**A Sermon Plan for Luke 12: 13-21**: **The Rich Fool**

*13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”*

*14 Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” 15 Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”*

*16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’*

*18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ 20 “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?’*

*21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”*

**Notes**

Jesus talked about money more than sex, hell, salvation, or almost any other subject. Maybe because He knew we’d find the subject difficult. One key thing Jesus said is we can’t love both God or money. We must choose one or the other. When Jesus talks about money, it’s because he cares for us and is interested in us. He knows happiness comes from being content with what we have, not from wanting more than we have.

The story of “The Rich Fool” is in response to someone who asked Jesus to help him get more money and possessions. People often ask vicars and Church leaders for help in all sorts of areas, such as with relationships or prayer, but very rarely for help with overcoming greed and materialism. Likewise people often declare enthusiastically they wish to follow Jesus, and make Him Lord of their life, but seldom say as enthusiastically they want Him to be Lord of their finances.

So how can we avoid being self-centred, like the man in the story? The answer is to be more like Jesus. And Jesus is generous. In fact so generous, he gave his life for us. So we need to learn to give. Specifically, we should give generously, sacrificially and joyfully.

Generously because God is generous to us. The OT talks about tithing. Some ask what that means in practice, and what types of income should be included. But it’s not about the least we can get away with. Nor for that matter a set amount. Instead we respond to realising God’s been generous to us.

Sacrificially: If we’re not missing it – we’re probably not giving enough. Most likely we’re just giving from what we have left over – whereas the OT talks about “first fruits” – giving from the best of what we have.

Joyfully because we’re invited to partner with Jesus and fellow Christians to transform the world. To do that, we need to learn the spiritual discipline of giving. When we give cheerfully it changes our perspective.

Maybe we’re scared to give, but following Jesus is an act of faith, for which some have lost their lives. We need to take risks, and believe God keeps his promises, such as if we are fully generous, we won’t be able to store up the blessing God will give us (Malachi 3: 10)

Finish with appeals to 3 groups of people: a) Regular givers – to consider increasing your gift to ensure it is keeping up with inflation, b) Occasional givers – to start giving regularly, and c) for those who have not yet given their lives to Jesus – to consider doing so today. Then finish with a final prayer.

**End** *\* Based on a sermon recorded by Revd Mark Miller of Stockton Parish Church, but these notes have been created by the*

 *Diocese of Newcastle Generous Giving Team.*