

NOW WHERE DID I PUT MY TREASURES (LUKE 12:13-21)**THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE**

As Jesus sat teaching on one occasion, a man apparently disgruntled with the way his parents' estate had been divided posed an interruptive question. The Jews often consulted the respected rabbis for their opinion on civil matters like this one, but Jesus refused to get involved, and then told a pointed parable that provided a sobering warning about covetousness or greed. Greed in the heart may have prompted the man to make the request that he did of the Savior?)The Law of Moses stipulated the right of the firstborn son to receive a double portion or two-thirds of the inheritance and the remainder was to be divided among the others sons—Deuteronomy 21:15-17. Whether this was the oldest/first born son or a younger son we are not told and it is not really important to the present discussion.) The man who made this demand of Jesus seems to have paid little attention to the vital truths that Jesus had been trying to communicate and was more concerned with the stuff and things of this life. Sadly, people of this kind have not perished from the earth and sadder still is the fact that many of this same mindset can still be found among members of the Lord's body. The truth Jesus stated in verse fifteen is stated succinctly, and the parable that follows provides the vivid illustration that "drives home the point!" Attention will now be given to this parable and the rich fool that is herein described for contemplation.

The ground of a certain rich man produced an exceptional crop that exceeded the storage space that the man had presently constructed—verses 16 and 17. The man was wealthy; and Scripture never presents wealth as an intrinsic evil, but great warning is given to how riches can be misused. This man had worked hard in the honest enterprise of farming and, combined with the blessings of God such as favorable weather conditions and his skillful management, a "bumper crop" had resulted. Elements of his downfall began to emerge as his selfish disposition was manifest in his desire to hoard and keep all his goods. (Notice how the personal pronoun "I" is used six times and "my" is used five times in this short account).

The rich man reasoned that the best thing to do was tear down his current facilities and build new and larger ones to house the bounty—verse 18. He could and should have given consideration to the poor, whose barns were empty and had no excess; and then his barns would have been amply sufficient to store what was needed for him and his family. Later on in this same chapter, verse 33 finds the Savior admonish: "provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys." (In these times of economic uncertainty, where and in what are you investing?) Reflecting on his resolved course of action, the rich man declares: "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." Several false assumptions are contained in this narcissistic exclamation. First was the notion that the soul can be satisfied with physical things (Ecclesiastes 5:10). Second was the false idea that the goods would last for many years (1 Timothy 6:17-18). Finally the man assumed that he would have many years to enjoy all these good things, but he was terribly mistaken. The rich man's quotation accords with the ancient tent of Epicureanism philosophy that is still practiced by millions today: "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." See also 1 Corin-

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

LOVE LIFTED ME

Text: _____

I. From the _____ of _____

Notes:

II. From the _____ of _____

Notes:

III. To the _____ of _____

Notes:

THE FULLNESS OF A CHRIST FILLED LIFE

Text: _____

I. _____

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II. _____

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III. _____

Notes:

thians 15:32. The man had no funeral plans and the precept “where men propose, God may dispose” is validated again. God interjects next and announces to the man “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you...” Here God calls the man a fool, which is shocking to the sensibilities of modern critics. However, the term accurately applies to this individual, who left God and others out of his plans and actions. “Fool” is the only term that accurately describes such an approach made by the man in this parable. This is in no way a violation of the Savior’s teaching in Matthew 5:22, where Jesus warns that those who are angry and in rage seek to berate others by calling them “fools.” Those guilty of this type of derogatory action place themselves in danger of hell fire, according to the Christ! The Greek text may suggest, “They [that is the goods you have amassed] are demanding thy soul from thee.” By way of illustration, how many have ruined their health to amass great wealth only to be willing to give all the wealth back to get their health?

The Lord probes further still: “then whose will those things be which you have provided?” This is one query the man had probably never entertained. How much do people leave behind when they die? Everything! There will be no U-hauls behind the hearse. Riches can be used constructively and help to advance the kingdom of God throughout the earth, but they can also hurt their owners eternally (Ecclesiastes 5:13; Psalm 39:6; Ecclesiastes 2:18-19). Many other passages can be cited to further confirm this truth. The fool forgot that all belongs to God (Psalm 50:10-12).

Jesus concluded: “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” The warning is still valid; those that continue to selfishly seek and hoard physical goods, while ignoring spiritual duties and the cries of the less fortunate, will find themselves spiritually bankrupt and eternally separated from the riches of that Heavenly land. This rich fool forgot other people, he forgot that man is more than what he owns, he forgot the source of real happiness, he forgot God, and he forgot that he would die. Dear reader, please do not live your life in such a way as to imitate this man’s foolish mistakes, but strive everyday to be rich in love, obedience, and good works to the glory of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son!

-Alan Judd

PEACE BY ALL MEANS

If anything makes you appreciate peace, it is the presence of conflict. War makes you appreciate international peace. Marital discord makes you appreciate familial peace. Legal disputes bring appreciation for social peace. Oddly some people thrive on conflict. They seek, plant the seeds of, and encourage conflict. Before the Civil War erupted in the United States in 1861, Ben Franklin, a preacher and editor of the *American Christian Review*, began receiving a significant number of inquiries on the question of slavery, but largely ignored them because he had learned many questions were asked, not to receive an honest answer but “because he (the questioner—AJB) wants to agitate an issue.” Such is but one example of how far some people go to satisfy their thirst for conflict. It seems, though, that, while they are widespread, such people are in the vast minority. Most people, Christians or not, are desirous of peace; international, familial, social, and otherwise. But what is the source of any and all true peace? If ever it will be achieved, it will be only based on the principles of Christianity and ultimately on Christ Himself.

As Paul concluded his second epistle to the Thessalonian church, he, as always, stated his blessing of hope upon the brethren and said: “Now the Lord of peace himself give you **peace always by all means**. The Lord be with you all” (2 Thessalonians 3:16). Jesus Christ alone can impart genuine peace unto all who would submit to His divine will. Earlier Paul had concluded how that God is not “the author of confusion, but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Jesus is referred to in scripture both as “our peace” (Ephesians 2:14) and the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Thus it seems that it is only proper that He be the means of “peace by all means.” But specifically, by what means is peace offered through Christ?

One means of peace available in Christ is **public peace**. Contained in the scriptures are numerous expectations as to how we, as neighbors, are to interact with each other. The true child of God actively pursues these avenues of peace with their fellow man. They will abide by the inspired direction of Paul in Romans 12:9-21 and love, encourage, help, sympathize, etc., with the general desire to live peaceably with all men (vs. 18). True Christians will be those who live such a life as to be without reproach among all men. They will be embodiments of “second mile Christianity” (Matthew 5:38-42), recognizing their responsibility as “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Why? Because “a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house” (Matthew 5:14-15). Ultimately, the true child of God is one, not who seeks conflict and division, but rather one who seeks peace (1 Peter 3:11). The means that every decision made in life is made with the driving desire to establish and maintain peace. It means every word spoken is spoken in peace. It means every deed that is done is done in peace. And if we truly submit to the expectations of Jesus Christ, we will enjoy a degree of public peace.

Another means of peace made possible through Jesus Christ is **personal peace**. How marvelous the opportunity to lay down to sleep at night with our head clear of guilt and our heart full of hope! Paul thanked God whom he says he served with “pure conscience” (2 Timothy 1:3). How was this possible? Because “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (James 3:17-18). As we submit our lives to the wisdom of God, we enjoy the inner peace that comes with purity of life. But our personal peace is not possible until we submit to that first act of conscience cleansing, obedience to the gospel (1 Peter 3:21). Once, though, our lives reflect the will of Almighty God, through Jesus Christ, we find a measure of personal peace available no place else.

A third means of peace present in Christ is **perpetual peace**. “O the depth and the riches of God’s saving grace flowing down from the cross for me! There the debt for my sins by the Savior was paid in His suffering on Calvary!” The peace Christians have through Jesus is not limited to merely a social or inner peace in this life, but it is one that spans the ages of eternity. Paul reminded the Ephesians that at one time they were “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). But, as Christians, he let them know that to the contrary “now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (vs. 13). Why? “For he is our peace” (vs. 14). Yes, in Christ exists the glories of eternal peace, that which shall never cease to be. But a perpetual peace is found only through the avenue of Jesus.

So much conflict exists and prevails in all quarters of life. From work, to the home, to social life, and even in the church, conflict is far too prevalent. Does it not cause you to thirst deeply for true and abiding peace? Our only hope is to turn to the Lord of peace who can “give you peace always by all means.”