
SCRIPTURE: LUKE 12: 13-34

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull 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, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

He 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. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

REFLECTION

Jesus told a story about a farmer who was very successful. His land was producing more crops than he could even contain! The farmer chose to keep all his crops to himself. He thought if he stored his wealth, he wouldn't have to worry about his future or work for years to come. He tore down his barns to build bigger barns for his hoard of crops. But then the farmer died before he even had a chance to enjoy his enormous savings. He had stored up treasures on earth, but not treasures with God.

Jesus goes on to say there is more to life than food and clothing. Jesus knew people often thought so much about what they would eat and what they would wear. They judged what others had or didn't have and missed out on other treasures. Jesus told the disciples to consider how the birds and flowers live. What could we possibly learn from ravens and lilies?

Ravens and lilies do not worry about storing up vast amounts of food. They live for each day and do not worry about the next day. They are a part of God's creation and do their parts for the ecosystem. Imagine if the ravens stored up all the nuts?! What would the squirrels or chipmunks eat? Imagine if the lilies soaked up all the nutrients from the soil. How would the other plants grow? Instead, a healthy ecosystem is formed when each creature takes what it needs and leaves what it doesn't. This way, the whole system becomes a treasure!

If we spend our energy on treasure that will last and trust God for our needs, does that mean it is wrong to save our resources? No, God wants us to be wise with our money, our privilege, and our property. That's being a "good steward." And when we use our privilege, money, and property for love and justice, there is less worry in the world. We know our community is fed, clothed, sheltered, and loved.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What would have happened if the farmer had kept what he needed and given away the crops he did not need?
- What kinds of invisible treasures would he have stored up if he had been generous? Whose lives would have been changed?
- How do you know when it is time to share your savings? How do you know when you have enough?

ACTIVITY

What is in our barn?

Many of us have large collections of items we store in our homes. Perhaps you have a vast barn of books, toys, stuffed animals, magazines, board games, or kitchen tools. Each person in your family might have their own stash of something. Take a look at your collections. Are there any collections that look like the farmer's crops? Perhaps you have too much of something or more than you could possibly use? Talk about what to do with the excess. No one should make a choice for someone else's stash, but instead, look at your own things. What could you give away or put to better use for someone else?

PRAUER

Creator God,
You made a world with abundant resources,
enough to feed and clothe everyone.
Help us to trust you for the future,
to use our resources well,
and become generous people
so everyone will have what they need.

Amen.

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