

# The Rich Fool

Luke 12:13-21

## PPT Title

### The Rich Fool

**Main Point:** The things we own are temporary. God's kingdom lasts forever.

**Key Verse:** *Then He said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has."*  
– Luke 12:15

**Props:** One small box. Two medium boxes. A bag of rice that is too big to fit in the small box. Various items (representing possessions) to put into the medium boxes.

### BACKGROUND



**Say:** Today we're going to be learning about a parable found in Luke 12. Remember that a parable is a simple story that teaches big truths about God's kingdom. In Luke 12, something really important has happened. More and more people have heard about Jesus. They've listened carefully as their friends and family describe the miracles He has performed. They've heard the conversations among their neighbors about His amazing teachings that seem so different from what the Pharisees and rule makers have always told them. And they've wondered what it would be like to hear these teachings for themselves.

That's why, in Luke 12:1 we read this: *During that time a crowd of many thousands had gathered. There were so many people that they were stepping on one another.*

Can you imagine? Wherever Jesus went, the crowds just kept getting bigger. And as the crowds got bigger, the Pharisees got angrier. They didn't like the way He told people that the kingdom of God was about more than following a bunch of rules. So the Pharisees decided to try and catch Jesus saying something that didn't agree with God's Word. They wanted the crowds to hear Jesus say something wrong or silly or embarrassing. So they decided to ask Jesus as many questions as possible to try to trick Him into giving a bad answer. But as we have seen over and over, Jesus never said anything that disagreed with God's Word. And the parable we're going to study today is one more example of how Jesus taught big truths about the kingdom of God by using a simple story. Let's read together in Luke 12:13-21.

**Teacher Note:** In the midst of this large and unruly crowd, Jesus is attempting to teach His disciples what it means to be His followers. We can imagine that some of the crowd was eavesdropping on this teaching, and that news of His words spread from person to person to person. One of the statements to His disciples seems especially significant when considered alongside the parable He would soon teach: *Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid, you are worth more than many sparrows.* - Luke 12:6-7

This truth, that God will never forget us or fail to take care of us, is an important thing to remember when studying the Parable of the Rich Fool. When God asks us to

de-emphasize earthly possessions, we can be certain that He will take care of us far better than any hoard of money or barnful of grain or collection of stuff.

## **JESUS IS ASKED TO JUDGE AN ARGUMENT ABOUT MONEY**

**Say:** *Someone in the crowd spoke to Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "tell my brother to divide the family property with me."*

*Jesus replied, "Friend, who made me a judge or umpire between you?"*

*Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has." . – Luke 12:13-15*

**Teacher Note:** Rabbis frequently served as mediators in disputes like this one. The man in these verses seems to be approaching Jesus as a leader in the Jewish community, but not necessarily as the Messiah. Although Luke doesn't tell us the details of the dispute, the man who asks Jesus to intervene doesn't sound like he wants the situation resolved according to Jewish law or even scriptural precedence. He merely wants someone to take his side. Jesus seems to have picked up on the fact that greed, as opposed to justice, was the man's motivation in seeking Jesus' involvement.



**Say:** Remember when I said earlier that Jesus was surrounded by a huge crowd? Thousands of people were gathered to hear Him teach and to see Him perform miracles. There were so many people that they were stepping all over each other. Do you think a lot of these people might have been trying to get Jesus' attention?

Think about when you see an important sports event on television. People in the crowd are always trying to shake hands with the players or get pictures with them or convince them to sign an autograph. There is no way a famous quarterback or pitcher or soccer player could possibly do everything the crowd wanted him to do!

Jesus must have been faced with a very similar situation. People all around Him were probably shouting questions at Him or telling Him about their illnesses or merely trying to get close to the teacher that everyone seemed to be talking about. But somehow, the man in Luke 12 caught Jesus' attention.

Let me ask you something. If you were in that huge crowd that day and could ask Jesus one question, what would it be? *Call on a few children who raise their hands and briefly discuss each of their responses.*

Those would be some really interesting questions for Jesus. But of all the questions this man could ask, of all the requests he could make, the one that seemed most important to him involved money. His request to Jesus had to do with an inheritance. An inheritance is something that one person gives to someone else when they die. For example, if a man owns a farm and he dies, he might leave instructions to give the farm to his children. The farm would be the children's inheritance from their dad.

This man didn't like it that his brother had been the one to receive an inheritance. The man wanted Jesus to take his side and tell his brother to share. But Jesus didn't want to get involved in the man's argument with his brother. He did, though, want to use the man's request as an opportunity to teach about something that distracts people from the kingdom of God. GREED.

Does anyone know what it means to be greedy? To always want more. To not be happy with what you have. To want what someone else has. Jesus knew that greedy people always want more than they need. And He knew that many people actually think that having more money or more things will actually make them happy. That's

why He gave this warning in Luke 12:15: *"Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has."*

**Application:** We are always being bombarded with the message that more stuff or more money will make us happier. Television commercials show children who seem to be really, really happy because they have the newest toy or because their mom bought them a certain kind of juice. Wealthy people talk about their nice homes and their expensive possessions and we tend to think those things make them happy. But here's what Jesus says about that idea...He says, "You shouldn't think that life is made up of a bunch of stuff."

*You always show me the path that leads to life. You fill me with joy when I am with You. You give me endless pleasures at Your right hand.*  
- Psalm 16:11

Psalm 16:11 says, *You always show me the path that leads to life. You will fill me with joy when I am with You. You will give me endless pleasures at Your right hand.* Jesus wanted the people in the crowd to understand that true happiness is found only in the kingdom of God, not in money or possessions. So he decided to share a parable. Let's read Luke 12:16-21.

### THE STORY OF THE RICH FOOL



**Say:** *Then Jesus told them a story. He said, "A certain rich man's land produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What should I do? I don't have any place to store my crops.'*

*"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my storerooms and build bigger ones. I will store all my grain and my other things in them. I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things stored away for many years. Take life easy. Eat, drink and have a good time."'*

*"But God said to him, 'You foolish man! This very night I will take your life away from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'*

*"That is how it will be for anyone who stores things away for himself but is not rich in God's eyes."*

**Take out the bag of rice and the small box. Say:** OK. So the rich man in the parable had just harvested a really great crop from his land. We're going to pretend that this bag of rice is the crop that he just harvested. And this little box is his barn. The rich man has a problem. He has too much stuff and not enough room to store it. **Try repeatedly to stuff the rice bag into the small box.** So he asks himself, "What should I do?"

I wonder why the man didn't ask his friends or family what he should do? Maybe he was afraid that he wouldn't like the answers they gave him! What if someone had suggested he give some of the grain to the poor? You see, the rich man liked all his stuff. He loved all the grain that he had just harvested. He loved the money that came from selling his crops. He loved the things he could buy with the money. And he loved the idea of keeping a bunch of grain around so that he could sell it for years to come.

So the rich man made a very foolish decision. He made a very greedy decision. He made a decision that caused God to call him a fool!

**Say:** He got rid of his small storeroom. **Toss the small box aside.** And he built some bigger ones in its place. **Take out the two medium boxes. Start filling the boxes with the bag of rice and all the items that represent the man's possessions.** Now he had all the room in the world for his crops and his stuff and his stuff and his stuff. He really thought his life would be a happy one now. He thought that the rest of his days would be one big party. But as we will see in just a moment, he couldn't have been more wrong.



**Application:** Sometimes people today are like the man in this parable. As time goes by, they collect lots and lots of stuff. Soon their house is too small for all their furniture and clothes and toys and CDs and books and pets. Instead of giving some of their stuff to the poor or selling it to raise money for a special project in the church, they decide they absolutely, positively must have a bigger house. Soon the bigger house is filled with stuff, too!

In the parable, God called the greedy man a fool. Why do you think God did that? *Because the man thought that things would make him happy. Because God wants us to find happiness in Him. Because earthly stuff never lasts.* God told the man that all the time and effort he had put into building a life filled with possessions was nothing but a waste of time. God said that the man would die that very night, and that all of his preparations wouldn't change anything in the end. His bigger storehouses would just belong to someone else after his death. All of his plans for the future were over.

Jesus ends His parable with this warning: *"That is how it will be for anyone who stores things away for himself but is not rich in God's eyes."*

Let's see what it means to be rich in God's eyes.

### **THE RICHES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

You might remember that before He actually started telling the Parable of the Rich Fool, Jesus said this: *"Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has."*

Possessions are temporary! They don't last. But if a rich life is not made up of more and more things, then what is it made up of? Here is what Jesus said about life:

In John 8:12, He said, *"I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to **LIFE**."*

Then, in John 10:10, He said, *"I have come so they can have **LIFE**. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way."*

So according to Jesus, the rich life is possible only through Him. Jesus came to earth to teach us about the kingdom of God and how we can be part of it. Then when He had taught us everything He needed to teach us about life in the kingdom, He willingly died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. Sin is what keeps us from living a rich life in God's eyes, and Jesus took care of that problem once and for all through His death and resurrection. If we believe that Jesus is God's Son and that He died on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven, if we decide to follow Him and be His disciples, then we will live a life that is rich in God's eyes. We will be part of His kingdom forever.

Remember Psalm 16:11 from earlier in our lesson? It says, *You always show me the path that leads to life. You will fill me with joy when I am with You. You will give me endless pleasures at Your right hand.* That is what living in the kingdom of God is all about. Unlike possessions, which don't last, the kingdom of God lasts forever.

**Application:** Even when we decide to follow Jesus, we tend to think that money and possessions are important. Sometimes we even worry about not having enough money. Does loving God and following Jesus mean that our earthly life is supposed to be a struggle to survive? Does it mean we can't have any possessions or plan for the future? Does it mean we can't be wealthy? It's really helpful to see what the Bible says about this.



*"I have come that they may have LIFE. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way"*  
- John 10:10

Right after He taught the Parable of the Rich Fool, Jesus said this to His disciples:

*"Don't spend time thinking about what you will eat or drink. Don't worry about it. People who are ungodly run after all of those things. Your Father knows that you need them.*

*"But put God's kingdom first. Then those other things will also be given to you."  
- Luke 12:31*

*"But put God's kingdom first. Then those other things will also be given to you."  
- Luke 12:29-31*

Also, Philippians 4:19 says, *My God will meet all your needs. He will meet them in keeping with his wonderful riches that come to you because you belong to Christ Jesus.*

**Say:** Jesus promises that if we put Him first and are a part of His kingdom as it grows and grows on earth, that God will give us all the things we need. Jesus doesn't say that possessions and money are bad. He just says that worrying about them and chasing after them is not the way to live a life that is rich in God's eyes. A rich life comes from belonging to Jesus and trusting Him completely. A rich life comes from being part of God's kingdom, which lasts forever.

**PPT Key Verse**

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- Luke 12:15*

**PPT Main Point**

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