

THERE'S NO BETTER WAY,,, TO MAKE A POINT,,, THAN TO PRESENT IT,,, IN A STORY,,, OR AS IN JESUS' CASE,,, IN A PARABLE.

AND *THERE'S NO ONE BETTER* IN DOING THIS,,, THAN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,,, WHO WAS A MASTER OF PRESENTING HIS POINTS,,, BY THE USE OF PARABLES! THESE PARABLES,,, WERE STORIES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE AND THAT MADE THEM EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND WE DON'T NEED A LOT OF ANALYSIS,,, TO GET THE MAIN POINT.

REMEMBER,,, JESUS USED PARABLES **TO CONCEAL,,, AS MUCH,,, AS HE DID **TO REVEAL**!**

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE PARABLE,,, MAKES IT EASY TO “*JUMP TO WRONG OR INCOMPLETE CONCLUSION*”.

AND THIS IS TRUE,,, IN THIS WEEKS TEXT AS WELL!

INITIALLY,,, THE STORY SEEMS SIMPLE ENOUGH. IT BEGINS WITH AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN 2 BROTHERS OVER AN INHERITANCE. NOW,,, HOW MANY OF US HAVE SEEN FAMILIES,,, TOTALLY DESTROYED,,, OVER THE DIVISION OF THEIR PARENTS ESTATES?

THE MAN IN TODAY'S PARABLE,,, WAS PROBABLY THE YOUNGER BROTHER. BECAUSE,,, IN JEWISH LAW,,, THE ELDEST SON TOOK POSSESSION OF ALL THE PROPERTY,,, AS WELL AS GETTING A DOUBLE PORTION OF ALL THE GOODS. THIS MIGHT SEEM STRANGE TO US TODAY,,, BUT,,, THAT'S THE WAY IT WAS,,, BACK THEN AND THERE WAS A GOOD REASON FOR IT.

IT WAS DONE TO PREVENT THE FAMILY PROPERTY FROM BEING DIVIDED UP INTO SUCH SMALL PIECES,,, THAT WOULD MAKE IT HARD,,, TO SUSTAIN THE FAMILY.

NOW,,, WE DON'T KNOW IF THIS PARTICULAR STORY WAS OVER A DISPUTE OF THE FAMILY FARM AND HOUSE OR NOT.

BUT JESUS CHOSE TO USE THIS PARABLE,,, TO ILLUSTRATE THE PROBLEM,,, *OF GREED!*

IN THOSE DAYS,,, IN PALESTINE,,, DISPUTES WERE OFTEN SETTLED BY GOING TO THE LOCAL RABBI,,, RATHER THAN IN COURT! SO THIS BROTHER CAME TO JESUS,,, ASKING HIM TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE,,, IN HIS FAVOR.

AT THAT TIME,,, JESUS WAS HELD IN HIGH REGARD AMONG THE COMMON PEOPLE,,, OF THE DAY.

BUT,,, JESUS REFUSED TO INTERVENE IN THE DISPUTE. BECAUSE,,, IF HE TOOK SIDES,,, THERE'D BE A DIVIDING OF HIS LISTENERS.

SOME WOULD SIDE WITH THE ELDER BROTHER AND SOME,,, WITH THE YOUNGER.

AND JESUS' MISSION,,, WAS FAR TOO IMPORTANT,,, TO GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL POLITICS. SO,,, JESUS TELLS THE MAN PLAINLY,,, THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN APPOINTED TO SETTLE THOSE KINDS OF DISPUTES. THERE WERE OTHERS WHO COULD SERVE IN THAT CAPACITY,,, BUT NOT JESUS!

JESUS THEN USES THE OCCASION,,, AS A TEACHING MOMENT! TURNING TO THE CROWD,,, HE WARNS THEM ABOUT *THE DANGER OF GREED.*

JESUS TELLS THEM,,, THAT; *ONE'S QUALITY OF LIFE,,, IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON,,, HOW RICH ONE WAS.*

THIS IS ILLUSTRATED,,, BY; JESUS' PARABLE,,, OF THE RICH FOOL! JESUS USED THE PARABLE OF THE RICH "FARMER" BECAUSE TODAY,,, AS WAS THE CASE IN JESUS' DAY,,, PEOPLE HAVE TO FARM,,, TO EAT!

THE RICH MAN WAS *ALREADY RICH!* BUT,,, HE HAD JUST BROUGHT IN A *BUMPER CROP*,,, AND NOW,,, HE WAS EVEN RICHER.

BUT HE HAD A PROBLEM,,, THAT EVERYONE WOULD ENVY. HIS BARNs WEREN'T BIG ENOUGH,,, TO STORE ALL HIS CROPS,,, WHICH WERE BIG ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN HIM FOR YEARS TO COME.

HE HAD TO PROTECT THEM,,, SO,,, HE CAME UP WITH A BRILLIANT SOLUTION.

HE SAID: *“I SHALL TEAR DOWN MY BARNS AND BUILD LARGER ONES! THERE I SHALL STORE ALL MY GRAIN AND OTHER GOODS AND I SHALL SAY TO MYSELF; NOW AS FOR YOU,,, YOU HAVE SO MANY GOOD THINGS STORED UP FOR MANY YEARS,,, REST,,, EAT,,, DRINK AND BE MERRY”*.

THERE WAS ONLY ONE PROBLEM. IT’S NOT ONLY THE PRODUCTION OF CROPS IN THE SEMI-ARID ISRAEL,,, WHICH WAS CERTAIN,,, BUT ALSO,,, THE SIMPLE FACT,,, THAT “LIFE ITSELF IS UNCERTAIN”.

GOD SAID TO HIM: *YOU FOOL,,, THIS NIGHT,,, YOUR LIFE WILL BE DEMANDED OF YOU; AND THE THINGS YOU HAVE PREPARED,,, TO WHOM WILL THEY BELONG?*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, NO ONE LIVES FOREVER,,, EVERYONE WILL PERISH. THAT RICH MAN FORGOT THAT DEATH,,, IS NO RESPECTER OF WEALTH. THE RICH MAN THOUGHT,,, THAT HE WAS SET FOR LIFE,,, BUT THE ANGEL OF DEATH CAME FOR HIM.

NOW,,, HIS CHILDREN WILL FIGHT OVER HIS ESTATE!

JESUS SUMS THIS UP,,, BY SAYING,,, THAT THIS IS THE CASE FOR SOMEONE WHOSE TREASURE,,, IS RICH IN HIMSELF AND NOT RICH IN GOD.

NOTHING FURTHER IS SAID ABOUT THE RICH MAN'S ETERNAL DESTINY,,, EXCEPT,,, GOD’S JUDGEMENT AGAINST HIM,,, DEMANDED THAT HIS LIFE BE TAKEN FROM HIM THAT NIGHT,,, FOR HIS PRIDE AND GREED.

THE MESSAGE IS SHORT AND SIMPLE! DON’T COVET EARTHLY THINGS,,, AND BE RICH IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS. REMEMBER,,, IT IS GOD,,, WHO GIVES YOU ALL YOU HAVE,,, AND,,, IT ALL BELONGS TO GOD!

THAT SEEMS EASY ENOUGH. DOESN’T IT? WE HUMANS LIKE EASY,,, SIMPLE ANSWERS,,, DON’T WE? *WILL ROGERS ONCE SAID*; THAT A SERMON,,, HAS A GOOD BEGINNING,,, A GOOD ENDING,,, AND,,, NOT TOO MUCH,,, IN BETWEEN!

HOWEVER,,, *IF THIS IS ALL THAT TODAY'S PARABLE MEANT,,, WE MIGHT AS WELL JUST HAVE OUR CLOSING BLESSING. AND HEAD HOME.*

OOOOH,,, BY THE LOOKS ON SOME OF YOUR FACES,,, I CAN SEE THAT I GRABBED YOUR ATTENTION AND THAT PERHAPS YOU THOUGHT THAT THE HOMILY WOULD BE SHORT TODAY.

WELL,,, I HATE TO DISAPPOINT YOU,,, BUT THERE'S MORE THAT NEEDS TO BE SAID,,, AND I HOPE,,, THAT ALL THE *IN BETWEEN STUFF* WILL BE ILLUMINATING.

THE PROBLEM,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, IS THAT WE'RE HUMAN,,, AND SOMETIMES DESIREOUS,,, OF EARTHLY THINGS,,, SO WE COVET,,, AND WE BECOME GREEDY!

SOME PEOPLE,,, ARE AFRAID OF THE FUTURE,,, SO WE ACT LIKE SQUIRRELS AND STORE AWAY STUFF,,, TO SAVE FOR A RAINY DAY. AND THIS IS SAYING; *I CAN'T TRUST GOD TO PROVIDE FOR ME,,, IN UNCERTAIN TIMES.*

IT'S DECEPTIVE,,, BECAUSE YOU CAN SAY IN YOUR HEART THAT YOU AREN'T LIKE THAT RICH MAN,,, OR EVEN INTERESTED IN THE GLAMOUR OF EXTREAME WEALTH. YOU SIMPLY WANT ENOUGH- *JUST IN CASE!* BUT IN DOING THIS,,, IT TAKES AWAY THE FROM THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU RICH IN TRUST AND FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST!

YOU DON'T APPEAR TO HAVE TIME FOR PRAYER,,, ATTENDING BIBLE STUDY,,, OR WORSHIPING AT MASS AND YOU BECOME MORE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING,,, THAN ABOUT YOUR SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING.

YOUR LIFES QUALITY,,, CAN BECOME COMPROMISED BY DOUBT AND WORRY.

THERE'S A SECOND CLASS OF DISCIPLES. YOU'RE POOR AND WOULD LIKE TO BE LIKE THE RICH MAN. YOU'RE JEALOUS OF HIS POSSESSIONS AND BELIEVE THAT THE RICH PERSON,,, SHOULD BE YOU!

YOU HOPE THAT SOME RELATIVE MIGHT LEAVE YOU A HUGE INHERITANCE.

OR,,, BETTER YET,,, THAT YOU'D WIN A \$500 MILLION DOLLAR NATIONAL LOTTERY.

AND IF YOU WIN (BARGAIN WITH THE LORD?) YOU WOULD GIVE MONEY TO THE POOR AND,,, ALSO,,, A BUNCH,,, TO THE CHURCH.

BUT ARE PEOPLE WHO WIN THE LOTTERY,,, REALLY ANY HAPPIER? STATISTICS SHOW THAT THEY'RE NOT! WE'VE HEARD ABOUT WINNERS THAT HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE,,, OTHERS HAVE BEEN MURDERED FOR THEIR MONEY AND THE DIVORCE RATES HAVE INCREASED. YOUR "*OLD FRIENDS*" WHO YOU HAVEN'T SEEN FOR MANY YEARS,,, SEEM TO APPEAR,,, WITH THEIR *HANDS OUT*.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, THE NET RESULT IS THAT *THE WINNING TICKET MIGHT BE A TICKET TO MISERY!*

THEN THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY RICH,,, BUT THAT'S APPARENTLY,,, NOT ENOUGH FOR THEM.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER,,, THE 1ST BILLIONAIRE WAS ASKED; *HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?* AND HE ANSWERED; *JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE!*

THESE PEOPLE SIMPLY MUST KEEP ON TRYING TO ADD TO THEIR WEALTH,,, AND WEALTH,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF A LONG BLESSED LIFE,,, ONLY JESUS IS!

MOST RICH PEOPLE STORE UP RICHES,,, JUST TO CONSUME UPON THEIR OWN PLEASURE. THEY SEEM TO HAVE *AN ABUNDANCE OF THINGS*,,, BUT,,, *NOT AN ABUNDANCE OF LIFE!*

THERE'S JUST ONE MORE THING TO LOOK AT HERE! THE JEWS BELIEVED,,, THAT WEALTH WAS GOD'S BLESSING,,, SO,,, TO BE RICH,,, WAS SEEN TO BE PROOF,,, THAT ONE WAS RIGHT WITH GOD!

THE THINKING WAS,,, THAT GOD REWARDS THE RIGHTEOUS WITH WEALTH,,, AND HE PUNISHES THE WICKED,,, WITH POVERTY.

WE JUST NEED TO OPEN UP OUR EYES AND LOOK AROUND,,, TO SEE THE ABSOLUTE FOOLISHNESS OF THAT STATEMENT.

EVEN SCRIPTURE SHOWS THE FALLACY OF SUCH AN IDEA. OUR PSALMIST,,, WONDERED WHY THE WICKED PROSPERED,,, WHILE THE RIGHTEOUS,,, SEEMED FORSAKEN. BUT HE SAW,,, THAT THE WICKED,,, WHOSE HEARTS WERE HARDENED,,, WOULD SOON WILT AND FADE!

THE ABUNDANCE OF WHAT ANY PERSON POSSESSES IN EARTHLY GOODS,,, IS NO GUARANTEE OF GOD'S BLESSING,,, AND POVERTY,,, IS NO PROOF OF GOD'S CURSE.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, TO GET TO THE POINT! *WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER,,, TO LEAVE,,, AS OUR OWN INHERITANCE,,, A MEMORY OF BEING KIND AND GENEROUS,,, AND A TESTIMONY THAT WE LIVED AS A FOLLOWER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,,, IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIFE?* IF WE'RE GOING TO COVET ANYTHING,,, SHOULDN'T THAT BE WHAT WE SHOULD COVET AFTER?

KINDNESS AND LOVE,,, DO NOT HAVE TO BE DIVIDED IN A WAY THAT ONE GETS MORE AND ANOTHER LESS! *LOVE IS ONE OF THOSE THINGS,,, THAT THE MORE YOU GIVE AWAY,,, THE MORE YOU HAVE!*

A LIFE THAT IS RICH IN GOD,,, IS ONE THAT TRUSTS GOD FOR THEIR DAILY BREAD,,, AS WELL AS KNOWING,,, THAT WHEN DEATH COMES AND IT WILL,,, THEY HAVE THE PROMISE OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

THIS IS WHAT WE SHOULD BE STRIVING FOR?

SO,,, LET'S LEAVE A LEGACY THAT'S GREATER THAN MONEY,,, AND,,, LET'S SHOW OUR TRUST IN GOD,,, BY OUR GENEROSITY,,, IN EACH AND EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIFE.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

+++ AMEN+++

(1,585 WDS - 6 PGS)

