

Relationships Over Stuff

Parables of Jesus

Ben Deaver at Tallgrass at The Well on July 17, 2022

Luke 12:13-21

So what? We are pulled to give our lives in exchange for stuff.

Feel what? Valuing stuff over relationships is foolish.

Now what? Invest in relationships.

VISION CASTING – Invest in a worthwhile legacy to experience happiness.

INTRODUCTION

Mingle Questions:

1. If you could bring back a fashion trend, what would it be and why? ROLLED UP JEANS!
2. What smell, image, or sound triggers nostalgia for you? OPENING A CAN OF TENNIS BALLS!

Parables of Jesus

- Last Sunday was about fidelity, or faithfulness, to the King. This Sunday is about fidelity, or faithfulness, to relationships, to one another.
- This morning we're back in Luke, Luke 12:13-21.

V. 13 ¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

- Pretty demanding fellow.
- Must've been a younger brother because it was the older brother's responsibility to divide the inheritance.

VV. 14-15 ¹⁴ Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵ Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

- Jesus could've stopped right there and sent everyone home.
- But no, He had to drive the point home at this guys' expense and also provide this guy an opportunity to reflect and repent.

V. 16a ^{16a} And he told them this parable:

PRAY

"Father, we want to gather around to hear Jesus. We want ears to hear and hearts to receive and courage to prioritize relationships over stuff. Amen."

VV. 16b-17 ^{16b} "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'"

- He's already rich. He's still yielded abundant harvests. The rich tend to get richer, right?! That's passive income right there. That's what we all want!
- This guy talks to himself a lot, as we'll find out.
- No meaningful input from his community into his thought process or decision making.

FAKE VV. 18-19 Then he said, "This what I'll do. I'll give away my excess to feed the poor. In fact, I'll establish a work program to provide jobs for my community here on my farm. I'll mentor these workers and leave my community better than I found it. Eventually I'll hand over my estate to a benevolent heir to carry on this tradition of generosity. I'll breathe my last breath, satisfied with the legacy I've left behind and I'll go home to my Creator!"

VV. 18-19 ¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

- I'll say to my soul, "Soul..." The immaterial part of us. Our spirit. The breath of life!
- This man's perspective is very Biblical apparently. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:32 quoting Isaiah 22:13, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."
- Eat, drink, and rejoice! Rejoice = euphrainó (εὐφραίνω)
 - Phron = diaphragm – Sigh of relief
- Maddox's comments that he doesn't want a mansion because it would be lonely. But he does want a house that's bigger than ours.
- Jeff Bezos riding Space Mountain in Disneyworld all by himself.
 - One Twitter user said, "The picture of Jeff Bezos alone on Space Mountain in Disneyworld is the perfect metaphor for being filthy rich and incredibly lonely."
 - Another user agreed, saying, "Sometimes being the 2nd richest person on Earth can be lonely."
 - "The photo of Jeff Bezos riding Space Mountain alone is one of the funniest, most pathetic

demonstrations of wealth I've ever seen. Imagine having the power to eradicate poverty & choosing instead to spend your money and time doing STUFF like this."

- Others defended Bezos' decision to ride alone. One user tweeted, "I can't judge... I would definitely do the same if i was a billionaire."
- When I'm biking I'm like, "Share the road, I'm on a bike here!" But when I'm in my car and I see a biker I'm like, "Move over! I'm driving here." Maybe that's just me.
- Everyone walks past First Class and sees all that extra leg room and fancy drinks and is like, "Those wealthy people." Until you're in First Class and you sit back, "Eat, drink, STRETCH OUT, and be merry!" Maybe that's just me.
- Peering into a closet full of clothes and coming to the conclusion, "I have nothing to wear."
- Driving multiple vehicles wherever my heart takes me and coming to the conclusion, "My cars are junk."
- Holding a three year old device in my hand that can access more knowledge than even existed 50 years ago and exclaiming, "My phone needs upgraded."

V. 20 ²⁰ "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?'"

- Fool = apherón = without reason = no diaphragm
- "I pity the fool!" First uttered by God in the 1st century then brought into American colloquialism by Mr. T in Rocky III in 1982.
- This man was experiencing the toxicity of being the third soil in the Parable of the Soils in Luke 8...where the plant that was growing was choked out by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and never matured.
- **Isaiah 5:8** Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.
- It's the FOOL contrasted to the SMART PERSON rather than the WICKED contrasted to the GOOD PERSON.
 - The use of our money is an ethical and moral matter but Jesus is appealing to what makes for the smart and happy life!
- "The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money." –John D. Rockefeller
- Tim Keller quote – "No one looks back and wishes they spent less time with their kids and more time in the office."

- St. Augustine – “He did not realize that the bellies of the poor were much safer storerooms than his barns.”
- The Soul & Psalm 42:1-2 – As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?
 - St. Augustine – “My soul is restless until it rests in Thee.”
 - “My soul is restless until it is assured of an overabundance of food and drink.”
- The Manna Principle in Exodus 16
- My story – Realization that relationships are more important than tasks. Tasks should serve relationships. Realization that I’m not wired that way naturally and need rewiring.

V. 21 ²¹ “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

- V. 15b+ “Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions...but in relationships, richness toward God.”

SOLUTION

RESPONSE & ACTION

- Jesus debriefs the interaction and takes it even deeper with His disciples...and we all get to listen into to Jesus dropping this wisdom.
- Follow Jesus around long enough and He'll teach you how to be happy and healthy.
- Jesus is good 4 u!

1. Don't worry

- **Luke 12:22-23** ²² 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. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes."

2. Consider

- Exhibit A: The ravens
- **Luke 12:24-26** ²⁴ "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! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? ²⁶ Since you cannot

do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

- Exhibit B: The wild flowers
- **Luke 12:27-28** ²⁷ "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ 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—you of little faith!"
- Considering not only helps battle anxiety but also cultivates gratitude as well as gives enjoyment.

3. Check your heart, then set your heart

- **Luke 12:29-31** ²⁹ "And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. ³² Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."
- Don't be afraid.
- You are a co-heir with Christ.
- Jesus, our Older Brother, will divide His inheritance with us.

- **1 Corinthians 15:19** If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:32** If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." (Isaiah 22:13)
4. Invest your treasure & your heart will follow
- **Luke 12:33-34** ³³ "Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
 - "Discussed with himself" vs. Community conversation and counsel
 - Chris Swanson example

INSPIRATION—RESPONSE & ACTION

Invite the Worship Team up

The Science of Generosity, A white paper prepared for the John Templeton Foundation by the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley (May 2018)

- ...a host of studies have uncovered evidence that humans are biologically wired for generosity. Acting generously activates the same reward pathway that is activated by sex and food, a correlation that may help to explain why giving and helping feel good...
- Further evidence of the deep roots of human generosity comes from studies finding consistent displays of generosity among young children— even young toddlers. Multiple studies have shown that children appear to have an innate drive to cooperate and to help others, but that this drive is tempered as children grow older and their giving behavior becomes more selective and nuanced.
- **Acts 20:35b** "...remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
- Maddox giving away his Pokémon cards to new kids at church, at a new Mexican restaurant in town ("That's dope!"), and to me on various occasions...and yet selfish with those same cards at home.
 - So much joy just watching someone else be generous.

- I follow #tanksgoodnews on Instagram. Watching others demonstrate generosity makes you feel good. How much more, to be the one who is generous and invests in relationships and leaves a legacy?
- Maybe this is part of what it means to receive the kingdom of God like a little child (Luke 18:17). Kids who receive something are often quick to give it away.
- Mr. Beast & Beast Philanthropy
- Facebook Post on Memorial Day Weekend needing a part for my AC – Lee Modesitt & the AC company

God's Plan 2018 music video by Drake

- Drake's team gives away \$996,631.90 in his music video for *God's Plan*.
- "The most important thing I have ever done in my career."
- Where's the money go?
<https://www.mtv.com/news/3065119/break-down-drake-million-gods-plan-video/>
 - \$50k to Miami residents in a game of Supermarket Sweep
 - \$50k to a junior at the University of Miami
 - \$10k to the University of Miami Frost School of Music

- \$70k to the Lotus House Women's Shelter including \$150 gift cards to 130 women and toys for all the children
- \$25k to Miami Senior High School
- \$20k to the City of Miami Fire Department
- \$10k+ to take a housekeeper to Saks Fifth Avenue for a shopping spree, spa day, and sinner at StripSteak
- Tons of random acts of kindness
- But what about... It's all for show. We can't just give people stuff. Etc.

CONCLUSION—REFLECT & REPENT

- What relationship can you prioritize over your stuff or your to do list today?
- What experiment of generosity can you run this week to test Jesus' words that it is happier to give than to receive?
- What legacy will you leave behind?

PRAY

"Father, we want to gather around to hear Jesus. We want ears to hear and hearts to receive and courage to prioritize relationships over stuff. Amen."

Chopping Block:

Notes:

- Possibility of life ending sooner than expected as compared to last week's teaching.
- Checkout Randy Alcorn
- My, my, my, my – My crap, my barn, my grain, my goods, my soul, my bad...
- Perhaps the older brother understood that his younger brother wasn't ready for the responsibility of his inheritance...or maybe he too was greedy.
- At least the younger brother waited until his dad died before trying to get his inheritance. But wait, shouldn't he be grieving right now?!
- Early retirement & MHK
- Rich Fool Summary from *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*
 - Self-criticism is needed
 - Healed relationships are priority over money matters
 - Needs, not earnings
 - Material possessions belong to God and are gifts from Him
 - Failed to secure his life or possessions
 - Human life is on loan from God
 - "Every breath you take"
 - The one who believes that life is about more stuff is sadly mistaken
 - We cannot ensure where and with whom our stuff ends up
 - Abundant life is found in treasuring up for God
 - Rich man will fade away in the midst of pursuits
 - Misunderstanding of the soul
- Parable of the Soils - Third Soil Toxicity
- Excerpt from an article published by Utah State University:
 - In a 2008 study, subjects were asked to rate their happiness and given an envelope containing either \$5 or \$20. The participants were randomly assigned to either spend the money on themselves or on someone else by the end of the day.¹ Those who spent the money on someone else reported happier moods than those who spent the money on themselves. A separate group was asked to predict outcomes of the experiment and most believed those who spent money on themselves would be happier. Not only were they wrong, they were significantly wrong. The research suggests "thinking about money may propel individuals toward using their financial resources to benefit themselves, but spending money on others can provide a more effective route in increasing one's own happiness."² UtahStateUniversity
<https://www.usu.edu/science/discovery/fall-2017/does-giving-make-you-happy>
 1 Elizabeth W. Dunn, Lara B. Akin, Michael I. Norton (2008). Spending Money on Others

Promotes Happiness. Science 21 March 2008: Vol. 319, Issue 5870, pp. 1687-1688.
 2 Elizabeth W. Dunn, Lara B. Akin, Michael I. Norton (2014). Prosocial Spending and Happiness: Using Money to Benefit Others Pays Off. Current Directions in Psychological Science 2014 23:41.

Illustrations:

- The grandpa who planted a tree knowing that he'd never sit in its shade.
- Abraham's faithfulness without receiving the Promise of the Land.
- Kingdom Economy – Economy of Grace

Child Dedication Blessing:

- https://discipline.wesleyan.org/wiki/Chapter_1: Baptism#D. Affirmation of Parental Vows
- Fast forward decades and consider your legacy.
- Relationships in the home and in the community

Passages:

- Habakkuk 1:7 They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.
- Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 ¹⁸ I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. ¹⁹ And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.
- Ecclesiastes 8:15 So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.
- Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 ¹³ Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.
 - Love God, Love Neighbor!
- Psalm 42:1-2 ¹ As the deer pants for streams of water,
 so my soul pants for you, my God.
² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
 When can I go and meet with God?
- James 1:11 ⁹ Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. ¹⁰ But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. ¹¹ For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
- Parable of the Shrewd Manager

The Manna Principle in Exodus 16

- V. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions.
- Vv. 14-20 ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.'" ¹⁷ The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. ¹⁸ And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed. ¹⁹ Then Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning." ²⁰ However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.
 - "I can't take you anywhere!"
- Vv. 25-28 ²⁵ "Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. ²⁶ Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any." ²⁷ Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. ²⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions?"
- Deuteronomy 8:3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.
- Psalm 78:24
- John 6:28-35 ²⁸ Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." ³⁰ So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ "Sir," they said, "always give us this bread." ³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the

bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

- John 6:47-58 ⁴⁷Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. ⁵⁰But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

⁵²Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

⁵³Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."

- John 6:66-69 ⁶⁶From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

⁶⁷"You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve.

⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."