

The 8th Sunday after Pentecost

“Riches from God”

Luke 12:19-21

August 3, 2025

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost is from Luke 12:19-21.

**“And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’” ’ 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”**

So far the text:

In what does your life consist in? If you ask that question to a doctor, from a purely medical point of view, it consists in a beating heart, breathing lungs, and a thinking brain. If any of those three cease to permanently function, then there is a pronouncement of death...the absence of any life.

Jesus began chapter 12 of our Gospel today speaking to the disciples and a crowd about what life consists in by reminding them that when the life in a body ceases, a person does not cease to exist. For the soul continues to live. Now, the big question is where does the soul live after the body dies. And the right answer determines whether Jesus describes you as a fool or not.

Yes, from a physical point of view, it is important to try to eat well, exercise, get enough sleep and the so on, but even the strongest of us all will weaken and die. Hulk Hogan, the Hulkster, the larger than life wrestler, just recently suffered a cardiac arrest that was irreversible. But, Jesus tells the crowd and us that beyond the reporting of a celebrity's death and the obituary, the soul continues.

The big question is where? To which Jesus says, **“4 “And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can**

**do. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”**

That is the bottom line – your life is in the hands of God. He has the power to cast you into hell or not. He calls you either a fool or His dearly beloved child. And what determines your eternal destiny? Whether or not you have Christ as your Mediator, your Savior, your Lord. For Jesus tells the crowd and us very plainly these words in chapter 12.

**8 “Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.”**

That’s what real life consists in...believing in Christ and confessing Him as we just did in the Nicene Creed. For Christ is the life of the world. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father except through Him.

Our epistle reading from Colossians 3 describes this life that the believer possesses right now.

**“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”**

This is the state of a believer right now – united and raised with Christ through your baptism! It is a gift from God – true riches. Listen carefully for Paul describes you, believer in Christ. You have already experienced death. Paul says, “For you died”. Christ’s death is your death so that you will not ever experience eternal death. In Romans 6 Paul explains:

**“we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”**

You have life in Christ right now! Yes, it is hidden from the world, but not from God. It is no longer “my life”, but “Christ who is our life”. And when He appears on the last day, you also will appear with Him in glory.

And so we understand why Jesus warns against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in the opening verses of our Gospel in Luke 12. For if one was to follow the Pharisaical teaching that one can earn eternal life on one’s own merits, one denies Christ and His all-sufficient merit won for the world on the cross. And foolishly ends up being denied by Christ eternally in hell.

Weighty, deep conversation Jesus is having here in Luke 12. But it seems to have completely gone over the head of one person in the crowd. For what does he say?

**“Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”**

What? Jesus just focused on what the eternal inheritance consists of – life with Christ – and this man is fixated on making sure that he gets his fair share of an earthly inheritance?

**“Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?”** There are earthly judges who can sort this thing out. Jesus came to be your eternal arbitrator and defend you from evil and give you eternal riches. Set your mind on the things above! Do we sometimes become overly fixated on the temporal riches of this life?

In what consists your life? Jesus answers us clearly. **“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”**

To drive this point home, Jesus tells a story. A rich man had a good and plentiful crop. And therefore, had a problem. He didn’t have anywhere to store the abundance. What to do? Build more barns and silos. Nothing wrong with that. God blesses us with material riches. But, the big problem was that this rich man didn’t acknowledge that God was the giver of all his wealth. He talked to himself this way...not to God.

**“‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ 18 So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.’”**

“I,I,I”... lots of “I’s”. My crop. My goods. No credit or thanksgiving is given to God who is the giver of all that we have in this life. He is the giver of our daily bread as we heard last week in the Lord’s Prayer that Jesus taught us.

What we have in this life, all the riches, are for our good stewardship for they don’t belong to us. If one’s life only consists of the possessions one has, one’s life never finds true contentment. For when we die, another gets them as we heard in Ecclesiastes 2.

**“Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool?”**

And this was the abrupt ending for the rich unbelieving man in Jesus’ story. His soul was demanded of him. And his treasures were taken away. What was left? A poor unbelieving soul...not rich toward God...not consisting of Christ’s riches of eternal life, but eternal death in hell.

A soul who is rich in Christ has above all, life and joy that one’s sins are forgiven, one’s soul is ransomed by the blood of Christ and one’s inheritance is eternal glory with God. And not only that, God graciously gives to us all that we need for our earthly contentment in this life. The writer of Ecclesiastes, Solomon, knows this important truth and can therefore say these words with confidence.

**“Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.”**

No, “I,I,I” but the hand of God giving us all that we need for our enjoyment in this life.

Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:

**“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”**

Godliness, life in Christ, our greatest gain, gives us contentment now and especially eternally when we will experience all the riches of God in all their fullness.

So Christ tells us in John 10 the very reason for His coming to us is this:

**“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”**

That is true wisdom – to know Christ – and the life He offers to all people. Without Christ there is only foolishness and emptiness.

God gave His Son Jesus, true riches freely and graciously to all people. As Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:7.

**“7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...**

And later in chapter two we hear these most beautiful words:

**“4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”**

There is no doubt in what life consists in, is there? Christ Jesus. Amen

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**