

**INTRO** - The older I get, the more I learn things about my family I had not previously known. When I was pastor in St. Louis one of my mom's aunts, and therefore one of my great aunts, passed away. I ended up with an oriental rug she asked that I have. I did not request it, but she got it for me. My mom had an uncle in the merchant marines who sailed the world and often brought gifts back for family. However, a number of years later she let me know that some in her family weren't too happy I had the rug. There were some hard feelings. My relationships with my parents families had always been positive and loving. I did not need or ask for that rug. Can you imagine hurting family relationships, having hard feelings, over something seemingly so insignificant as a rug?

I. But, that is what is happening in our Gospel lesson for today.

A. A man comes to Jesus and seeks His authority, His help, to get some earthly possessions or wealth he desires.

1. <sup>13</sup>**Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”** <sup>14</sup>**But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?”** <sup>15</sup>**And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”**

2. You can fill in the details. What kind of relationship was this man building with his brother, or vice versa?

3. Sometimes those who were loving, now harbor resentment. For what? A rug? Some money? And these are just THINGS. Ephesians 5 teaches, “Coveteousness is idolatry.”

B. Jesus warns that things not only get in the way of our earthly relationships, but can also hurt our relationship with God.

1. Jesus tells the parable of the man who is wealthy and has a bumper crop and builds more barns, thinking life is now secure and comfortable.

2. Unfortunately, in taking care of earthly wealth, the man has neglected spiritual riches. God's words to this man are, **‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’**

3. Jesus' response to the man who sought help, his final words are, <sup>21</sup>**So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”**

4. Why would anyone risk relationships, what is eternal, for possessions which are only temporary? No wonder in the parable God calls the farmer, “Fool!”

C. But, we know why this is to a certain extent.

1. While our lives are eternal, we live today in THIS world. It takes some money to survive, it seems.

2. Don't forget when we pray the Lord's prayer we pray, **Give us this day our DAILY bread.** We only need for today.

3. And ultimately, God is the one who provides - always

4. Unfortunately, its dangerous but it is easy to focus on the things of this world and forget the things that are eternal.

II. In the 1980's my wife and I lived in Florida, but were visiting her mom in Memphis. She received a phone call while we were sitting in her kitchen. She was living off her deceased husband's retirement and social security, which were not much. They had a few meager investments. One was municipal bonds in the city of St. Charles,

MO. St. Charles had defaulted on their bonds. She had hoped for extra return above interest for her investment. Now she had lost the whole sum of money. Think of the cost of valuing things over people, relationships, God.

A. One could Gain a possession, but lose a sister, a brother, a friend?

1. Is it really worth it? Right now we know the answer is no.

2. How about when faced with the choice? Do we remember or does covetousness take over?

B. Or worse, we could seemingly gain earthly security, like the man in the parable. But, by focusing on earthly possessions, we could lose Jesus. We could lose eternity.

1. The temporary things of this world are truly not worth sacrificing the eternal love of God.

2. But you know, we do make the choice of things over people, and things over God at times.

C. Today's lesson teaches that we want to be Rich towards God.

III. I have some possessions that have special meaning, and not so much because of what they are, though they are nice, but who gave them to me. I have a gun given to me by a dying friend. That makes it special, though I seldom use it. I have two trees given to me by two saints who were colonists and pioneers in Palmer. The trees have grown and are nice. But I remember who gave them. I have a fishing pole given to me on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my time at St. John in Palmer. Again, I appreciate the pole because of where it came from. I have a Bible given and inscribed by my mom.

A. Before we try to put a monetary or earthly valuation on eternal life, please remember where it came from.

1. In Ephesians 1, Paul is inspired by God to teach, <sup>3</sup> **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,** <sup>4</sup> **even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love.** We have EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST!

2. That is a gift, bought at the price of the life and death of the Son of God. That is the price paid. Is it not the MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSION WE HAVE?

B. Our Gospel and Epistle don't always have the same theme, but did you hear today's epistle from Colossians? <sup>1</sup>**If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.** <sup>2</sup>**Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**

1. Let me read it again. <sup>2</sup>**Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**

2. And all the things above are a gift, won for us by the suffering, the blood, the death of our Lord Himself. How can we not set our minds on these spiritual blessings?

C. And, if the possessions of this world continue to allure, please remember it is the Lord who provides.

1. Listen to Romans 8:32. **He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**

2. Listen to Matthew 6:33, **But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

3. The Father has given His Only Begotten Son. If He gives that big gift, he also provides for our earthly needs.

4. We seek to live in the riches God gave us when we worship, when we pray, when we read and meditate on Scripture, when we partake in Christian fellowship and service. When we do these things we get to see God work, and His riches

CONCLUSION - I have a friend whose daughter was in trouble with addiction. Unfortunately, many of my friends have faced that dilemma. Treatment would cost a lot. But he paid over \$80,000 for the treatment, because he loved her more than the money. How much is our relationship with our Lord worth. Do you know how much? TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IT IS WORTH THE LIFE OF JESUS!

How will you set your mind on things above, be rich towards God?