

Living in God's Kingdom

Lesson 2: Security

Notes for the leader: This is the second in a series of lessons about "Living in the Kingdom." This lesson focuses on the parable of the Rich Fool and on Jesus's teachings about how we can find security in our lives.

Introduction

In the previous lesson, we mentioned that the religious leaders were suspicious of Jesus and his teaching. They considered Jesus a threat to their positions of power. They kept looking for ways to trap Jesus into saying something they could use against him, either with the people who were coming to hear Jesus or with the Roman authorities. We can find an example of this in Luke 17.

Luke 17:20-21

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

The Pharisees were members of a powerful and important religious movement. They were men we would call "super-religious" or "super-Orthodox". They took an oath to live their lives according to every detail of the Jewish ceremonial law. And they tried to impose their interpretations of the ceremonial law on other people.

Jesus tried to tell them that God cares more about our relationship with Him and with other people than with whether we follow these ceremonial details. Here, he was trying to explain that the Kingdom of God is not a place, it's an attitude. If you have made a sincere commitment to follow Jesus, then you are part of his Kingdom, and the Kingdom of God is within you.

Now let's turn to Luke, Chapter 12, starting at verse 13, and learn more about life in the Kingdom.

Luke 12:13-34

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop."

He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

Luke 12:13-34 (continued)

"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' "

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.

Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.

Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!

Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life ?

Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.

For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Let's break into small groups and spend a few minutes talking about this parable. We'll see if we can figure out the "deeper meaning." Remember that an important way to help understand the "deeper meaning" is to ask ourselves who Jesus was telling this parable to, and what situation led him to tell this parable.

Notes for the leader: Hand out copies of the Small-Group Discussion Questions to each person. Depending on the size of the group, have them break into small groups of four to ten. Make sure that each group has a capable leader, who can keep the discussion moving and well-focused. Make sure the groups understand how much time they have. 15 minutes should be a minimum. 20 minutes is better. Give each group a time warning three or four minutes before they need to reassemble as a large group, so they can bring their discussion to an orderly conclusion.

Follow-up Discussion

Notes for the leader: The main purpose of the follow-up discussion is to make sure that each small group has grasped the main ideas of the study. You can skim quickly through the answers if it seems clear that everybody understands them. If not, pick a group that "got it" and have them explain the answers.

If circumstances permit, it's a good idea to walk around and listen to each group discussion so that you know who "got it" and who didn't.

1. Who was Jesus telling this parable to? What was the situation? (*verses 13-15*)

In this case, Jesus had been interrupted by a man who was having an argument with his brother about money -- a family inheritance. The man wanted Jesus to tell his brother to split the inheritance with him. Jesus refused to get involved in the argument. Instead, he told the parable of the Rich Fool.

2. What do you think the "rich fool" was looking for in life? (*verses 18-19*)

Comfort. Making sure he had all the material wealth he would ever need. There's no sign that he was concerned about anyone but himself.

It's easy to look at the Rich Fool as being **greedy** or **selfish**. But I think Jesus was saying that his problem was deeper than that. This was a man who wanted **security** in his life. He wanted to be able to feel that **no matter what happened, he was going to be OK**. The point of Jesus's parable was that there aren't any guarantees like that in material possessions or wealth. None of us can be sure that we're going to wake up tomorrow morning! Any material wealth we've accumulated can disappear overnight.

3. What does Jesus say we should be looking for? (*verse 31*)

God's Kingdom -- a real relationship with Him. This is the only place we can find any real security. Only God can give us a real guarantee of security -- that **whatever** happens to us in this life, He will be with us, and that we can be **sure** that we will be with Him **forever**.

4. What happens if we seek God's kingdom? (*verse 31*)

Our other needs will be taken care of, as well. God **knows** what we need, **and He wants to give us what we need** in our lives.

5. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"? (*verse 34*)

All of us spend our time thinking about what's really important to us. We **show** what's important to us by what we **do**. We all know people who talk about how important their families are to them, but they never spend any time with their kids. We all know someone who only thinks about his business, or his stock market investments. These people are showing us where their treasures really are.

6. How does this saying apply to the rich fool? Where was his treasure?

In the barn -- where he was storing the material things he was depending on for his security. **So where was his heart? In the barn!**

How does it apply to the brothers arguing over their inheritance? Where was their treasure?

In that family inheritance. And it's easy to imagine that the fight they were having was destroying their relationship with each other, and probably the relationships among other members of the family as well.

Most importantly, how does it apply to you?

Where is **your** treasure? What are **you** counting on for your security? Jesus says that there is only **one** thing that we can really count on, and that is our relationship with **God** through **him** (*John 14:6*). If our relationship with **him** is right, then the other relationships in our lives will begin to heal. And the other priorities in our lives will be right.

Notes for the leader: Before the group leaves, make sure everyone has a copy of the "Take-Home Thoughts" handout. This will help them remember the things discussed in the lesson. Some of them may also use these handouts to explain the lesson to a cell-mate or in a letter they write to their families. You never know how far the lesson materials may travel, or whose life may be affected by them!

Small-Group Discussion Questions

Security *(Luke 12:13-34)*

1. Who was Jesus telling this parable to? What was the situation? (verses 13-15)
2. What do you think the "rich fool" looking for in life? (verses 18-19)
3. What does Jesus say we should be looking for? (verse 31)
4. What happens if we seek God's kingdom? (verse 31)
5. What do you think Jesus meant when he said,
"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"? (verse 34)
6. How does this saying apply to the rich fool?
How does it apply to the brothers arguing over their inheritance?
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Take-home Thoughts About ...

Finding Security *(Luke 12:13-34)*

A man interrupted Jesus while he was teaching. The man was having an argument with his brother about money -- a family inheritance. He wanted Jesus to tell his brother to split the inheritance with him. Jesus refused to get involved in the argument. Instead, he told the parable of the Rich Fool. *(Luke 12:13-34)*

The Rich Fool had a good year. His crop was bigger than he needed. He decided to tear down his barn and build a bigger one so that he could store it all. Then he would never have to worry about anything again. But that very night, God told him his time was up: "Now who will get all the riches you have stored up for yourself?"

It's easy to look at the Rich Fool as being greedy. But his problem was deeper than that. He was a man who wanted **security**. He wanted to feel sure that no matter what happened, he was going to be OK. The point of Jesus's parable was that **there aren't any guarantees like that** in material possessions. None of us can be sure that we'll wake up tomorrow! Any wealth or material possessions we've accumulated can disappear overnight.

Jesus said that only God can give us a real guarantee of security. Whatever happens to us in this life, He will be with us, and we can be sure that we will be with Him forever. If our relationship with God is healthy, other needs will be taken care of, as well.

Jesus said, "**Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**" *(Luke 12:34)* We show what's **important** to us by what we **do**. So **where is your treasure?** What are **you** counting on for your security? Jesus says that there is only one thing that we can really count on, and that is our **relationship with God through him** *(John 14:6)*. If our relationship with him is right, then the other priorities in our lives will be right, too.

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