

The Folly of Covetousness

Luke 12:16-21

Introduction:

- A. Parable given to show the foolishness of covetousness (greed).
 - 1. The man's request (v. 13)
 - 2. The Lord's answer (v. 14).
 - 3. The Lord's warning (v. 15).
 - 4. The Lord's reason (v. 15).
- B. Covetousness is "*greedy* desire to have more." (Thayer)
- C. Covetousness or greed is at the root of much mischief.
 - 1. Lawsuits, imprisonment, wars, lost souls.
 - 2. Families torn asunder over few dollars or things.
 - 3. Lord's work suffers – greedy members, greedy churches.
 - 4. All rich are not greedy, all greedy are not rich.
- D. This parable shows three reasons why covetousness or greed is so foolish:

Discussion:

I. The Nature of *Earthly Gain*.

- A. Fool could not carry his gain with him (vv. 18-20).
 - 1. Bigger barns never built.
 - 2. Many years never came.
- B. A covetous person sacrifices eternal riches for a mere life-time of gain.
 - 1. Legitimate material gain is needful (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:8, 10-12; Jas. 4:13, 15).
 - 2. Greed involves both ill-gotten and ill-kept gain (Jas. 5:4; 1 John 3:17; Mal. 3:8-10).
 - 3. No amount of things is worth a soul (Mt. 16:26)

II. The Nature of *Earthly Pleasure*.

- A. Fool's aim was to "enjoy life" for many years (v. 19)
 - 1. What ever pleasure "things" bring end with this life.
 - 2. Would be fine if this life were all there is (1 Cor. 15:19, 32)
 - 3. One can enjoy life as a Christian (Phil. 4:4; 1 Pet. 3:10; 2 Cor. 12:10)
 - 4. Christians' enjoyment of life does not depend of material things (Phil. 4:11-13)
- B. When pleasure becomes the goal, then Lord's work suffers.
 - 1. Churches become social centers.
 - 2. Mission of the church becomes secular.
 - 3. Partying replaces pulpit.
 - 4. Worldliness replaces worship.
 - 5. Donuts replaces "do-nots."
 - 6. Pie replaces piety.
 - 7. Foolishness replaces fellowship. (cf. Rom. 14:19).

III. The Nature *Earthly Life*.

- A. Fool did not expect to die so soon (v. 20).
- B. Uncertainty of life should make all plans tentative and God-centered (Jas. 4:13-15)

Conclusion:

- A. Anyone is a fool to covet because:
 - 1. Anything gained will soon pass away.
 - 2. He forfeits far greater riches (v. 21)
- B. Begin now to lay up for yourselves riches in heaven, by obeying the gospel of Christ.