



# Table Talk

By Rev. Timothy J. Swenson • ILT Dean of Chapel

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 31, 2022

## LUKE 12:13-21

.....  
*"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you...'"*

Vs. 20



The gospel this week begins with another attempt at self-justification. Like Martha from two weeks ago and the lawyer from the week before, this anonymous member of the crowd wants to enlist Jesus (the Word of God) in his personal struggle against his brother. The issue is an inheritance, and the anonymous member of crowd covets his share of it. Jesus will not be drawn into such justifications of the self (vs. 14). Jesus then goes on to expand the notion of covetousness beyond the issue of wealth. Jesus admonishes them against "all covetousness" (vs. 15). That admonishment then makes the "abundance of possessions" which follows refer to anything a person might possess such as money, property, social position, family and friendship relationships, even the possession of good or meritorious works. All these can be coveted and possessed but, in Jesus' words, life does not consist of them.

Before his hearers can be confused about the things which constitute life, Jesus launches into a parable using the specific example of an agricultural bounty. The rich man's lands produced abundantly. So abundantly that he anticipated being able to live in luxury for many years. In such anticipation, he assumed he had overturned the curse leveled upon all mankind "by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread,

'til you return to the ground..." (Ge. 3:17-19). Not only did he assume he had overturned the curse, but he also assumed a freedom from God's providence of daily bread. The rich man believed he had many, many days of bread stored up. What need did he have of God?

God confronts this man who considered himself secure in himself, i.e., he had much "treasure" for himself. God shows him the immediacy of his end, "This night your soul is required of you..." (vs. 20). All his possessions... and likewise, all our possessions, yours and mine, wealth, property, social position, family and friendships, even those good and meritorious works of ours slip away from our mortal grasp as we return to the dust from which we came. Only the riches that are ours through the enduring Word of God persist past our mortality.

**Table Talk:** Discuss the extent of covetousness and earthly possessions.

**Pray:** Father, keep me rich in your Word and let all else slip away. Amen



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13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” 14 But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” 15 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.” 16 And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ 18 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. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”



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