

Fool!

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's guidance, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. The Gospel according to Luke, and chapter 12.

Luke chapter 12, and if we read again at verse 16. Luke chapter 12, and verse 16. And he, that is Jesus, told them a parable, saying, The land of a rich man produced plentifully.

And he thought to himself, What shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I will do this. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones.

And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, be merry.

But God said to him, Fool, this night your soul is required of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?

[1 : 1 2] But God said to him, Fool, tonight your soul is required of you.

The parable of the rich fool is probably one of the most solemn parables that Jesus ever told.

Because in this parable we are confronted with the reality of our heart. That it doesn't want to seek after God. We are confronted with the uncertainty of our life.

We don't know what tomorrow will bring. But we are also confronted with the inevitability of our death. But it will happen. The parable of the rich fool is a sobering parable.

And it is a parable which wants to drive home just one point. One point. And the point is, in the grand scheme of things, what's it all about?

[2 : 2 2] What's it all about? What are we living for? Where is our life going? And where will our life end? And what preparations are we making for the future?

Because the need to prepare for the future is something that is inbuilt in us. It's something that we do almost instinctively. Even when we look around us, especially at this time of year, there are many preparations being made.

Where in a crafting community like this one, there are many people already preparing for another winter. There are some who have been cutting the grass and they've been baling hay in order to feed their animals over the winter months.

There are others who have maybe been taking home peats so that they will be warm during the cold, dark nights of winter. And there are some who have been preparing all their vegetable plots for their harvest of potatoes or other veg.

And everywhere we look, we're all preparing for the future. We're all planning for what's ahead of us. We're all looking to the future. But what about eternity?

[3 : 3 5] What about eternity? How many of us are preparing for eternity? How many of us are preparing for the moment when we leave this world?

Because none of us know when that moment will be. And that's what this solemn parable is all about. It's a parable about folly. The folly or the foolishness of not being prepared for eternity.

And the folly of being far too preoccupied with the material things of this world. And you know, this may be a 2,000 year old parable.

But it's just as relevant to the 21st century. Because it's reminding us, as Solomon said, we are all going to our long home.

Which is the grave. And we're all going to leave the scene of time. And we're all going to enter into eternity. And so we all need to be prepared for eternity.

[4 : 3 4] But the question is, are you prepared, my friend? Are you prepared for eternity? Because this well-known parable of the rich fool, it's a solemn reminder against the danger of being so consumed with everything else that we forget what is of the utmost importance.

Our undying soul. The undying soul. And you know, I believe that that's my calling as your minister.

It's to remind us that even though we get caught up in our daily lives, and our daily routines, and all our homes and our families, as wonderful as they are, my calling as your minister is to remind you that you have an undying soul that needs to prepare for eternity.

That's the reality. Because there is one word from this Bible, I hope and pray that you will never, ever hear. The word fool.

Fool. And so this evening I'd like us to consider this parable. And I want us to consider it under three simple headings. Too little, too much, too late.

[5 : 56] Too little, too much, too late. So if we look firstly at the first section, too little. Look at verse 13. It says, Someone in the crowd said to him, that is Jesus, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

But he said to him, Man, who made me a judge or arbiter over you? 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 one's possessions. Now the parable of the rich fool, it's found within the context of Jesus preaching.

Where a large crowd has gathered around to hear Jesus preach. In fact, we're told in verse 1 that there were thousands, thousands of people who had gathered around to hear Jesus preach.

And so as Jesus is preaching, he's in full flow and he's teaching and preaching about the kingdom of God. And he's emphasizing to all his audience, his congregation, he's emphasizing to them the things that are deeply spiritual and are of eternal importance.

[7 : 09] And Jesus, he has been preaching, we've read through what he was preaching, he's been preaching about the sovereignty of God and the fact that he knows even the number of hairs upon our head.

He's been speaking about the coming day of judgment and the importance of confessing your faith in Jesus Christ. And he's also been highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers.

And Jesus, he has been preaching about all these spiritual and eternal matters that are of great importance. But as he's in mid-flow, someone from the crowd takes the opportunity to rudely interrupt Jesus in order to tell him all about his problems.

But what's surprising is that what this certain individual says, it has nothing to do with what Jesus has been preaching about.

In fact, this man's topic for discussion has nothing to do with spiritual matters or the kingdom of God or the things of eternity. Instead, the issue which this certain individual is really concerned about and wants to raise with Jesus is a family matter.

[8 : 26] It's a family dispute between two brothers over an inheritance. Where this man says to Jesus, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

And what's so apparent about this is that this man's desire has absolutely nothing to do with what Jesus has been talking about. He has been listening to the subjects which Jesus has been preaching on, which are of eternal significance to him.

And that's because this man is so wrapped up with his own concerns and his own gain that his ears are closed to the glorious message of the gospel. He's become so obsessed with his own property and his material possessions and what belongs to him that he can't even hear the Son of God speaking.

And you know, my friend, there are many people like him. There are many people like him. There are many people who sit under the preaching of Jesus Christ, a glorious Christ, a beautiful Christ, and they don't hear a word.

They don't hear a thing. There are many who come to church, but their minds, well, they're not in church. There are many who sit under the sound of things which are of eternal significance to them.

[9 : 56] But in reality, it's of little significance to them. And there are far too many people who sit in church and they're presented with all the warnings and the alarming reality of dying without Christ and going to hell, but they don't pay any attention.

And my friend, I wonder if you're one of them. You know, I look at you month by month, week by week, and I wonder, are you actually listening?

Are you engaging with what Jesus is saying to you? Are you actually taking it in? Are you one of these people who just sit and do nothing with what you're hearing? Are you one of them, like this man was, not interested in what Jesus has to say?

And you know, it was J.C. Ryle who said in his commentary, on this passage, he said, how many people are incessantly planning and scheming about the things of time under even the very sound of the things of eternity?

How many people are planning about the things of time under the sound of the things of eternity? And it's so true.

[11:16] How many people are planning and preparing for the future while they're sitting in church under the sound of a message which is of eternal significance to them? How many people plan their whole week from the pew and plan what they're going to do this week and think about what needs to be done this week and what needs to be addressed this week and what jobs need to be done around the house this week and who we need to see this week where we're planning and planning and planning for every other event in our lives but the one that brings us into eternity?

How many people are not planning for eternity? And you know when this anonymous person steps forward and speaks it just shows how much he wasn't actually listening to what Jesus was saying because he says teacher speak to my brother to divide the inheritance with me and it shows us that if he had been listening he would never have said that to Jesus he would never have interrupted Jesus while he was preaching because Jesus has been preaching about the provision which God makes for his people the provision of salvation but this man he wasn't interested in God's provision he wanted to provide for himself he wanted to increase his wealth by receiving the portion of his brother's inheritance and when we look at what this man said well we can assume that his father must have died and he left an inheritance to his brother who would have been the elder brother and maybe as brothers they had fallen out over the issue of the father's inheritance but whatever had happened this man felt that he should be getting a portion of what his brother received but when he interrupted Jesus he didn't ask Jesus to evaluate his claim for an inheritance instead this man he just demands that Jesus makes his brother divide the inheritance with him but his demand is completely out of order because Jesus wasn't a judge over these temporal matters there were courts in the land of Israel for all these things which is why Jesus responds by saying man who made me a judge or arbiter over you who made me a judge or a divider over you of course in one sense we know that Jesus is a judge and a divider not over temple matter but over spiritual matter he is as the bible says the judge of all the earth he's the king who will divide the sheep from the goats on the last day he's the judge and he's the divider but only over the things that are of eternal significance but you know instead of letting this incident drop and continuing his sermon and just leaving this man until later on

Jesus takes the opportunity to warn against covetousness he says in verse 15 take care be on your guard against all covetousness for one's life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions and in only a few words Jesus points out to this man the heart of his problem which is the problem of his heart and Jesus says to him your heart is empty and your life is empty because your life is only taken up with things and possessions where you have this desire for more and more and more and you think that you don't have enough you think that you have too little you think you have too little and Jesus warns this man saying beware of covetousness because what is life all about he says what's it all about and Jesus is clear your life does not consist in the abundance of your possessions your life is not all about things and family and what you have no your life is about the condition of your soul before God that's what it's about my friend this man looked at his life and he wasn't satisfied he didn't have enough he was envious of his brother because he thought that he had too little and he wanted more and he wanted more things but Jesus wanted to teach him that he was looking for satisfaction in all the wrong places and in order to stress to this man who thought that he had too little

Jesus points out to him that his urgent need is not for him to gain material possessions from his brother his urgent need was to gain eternal life but in order to get his point across so clearly and so vividly to this man Jesus tells this man who thought he had too little he tells him a parable about a man who had too much he tells him a parable about a man who had too much and so we've looked at the man who had too little but secondly we see one who had too much too much look at verse 16 and he told them a parable saying the land of a rich man produced plentifully and he thought to himself what shall I do for I have nowhere to store my crops and he said I will do this I will tear down my barns and build larger ones and there

I will store all my grain and my goods and I will say to my soul soul you have ample goods laid up for many years relax eat drink and be merry we're familiar by now with the fact that Jesus often

spoke in parables and as we've said on a number of occasions the parables were not just sermon illustrations to make the teaching of Jesus easier to understand and either were they just a little story in order to entertain the crowd in order to keep their attention the purpose of a parable as we've seen before is that it's to get the listener deeply involved and make them see that they are the ones who are being portrayed and represented in the parable and that when they see themselves in the parable and that they're being addressed by the parable it ought to compel them to make a personal decision about following

[18:29] Jesus and this is why Jesus tells a parable at this point because he wants to highlight to this man who was only concerned with material things that he urgently needs to be concerned with eternal things he urgently needs to be concerned with his never dying soul and so Jesus tells this man who thought he had too little he tells him a parable about a man who had too much where one year this rich land owner had a great harvest and he brought forth plentifully so much so that not even this rich land owner had prepared for such a harvest he may have hoped for one but he wasn't prepared for it he never expected that his crops would produce so much so much that it was too much it was too much for his little barns to hold all that he had and so all the produce which this rich man had acquired from his land it led to a predicament where the rich land owner he didn't know what to do because he didn't have enough room for his harvest so he was in a predicament because well does he sell what he can't keep to make him even richer does he acknowledge that the lord has been good to him and give what he doesn't need to those who didn't have such a good harvest does he just give it to the poor he's rich already he's not going to miss it or does he just keep it for himself what does he do what does he do he's in this predicament and so his plentiful harvest which led to a predicament it's resolved by his own pronouncement he came to a decision about all his increasing wealth and he says as we read this is what I'm going to do this is what I'm going to do

I'm going to tear down my little barns that have served me so well and made me rich already and I'm going to tear them down and I'm going to build greater barns I'm going to build bigger and better barns that will hold all of my produce and so in this parable Jesus tells us that this rich landowner with an increasing wealth he set to build bigger and better barns but at the end of it all after dealing with his plentiful harvest and solving his predicament and making his pronouncement he foolishly made a presumption he foolishly made a presumption says in verse 19 and I will say to my soul soul you have ample goods laid up for many years relax eat drink and be merry and his presumption was that he had many years his presumption was that he had many years he foolishly made a presumption and the product of his presumption was that he told his own soul take it easy relax go into early retirement take it easy eat drink be merry but before we reach the point in this solemn parable where

God speaks I want us to see that the actions of this man in the actions of this man we are confronted with the root of all evil because this parable highlights the sobering fact that the love of money is the root of all evil it's not money which is the root of all evil it's the love of money which is the root of all evil it's the love of wealth and the love of gain and the love of possessions people often say to me why is there how come there is a good God if there is famine in the world how come there is a good God if there is all these problems in the other parts of the world but the reality is we have enough resources and enough money in the world to look after the whole world but the reason why the reason why all these countries are suffering the love of money is the root of all evil we don't share it we don't love one another we love money because it's the root of all evil it's the root cause of problems and you know it was the root cause of this man's problem because if we were to ask this rich man if we were to ask him is there anything missing in your life he would say yeah money and if we were to ask him again well what made you not want to give away your possessions I love my possessions and why did you build bigger and better barns I love having more and more and more he was discontent he wasn't satisfied and he was looking for a good life he was searching for a happy life he was seeking a comfortable life but my friend what is a good life what is the happy life what is the life which is longed for by countless millions what is life all about what is real life what is true life what's it all about what's life all about because any philosophy for life that tells you that you need to gain more and get more in order to be satisfied and to be comfortable it's a lie it's all a lie because life says Jesus real life true life that doesn't consist in the abundance of your possessions and you know we see it all the time people live their lives to finance the dream the dream home the dream car the dream holiday it's all a lie it's just for the moment it doesn't last it's

not eternal nothing there's nothing wrong with having any of these things nothing wrong at all but that doesn't address the issue of the never dying soul and my friend the bible repeatedly warns us about the danger of having too much we can see it so clearly in this passage but we also looked before at the parable of the sower and you remember in the parable of the sower we were warned about the seed that fell among thorns and Jesus explained that the seed that fell among the thorns it was like the cares of this world choked the seed and the deceitfulness of riches they choked it they choked the preaching of the word because these things in our life the things we have they can crowd in and they can crowd out the word and that's what happened to this man who interrupted Jesus the deceitfulness of riches the lack of satisfaction the emptiness in life and the obsession for more it choked his ability to hear anything that Jesus was saying to him and because he wasn't listening to Jesus all his concerns were material they were temporal they weren't eternal that's all he ever spoke about the things of this world the material things of this world but you know when we look at the rich man in this parable we see that he had a dilemma he didn't know which way to go he didn't know what to do because he was ensnared by the fact that he already had too much and he still wanted more he was ensnared by his hunger to increase and get bigger and better and his wealth had become such a snare to him that it had tempted him to the place where it leads countless millions where is that place the false sense of security security a false sense of security because you know there are many people where their business their job their money their property their wealth their health their friendships their family that's their security that's their security and don't get me wrong again there's nothing wrong with any of these things nothing wrong at all nothing wrong with having a job or money or property or wealth or family or friends that's not the issue which Jesus is talking about the issue which Jesus is addressing is where do you find security where do you find lasting security where do you find eternal security security and you know people often say that having all these things doesn't satisfy having money and wealth and a good job and a nice family and the loving friends people say it doesn't satisfy the problem is they do satisfy they do satisfy that's why there are so many people in our nation and in our communities who don't see the need for

[28 : 52] God or church or salvation because their satisfaction has led them into a false sense of security where they feel so secure and so satisfied by what they have and what they've earned and what they've done for themselves and everyone who's around them that they act like this man in the parable and they take it easy they eat and drink and they party their life away and they're so satisfied and so secure that they don't need God in their life and they live their life as if God does not exist that's why our churches are empty that's why our pews are empty they were filled in a past generation because people saw their need of God but now with everything at our fingertips everything at our fingertips people don't need God they think they have everything they need in life so we don't need God push God out the window he's of no use to us anymore and it's only another one of many reasons why people say that they're now atheists everybody's an atheist nowadays they don't need God who needs a God in their life who will tell them what to do and how to live who needs a God that will take away the fun of life and enjoying it for the moment who needs

God when you have satisfaction and security and everything else who needs a God then when we can replace him with all the other stuff in our lives and you know that's the mind of an atheist but that's also the mind of someone who lives like an atheist and you might not say to me tonight well I'm not an atheist because you believe in the existence of God that's why you're here you believe the Bible you believe that you're a sinner you believe that you need to be saved but even though you believe all that on a Sunday evening you might live the rest of the week like an atheist because an atheist is someone where God is not part of their life they are a theist without God and for some of you in here tonight you might not go to the extreme of calling yourself an atheist but in reality that's what you are because God is not part of your life and God does not factor in your understanding of life

God is not in your thoughts on a day to day basis he's not in the decisions that you make in life he's not part of anything that goes on in your life you don't pray to him at any point during the week where you live your life as if God does not exist you may come to church on a Sunday you may sit in the pew you may go out again you may pat yourself on the back and say good job I was in church this week and you live your life the rest of the week as if God does not exist but do you know what God says about atheists do you know what God says about those who live their life like an atheist we were singing about it earlier in Psalm 14 God says about atheists and those who live their life as

if God does not exist the fool hath said in his heart there is no God the fool hath said in his heart there is no God and my friend this solemn parable reminds us of what can happen to a life that is lived as if

God does not exist and it's a solemn parable and it solemnly reminds us what can happen to a fool it's not me calling you a fool the Bible this is God's word speaking because as Jesus tells this man who thought he had too little he tells him a parable about a rich man who thought he had too much and Jesus affirms to him it's just remarkable Jesus affirms to him that when it came to dealing with his undying soul he was too late he was too late too little too much too late look at verse 20 but God said to him fool this night your soul is required of you and the things you have prepared whose will they be fool this night your soul is required of you when Jesus began to tell the parable about the rich man who had too much it seemed that everything was going so well for him where he had grown this mass amount of produce and he had produced so much too much and he had solved his predicament of having little barns he solved it by the pronouncement of building bigger and better barns and it all seemed so good for him because he had decided to take early retirement he was going to take it easy going to eat and drink and enjoy all that he has and he was going to enjoy life and he was so satisfied with what he had and he was so secure in his health and his wealth that he even spoke to his own soul he had the audacity to speak to his own soul and say soul you have many years many years laid up for yourself eat drink and be merry but this man's problem was that he had made a presumption he made the presumption because in this parable

Jesus tells us that there was a twist in the story all seemed to be going well for this man and for his soul but there was a twist in the story there's an unexpected event an unforeseen circumstance that comes into his experience this rich man hadn't prepared for a great harvest harvest but he certainly hadn't prepared for what would happen next because what happens next is that God speaks God speaks to this man and when God speaks to this man and into this man's life it's not at all what he expected it wasn't planned it wasn't prepared for he never anticipated what was going to happen he never saw it coming and it's not what he wanted to hear either because the voice which he had ignored for so long throughout his life it finally spoke and the voice spoke to his undying soul and you know my friend there are too many like this man they live in the safety and the satisfaction and the security of this life they live for the moment they live for the here and now they live for the parties of this world they live for the weekend they live for their family they live for all that they have they live for the material possessions of life but when

[36 : 49] God speaks when God speaks there is always a twist in the story of their lives where life takes an unexpected turn and God speaks and he speaks maybe through an illness maybe through an accident or even through the death of a family member and when God speaks it's only then that the reality of life is brought home but my unconverted friend what you are yet to experience what we are all yet to experience is when the voice of God speaks directly to us when God calls you and me out of the scene of time and into eternity my friend when the twist in this story took place

God spoke and said too late fool this night your soul is required of you you have lived your life without God you have built bigger and better barns for yourself and for what you're leaving them to the next generation you thought you had many years ahead of you you've wasted your life on eating and drinking and all your parties you you told your soul to take it easy but this night your soul is required to give an account fool you have not prepared for eternity fool my dear friend what is a fool someone once said the fool is someone who lives contrary to reality the fool is someone who lives contrary to reality because the reality which we have been confronted with in this solemn parable is that we're not promised tomorrow and we say it so often but so often we say it so flippantly we're not promised another hour we don't know what a day or an hour will bring and you know from time to time things come into our lives where we are reminded of that very fact of the shortness of time and the length of eternity we're reminded when others hear the voice of

God and that they are called from this scene of time into eternity eternity but one day it will be me and one day it will be you I just hope and pray that God doesn't say to you fool too late what is a fool someone who lives contrary to reality the reality that we're all going to our long home the reality that we're all going to leave the scene of time and enter into eternity the reality that death will leave us judgment will find us and eternity will hold us and we all need to be prepared my friend are you prepared for eternity my longing for each and every one of you is that you will prepare yourself for eternity that is my existence as your minister that you will prepare yourself for eternity and you know before

Jesus even told this parable he had warned those listening to him preach about what awaits those in eternity who don't close in with Christ because he said in verse four I tell you my friends do not fear those who kill the body and after that have nothing more that they can do but I warn you whom to fear fear him who after he has killed has authority to cast into hell yes I tell you fear him fear him that's who we ought to fear tonight the one who is able to speak to our undying soul and the one who is able to cast us into hell my friend the only way to be prepared for eternity is to commit your life to

Jesus Christ the only way to commit to him to realize that you can do nothing without him and that you need him to save you and you need him to save you now and that you need to commit yourself to him and follow him openly and publicly regardless of what anybody else thinks and you need to do it now before you're too late before you're too late going for where where is our life going and what preparations are we making for eternity my friend if I could I would plead with each and every one of you individually please please please don't don't be a fool don't be a fool seek the [43 : 31] Lord while he's to be found call upon him while he is near because he is near you tonight passing by in the gospel waiting for you to cry out to him for help but don't let the opportunity go by don't let it go by another week don't let it go by another moment because who knows what awaits us this week who knows but there's one thing for sure I don't want you to ever hear the words too late fool tonight your soul is required of you my friend you make sure you seek the Lord before you are too late may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray oh Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee for the gospel we bless thee that it is a living word and we pray that it would speak to us and continually speak to us that we would not put it off in our lives any longer but that we would seek thee while the

Lord to be found and call upon thee while the Lord near oh bless thy word to our undying soul help us as those who love thee and follow thee to realise the urgency of this message to truly tell it to the generation following that this God is our God and that he will be our guide even unto death oh Lord bless us we plead with thee keep us in the week that lies ahead a week that is unknown to us but known only to thee go before us then we pray part us with thy blessing and do us good for Jesus sake amen we shall conclude by singing in psalm 25 psalm 25 singing from the beginning of verse 4 down to the verse mark 9 that's in the

Scottish Psalter page 231 psalm 25 from verse 4 show me thy ways O Lord thy path so teach thou me and do thou lead me in thy truth therein my teacher be for thou art God that does to me salvation send and I upon thee all the day expecting do attend thy tender mercies Lord I pray thee down to the verse mark 9 of psalm 25 to God's praise to me thy ways to me thy ways O Lord thy path so teach thou me and do thou lead me in thy truth let my teacher be for thou art God that does to me salvation send and I afford thee all the day expecting to attend thy thy tender mercies Lord I pray thee to remember and loving kindnesses for they have been not full forever my sins and thoughts of you do do thou

O Lord forget after thy mercy take on me and for thy goodness pray God good and upright is the way his sinner show the meek in judgment he will guide and make his path to know the grace of the [49 : 29] Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen