

Sermon Draft for November 26, 2025

Who's the Fool?

Text: Luke 12:13–21

We've all heard the parable in our text before. But does it apply to us also? Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."'

But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:13–21)

Fool? The rich man thought to himself, ***“What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops? . . . I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods”*** (vs 17–18).

Fool? The man was only caring for what he had harvested. He was only caring for his bounty.

Fool? He was preparing for the future. He was making sure that there would be enough room in his barns and storehouses that he could retire after his long-fought years in farming and buying and selling in the marketplace.

Fool? He was only doing what every single person in the modern world does.

Fool? The rich man thought to himself, ***“I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry’”*** (v 19). But God said to that rich man, ***“Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?”*** (v 20).

Was the rich man really a fool? We know the answer’s supposed to be “yes,” but are we really sure?

We want to argue with Christ in his parable. We could take up his hypothetical rich man character and say, “‘Fool’ seems like a really harsh judgment. He was simply planning ahead. He didn’t know he was going to die. Maybe he was just being a good steward of the gifts that were given to him. After all, only a fool would leave his grain out to rot or be eaten by bird and beast.”

We could also get very defensive of ourself and our own amassed wealth either in our grain bins or the storehouses of our digital bank accounts. Husbands and fathers especially are quick to defend themselves from our Lord’s words. “I know who’s my things will be.

My will says that my money will go to my wife, children, grandchildren, and the church!” That is all well and good. The wealth we are amassing is going on to serve God and our neighbors.

What made this man foolish wasn’t simply what he was doing with the wealth the Lord had provided him. His foolishness wasn’t manifest in his planning. His foolishness was in his heart. What was his treasure? Where did he place his hope and trust for the future? How does this man comfort his restless, weary soul? ***“Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”***

When this man was building his bigger barns and storehouses, he was building a temple for his god. He didn’t trust in the one true God: the Lord, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift. He trusted in the work of his hands. He trusted in the wealth that he thought he had built all on his own. He trusted in his god, Wealth or Mammon, whom he worshiped at the temple of his barn. This god would provide for his future.

This god would provide so well for him for such a long time that he could at last eat, drink, and be merry.

This hypothetical man from Christ's parable was a fool not because he amassed such wealth but because he thought he had done it himself and because he trusted in it. Such foolishness exists even in our hearts. Such foolishness measures, plots, and plans as if Christ won't return at any moment or as if our death were some distant event so far in the future that it ought to have little to no effect on our present actions.

Such foolishness only trusts in our own efforts to provide for ourselves. Such foolishness says I have to avoid the regular congregation of God's saints so I can gain enough wealth to provide for myself, my family, and my community. Such foolishness says that we have to be stingy with our money. This foolishness says that generosity is a modern vice that steals away our leisure because we, too, would like to eat, drink, and be merry.

Now what does the Holy Spirit have to say about generosity? Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 9:7–8, ***“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.”***

When considering how much of our money to give to the work of the church, be generous. But don't do it reluctantly. Don't be forced into it. The Lord loves a cheerful giver. Only consider how God is the one who gives us all that we need. He has promised to give us our daily bread.

This is, after all, what we celebrate at Thanksgiving: God provides for us. We give thanks to God for giving us all that we have. He supplies seed to the sower and bread for food. He will multiply our seed for sowing.

The Lord provides everything that we need. We have all abundance already in Christ. What does wealth promise to deliver to us or protect us from? Failing health? Christ defeated that by dying and rising again. A full belly? Christ tells us to look at the birds of the air. He provides for them. They're worthless compared to you. Clothing on our back? Christ tells us to look at the flowers of the field. He dresses them in clothing finer than anything King Solomon could order for himself. You're far more valuable than they. You've been bought by the precious blood of the only begotten Son of God!

Certainty? Peace? Security? If we know anything at all about living in this vale of tears, it's this: Life is uncertain. Shut-downs can cripple an economy overnight, and your great amassed wealth is lost to the market or inflation. Health is uncertain. Heart attacks and surprise cancer diagnoses can seemingly come out of nowhere. Security is uncertain. Mistaken actions cause riots. In a matter of hours, peace and tranquility can be transformed into smoking cityscapes, rioting, looting, and anarchy.

Or much worse, peaceful days at school quickly turn tragic by the unspeakable actions of disturbed individuals. What can the false god of mammon do in the face of these? Fools trust in such a weak idol!

Look instead to Christ, who has already defeated all these enemies. He pulled a coin out of a fish's mouth. He divided loaves and fish on multiple occasions to feed thousands of men, women, and children in the middle of the wilderness. He faced rioting crowds who wanted to throw him off a cliff, and he passed right through them. In the end, he willingly gave himself over to death even at the hands of an angry mob. Yet even death could not keep him. This is the same Christ who tells us not to worry or fret. Only ask, and you shall receive. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. All your hope rests in him, for his righteousness endures forever. He distributes freely. Fools trust in such a weak idol, but Christ makes all grace abound. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift. Amen