

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS**  
**Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz**  
**August 8, 2010 Pentecost 11 Luke 12:13-21**



Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" "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?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

*This is God's Word!*

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Money, money, money, money! You know that song they have at the start of Donald Trump's *The Apprentice*? It's by the O'Jays. It's called For The Love Of Money. The first twenty four words of the song are "Money!" "*For the love of money – people will steal from their mother. For the love of money people will rob their own brother. For the love of money people will lie, rob, they will cheat. For the love of money people don't care who they hurt or beat.*" A man named Jack Whittaker won the West Virginia Lottery. He won \$315 million dollars! It's tempting to think if I won \$315 million all my troubles would be gone! Think about it! \$315 million bucks! Before you know it – Jack was arrested for drunk driving. That had never happened before! He was robbed – outside a nasty nightclub he was robbed of literally \$500,000! That's half a million gone! People sued him. His wife divorced him. His 17-year-old grand-daughter whom he supported with a monthly allowance died of a drug overdose. Then his daughter died – her dead body found in her home. His ex-wife said, "*If I knew what was going to transpire, honestly, I would have torn the ticket up!*" Money, money, money, money! Today Jesus will remind us – "**The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil!**" Today God's Word will encourage us:

**Be Rich Toward God!**

1. Be on guard against greed
2. Life is not about "things and stuff"

It's always *always* important to understand – to appreciate the context! Jesus' whole earthly ministry was only 3 years long. The closer and closer Jesus came to the end – the more intense if it's possible--and the more pointed his teaching became. Luke chapter 11 – we read just last week. Remember? **Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples.** Remember how Jesus taught them the Lord's Prayer? Remember where Jesus said, "**Forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.**" ESV Jesus forgives us. It is that forgiveness in our heart that is both the reason and the power to forgive everyone who sins against us! That's what we are talking about every time we pray the Lord's Prayer! How often do we pray that prayer? Wednesday – at Mrs. Riemer's funeral we pray the Lord's Prayer at 11:20 and again – before noon – we prayed the Lord's Prayer again – standing literally at her grave toward the north/east corner of Oak Hill Cemetery – with little mosquitoes trying to distract us! That's sometimes why we squeeze our eyes tight shut and squeeze our hands tightly together to pray – so the devil can't distract us! Luke chapter 11 – Jesus casts a demon out of a man that couldn't talk. Oh, Jesus' enemies said, "**He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons!**" Jesus told them that didn't make any sense! **Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, "Every kingdom**

divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household fails. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul...Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." *ESV Pick a lane!* You can't go through life saying, "Jesus? I can take him or I can leave him! I have nothing against organized religion. I just never go to Church—never read my Bible—never come to Lord's Supper!" With Jesus or against him—serving him or denying him. It is only by the power of the Gospel—through the means of grace—that we confess Jesus and live lives dedicated to glorifying and sharing him! It was here that Jesus said there are not spiritual vacuums—souls that are just empty and neutral. Jesus said, "**When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first...** Even more blessed than the tummy of the Virgin Mary—are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice. Jesus told them—like Jonah in the tummy of the great fish—he would be in the grave—and then rise from the dead. Easter morning—they should have come to the tomb—looking for the risen Christ. Woe to you Pharisees, to you teachers of the law—to you who copy the Scriptures literally by hand—day after day—you hypocrites! Jesus and only Jesus could see into their hearts and see the wickedness that festered there! Jesus said watch out for **the leaven—the yeast of the Pharisees**—which is hypocrisy. It works its way through the whole lump—ultimately spoiling everything! Jesus said, "**I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear; fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. (That would be God!) Yes, I tell you fear him! Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. Acknowledge Jesus before people. Know that he will call you friends before his Heavenly Father on Judgment Day!**"

Someone in the crowd said to (Jesus) him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" Jesus had moral authority. There was no denying it! Here was a man who was respected and admired! So, hey, Rabbi—make my brother give me my fair share of my inheritance! This was not what Jesus came for—to make people share "things and stuff". Jesus didn't come to earth to run Small Claims Court! Do you know how many TV shows there are—The People's Court—Judge Wapner—Judge Judy—Judge Gumby and Judge Pookey! Why do people like to watch these shows? There is a part of us that wants to see justice done! Make that slacker pay up! Make the person who ought to—to share! Pound on people who do anything wrong! No mercy! Zero tolerance! And then we make a mistake—and it's an *innocent* mistake—a terrible *misunderstanding*! Jesus was not Small Claims Court. Jesus' purpose here was not to make people share things and stuff! Jesus came here to take away sin and guilt. When Jesus' love fills your heart—you will share!

Then he said to them, "**Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**" It's easy to become greedy! There is a book called, Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Stuff! People justify hoarding as curating (that's like working in a museum) and recycling, deeming odd objects beautiful and useful. Sometimes they act as if history were at stake. Andy Warhol, "straddling the border between eccentricity and pathology," the authors write, would periodically sweep everything—cash, artwork, apple cores—off his desk and into a cardboard box. He stored hundreds of these "time capsules." It's easy to say to yourself—I know lots of people who are much more obsessed with things and stuff than I am. I know people who have houses cluttered—literally cluttered with anything and everything. When I was a child one of our neighbors passed away. When she died they emptied out her house. She left behind literally hundreds of pairs of work gloves—bundles and bundles—Sam's Club clumps of those white work gloves. They hauled out of her basement hundreds and hundreds of 5 # bags of flour. It was rancid. It had little bugs in it. Something must have happened some time in her life—that made her afraid the day could come when there were no work gloves and no flour. And she was going to be prepared. She had hoarded all this stuff and now it was moldy and spoiled. *How sad!* It would be good if from time to time—we would stop and take inventory—of all the things and stuff we have made so important

in our lives – and realize it’s only temporary – for us to manage. All we have and all we are – really and only belong to God!

**“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”** Things and stuff! We all have so much! I would dare say – in each of our homes – we have a drawer in the kitchen – a junk drawer! It’s so full of junk you can’t just open it – stuff catches – so you have to pull and push and pull and push! It’s full of all kinds of junk. We have keys – spare keys and extra keys – to what? Cars we don’t even own anymore? We have suction cups for hanging stuff on windows. We have screwdrivers – really small ones – regular and Philips. We have that little Allen Wrench – for if the garbage disposal jams. We have flash lights – little thin ones – with batteries that are probably dead. We have pocket knives and screws and washers and those little coupons from off of cereal boxes. None of these things is very valuable – but you can’t quite throw them away either. So – from time to time you dig through all that junk – find the one little thing you need – then push it shut again. Who doesn’t have boxes of stuff – out in the garage? Some oil for the car, another for the lawnmower, another for mixing with gas for the weed wacker. Several gas cans – for the above mentioned equipment. We have hammers, regular and ball peen a rubber mallet and a sledge hammer! We have screwdrivers – of all sizes – and all sorts of bins of nails and screws and nuts and bolts. We have a hardware store in our garage. The question is – could you find the one little part you need – when you need it? Could you? We have shoes on racks in our walk in closet. We have dressers full of undies and plastic bins full of socks – black and blue and brown. We have refrigerators and freezers full of food. We have basements and garages and closets and crawlspaces. And if push comes to shove we can rent additional storage space! We have so much! And still we want more! We buy things with plastic we can’t afford to pay cash for. We dig pits of debt in our homes and in our state and in our nation to the tune of trillions of dollars because of greed! That’s a sin! To love money and the illusion of control and comfort that it promises is a sin!

I think it’s easy to understand the rich man in Jesus’ story. He had so much stuff he had to build more storage space – to hold it all. He planned to take life easy – to eat and drink and be happy! **“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?’ ‘This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”** A young lady named Callie Rogers was only 16 when she won the lottery in England. She won 3 million dollars! Wow! She bought and fixed up 4 homes – and spent liberally on vacations, cars, gifts, drugs and plastic surgery. Six years later she is bankrupt – a single mom driving a used Volkswagen to her job as a maid. Twice she has despaired and tried to self-destruct. She said, *“Hopefully now that it has all gone, I can find some happiness!”* Jeffrey Dampier won \$20 million! All he wanted to do was move to Florida and open a gourmet *popcorn* shop. He was kidnapped, robbed and murdered by his own sister-in-law and her boyfriend! Billy Bob Harrell Jr. won \$31 million in Texas. Billy Bob was a hard-working family man of 47. He had a job stocking shelves at Home Depot. He spent lavishly on art, antique cars and real estate. He gave to his congregation and to almost anyone who asked for help. He also showered gifts on a young girlfriend. Less than two years after he won – in the middle of a divorce, depression and financial ruin Billy Bob despaired! I could go on – but you get the point! What is a person profited – if he gains the whole world – but loses his soul? What can a person give in exchange for his soul? Jesus died and rose again – to make us eternally and forever rich before God – in the only way that matters. We are saved by grace through faith for Jesus’ sake. Amen!

To God alone all glory!



*Rev. Anthony E. Schmittz*