



# **STORIES OF LIFE!**

**The Gospel of Luke**

## **A Story about Stuff!**

**Luke 12:13-34**

**Message #40 of 50 – S820**

**Sermon given on December 2, 2018**



**Sunday Morning Service**

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# A Story about Stuff!

*Luke 12:13-34*

## Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 12**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- Here we are on the first Sunday in December – it is a good month
- On Wednesday, Kelly and I will celebrate our 37<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary
- And then later in the month, we celebrate the birth of our Savior
- I have a confession to make – one of the reasons why I enjoy those events is because I like stuff
- I love getting presents – some part of me may always be a kid
- It is not really that much about the gift – it is what the giving of a gift implies – friendship, affection, love, appreciation
- In our text for today, Jesus is going to talk about stuff, and what our attitude shouldn't be regarding stuff in our lives
- There is nothing wrong with stuff – there is nothing inherently evil about things, or possessions
- It is our attitude toward those things that can be the problem
- It is my hope that today we can discover something that will make this season of giving and receiving stuff even better
- Because ultimately it is not about the stuff
- Let's pray and then get into today's text
- **Pray**

## Teaching

- **A Story about Stuff!**
- Jesus just finished telling His disciples to watch out for hypocrisy
- Don't downplay your allegiance to Christ, and don't act like you are better than you are
- Just be real, be authentic
- No sermon preaches louder than an authentic Christian life lived out for the world to see

- Then comes a seeming interruption
- **Luke 12:13-14**
- We aren't given a lot of details about why this man brought this petition to Christ
- Apparently, this man's father had passed away, and his brother had authority for the dispersing of his estate
- We don't know if the brother was withholding what was right to give, or if this man wanted more than he was getting
- Jesus refuses to get involved in this domestic squabble
- He had another reason for being here on earth **1 Timothy 1:15**  
**This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...**
- As was His custom, Jesus took this opportunity to teach them
- **Luke 12:15**
- Covetousness is an unhealthy desire for more stuff for yourself
- It is one of the Big Ten – the Tenth Commandment – Do not covet
- It is a sin of worshipping our desires – of putting our desires on the throne of our lives
- Told them a story to illustrate His point
- **Luke 12:16-19**
- This man referred to himself thirteen times in three verses
- There is no mention of God or of other people
- He is living as if life is all about him – as if there is no God – as if he has no responsibility to those around him
- God has a harsh word for someone like that
- **Luke 12:20-21**
- This man was living for his next meal, or drink, or moment of pleasure
- I can still remember this man's attitude in my own heart – living for some temporal reward in life
- I was living my life with my retirement in view – work hard until I can retire and then sit back and enjoy life
- I was living for my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday – wrong attitude – should be living for my 65,000<sup>th</sup> birthday

- Science tells us that the sun has enough hydrogen to continue burning for another 5 billion years
- If God didn't have a different plan for the sun, we will still be around to watch it burn out
- Jesus is saying it is foolish to focus on the things of this world
- The stuff of this world does not have eternal value to beings who will live forever
- If you want to start to change how you view the stuff of this world, look at it from the perspective of what value it will have in 1,000 years
- If it won't have any value in heaven, it shouldn't be the focus of our affection in this life
- Jesus draws an interesting conclusion from this parable
- **Luke 12:22**
- 'Therefore' points back to His teaching on covetousness
- 'do not worry about your life' – worry = be anxious about, have anxiety, be concerned
- Turn to **Philippians 4**
- It is interesting to me that Jesus combines covetousness with worrying here
- Both are things that people do, even Christians, and don't really think they are bad things
- I have even had people try to convince me that worrying is good
- Jesus says it is not and Paul tells us what we should do instead
- **Philippians 4:6-8**
- Worry or anxiety should not be the natural state of a Christian
- Turn back to **Luke 12**
- Things happen and in times of weakness, everyone worries
- Tells them three things about their life they shouldn't worry about
- 'what you will eat' – what you need to survive
- 'nor about the body' – or what happens to it
- 'what you will put on' – the things you might add to your life
- Jesus gives us three reasons why worry is useless
- First – **Life is about more than this**
- **Luke 12:23-24**

- Life is about than the simple things that we tend to worry about
- And if God takes care of the ravens, He will take care of you
- One commentator – “Worry insults God”
- Second – **Worry cannot change your situation**
- **Luke 12:25-26**
- Cubit = unit of measurement – elbow to fingertip – also used symbolically of time
- Stature = physical height – also used for lifetime
- If you are short – can’t make yourself tall
- You can’t add extra time to your life
- If worrying can’t do those things, it won’t do anything
- Third – **Worrying is how the world thinks**
- **Luke 12:27-30**
- God, as our loving Father, omniscient – knows what you need
- **Matthew 6:8**
- ...**For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.**
- How can we witness to the lost of this world if we ourselves are worrying and doubting God’s grace, mercy, and love?
- Covetousness and worry are both common in people, including Christians
- Both covetousness and worry are preoccupied with the future
- Covetousness is focused on a future with more or different stuff – rooted in pride
- Worry is focused on what the future might bring or take away – rooted in fear
- Next Thursday is the final exam for the Greek class I have been taking
- A number of the students have expressed concern about passing the final, one young woman said she expects to fail
- I’m not worried, and that is not because I am smart – the reason is – it’s not Thursday yet! Worrying about passing the final until Thursday will not help me to pass it – will just make me miserable all week
- What will? Studying! I have to do my part, and only my part
- Jesus concludes this section with three things to deal with covetousness or worry in your life
- First – **Seek God, not stuff**

- **Luke 12:31**

- “But’ = instead of seeking stuff or worrying about stuff, seek God

- Our God is a good Father – seek Him **Hebrews 4:16**

**Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

- **Luke 11:13**

**If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!**

- Both covetousness and worry are lifestyles that deny the truth of those two verses - They are both subtle sins that people often justify – but they are sins - repent

- Seek God – in prayer – in His Word – through His people

- Second – **Trust God to give you stuff**

- **Luke 12:32**

- ‘little flock’ = Jesus is the Good Shepherd – He is responsible to take care of us – trust Him to do it **Romans 8:32**

**He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

- All things = everything that you care about – do you trust Him, our Good Father, to do it in all things

- With your future – or the future of your kids or family – with your possessions – with your health or the health of someone you love – with your job – with your relationships

- If God gave us His Son – then what would He withhold from us

- Worrying is the opposite of trusting God

- Seek God – Trust God - Third thing – **Give stuff to others**

- **Luke 12:33a**

- ‘give alms’ = give to the poor

- This is not a call to poverty, but a call to take your focus off of yourself or the desperate future you are imagining and do something for others

- If you are struggling with covetousness – the cure is generosity

- If you are struggling with worry – help those who are in need around you – while seeking and trusting God

- Jesus finishes with a word of encouragement

- **Luke 33b-34**

- Seek God – trust God – help others

- God is looking for people like that **2 Chronicles 16:9**  
For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those whose heart is loyal to Him.*
- Do your part and trust God to do His
- God cares about all your stuff – trust Him to give you the stuff you need – and not to give you the stuff you don't need
- And then let Him be God of your life – whatever He does or doesn't give you is good – let God write the story of your life
- Whatever He does or doesn't do is His perfect will – accept it
- Focus on the now – trust Him with tomorrow **Matthew 6:34**  
Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is its own trouble.*
- Seek God – trust God – do your part, focusing on others rather than yourself
- He will lead you to the abundant life – He will write a good story in your life – a story about Jesus
- **Pray!**