

Temporary Treasure

Luke 12.13-21

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 his possessions."

The issue at hand: Greed or generosity.

Now

Later

Ultimately

A man asks Jesus to intervene in a family matter. "*Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.*" We don't know if the brother is dragging his feet, is still in a state of mourning, or if the questioner is unreasonable. We do know this. The eldest son gets two-thirds of the estate (Deut 21.15-17), and the rest is divided up among the siblings. The property could not be sold to outsiders; it must stay in the family.

One Point: Earthly treasure is temporary; the spiritual treasure is eternal.

One Question: Am I gathering the one or the other?

What do you need to know? Jesus refuses to be the judge the matter. As God, he will judge everyone at the end of days. As Messiah, he goes to the root of this man problem—covetousness (greed). What you gain in this life is not what life in the kingdom is about. Gathering possessions will be a roadblock in your spiritual life. Are my energies spent on the comforts of today and the worries of tomorrow?

Why do you need to know it? This parable describes a landowner who just had the once in a lifetime harvest – a bumper crop. What do you do with a windfall, an unexpected major gain? Some spend it all immediately on pleasure. They wake up the next week poorer than they were before the windfall. This landowner saves for the future. He is expecting a long life. Not a bad plan—except for the uncertainty of a tomorrow. He forgets the eternal—he forgets that serving of his fellow, man is serving God. What you do with gains now will affect your eternity.

What do you need to do? There is no sin in paying your bills of saving for a future or building security for spouse and children; God expects it. A Christian needs to be mindful of the future. A disciple also needs to be mindful of the future; selfless in caring for those poorer than they are.

Why do you need to do it? Earthly life is phase 1. In the end, phase 2, the unbeliever stands before the God he did not care for. The believer also stands before God, not for salvation but for an audit: Were you rich toward the kingdom? Did you care for your neighbor? Did you give bread to the hungry? What was the stewardship of your life?