

Gospel lesson

Once again, we continue reading about Jesus on His countryside ministry this week.



*picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lumo-rich-fool/>;
courtesy of Lumo Project Films - www.lumoproject.com*

Luke 12:13-21

(NRSV)

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me."

¹⁴But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"

¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

¹⁶Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly.

¹⁷And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?'

¹⁸Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

¹⁹And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'

²⁰But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night

your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

The Word of God for the people of God

<Children's time>

I want you try holding your breath as long as you can. <Let them try it>

Why did you stop? <Let them respond>

What was your body telling you it needed?
<Let them respond>

And how did you answer that need? <Let them respond>

What if your stomach growls? What is your body telling you that you need then? <Let them respond>

How do you answer that need? <Let them respond>

What about when your eyelids get heavy and you start to yawn? What is your body telling you that you need?
<Let them respond>

And how do you answer that need? <Let them respond>

So our bodies have needs, and there are things to fulfill those needs. It is part of living.

Have you ever felt sad and lonely? What do you think

your body was telling you that you needed then?
<Let them respond>

How is that need answered? <Let them respond>

We have people in our lives to keep us company, to share the good times and the bad. If the ones we live with are not around, we can meet new people and form new bonds to meet our need to be part of society.

Have you ever heard the question, “What is the meaning of life?” What kind of need do you think the person asking has? <Let them respond>

How is that need answered? <Let them respond>

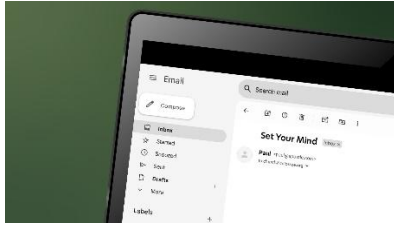
People may try to answer that need in a lot of different ways – through work, through chasing money, through hobbies, and even by holding someone up as a hero and role model. I believe the healthiest answer, the one that our selves really need, is to serve God in love and to love one another.

It becomes easier to meet all of our other needs when we help one another in the love of God. Let us all try to set our minds on what Jesus would have us do and treat everyone we meet with kindness.

<Hymn “More Precious than Silver”

TFWS #2065>

Message: Set Your Mind



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/eighth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/eighth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Precious Savior and Lord above all things,
as we take time now to further consider today's
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

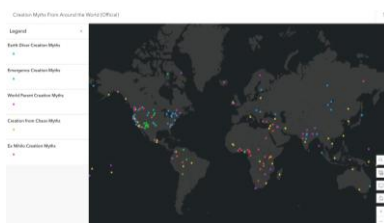
That we may be more focused You in all of our living
and share Your grace with all whom we encounter.

Amen.

Let's consider from Paul's letter to the Colossians
that he might have texted to check how it is going
since God "Set Your Mind" in Christ:

"This week marks the last "email" from Paul to the
Colossians in this worship series,

the last reminder about who the Christians of
Colossae are and how their story forms their
identity as a community."



screenshot from

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=d0c57656f6624285aaa374883e547004>

In one of the classes I took to be a pastor, we had

to read myths of creation from societies all over the world. It struck me that every society that lasted believed in powers greater than humanity ruling over the earth, that humans are to serve.

You could argue that it was an evolutionary thing, that by worshipping something greater than any one individual, the community was fostered. I think it is more fundamental than that, however.

To live, we need to eat, to breathe, to rest; all of these needs have something to meet them. We would not eat if food did not exist, we would not breathe if there was no oxygen, and we would not rest without safe refuge.

We all seek spiritual fulfillment as well; therefore, there must be something universal to meet that need, and I believe it is love from God, the source of all our life. Our Creator made us directly aware of Godself through Abraham and his descendants. The psalmist praises “the steadfast love of the Lord” for meeting all of our needs well.

Just as the world was created in stages, human society has been growing over time. Unfortunately, just as people have a tendency to binge on junk food instead of eating only healthy foods, people also have a tendency to worship unhealthy things.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/hosea/>;
credit: Arabs for Christ / FreeBibleimages.org

Hosea brought God's call for healthier spiritual

existence to the Israelites shortly before the fall of the Northern kingdom. You can hear the love of God mourning their choices as they allied with Assyria instead of trusting in God, because they would become subject to Assyrian rule and suffer under a king that did not love them as God did.

We see that today, with people across the world venerating humans in power or in the spotlight of fame. Fans invest in [politicians, sports teams, performers, etc.] but get only short-term gains, if anything, from them. There is only one ruler that outlasts all human endeavors, and that is God.



picture from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Atessa \(IMO 1006099\) yacht in Bah%C3%AD San Lucas - 2019-04-23.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Atessa_(IMO_1006099)_yacht_in_Bah%C3%AD_San_Lucas_-_2019-04-23.jpg);
credit: Filip Frącz

Jesus warned His followers about that, to be careful of what they sought. Just like the “fool” in the story we heard today, we can’t take material gains with us when we die. Someone else will inherit what we leave behind. All we can take with us is ourselves, the kind of person we are.

So what makes you who you are? Paul asked the Colossians to put aside the things that are “earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry).” From creation in Genesis through all the ages, what matters most are our relationships with God and with one another – and our relationships have been corrupted with sin.

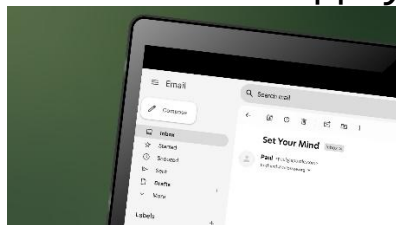


background picture from
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/group-of-people-forming-star-using-their-hands-1116302/>;
credit: Chu Chup Hinh

In Christ we have the opportunity to move forward in healthier, happier ways than earthly greed affords. When we focus on Jesus as our head and all of us equal (albeit different) parts of the church body, no longer do we favor one at the expense of another.

In Christ, the divisiveness of segregated groups is eliminated. “There is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!”

So where is your head at? Are you prioritizing the love of God or love of something else? If we truly want to live well, we need to refocus on God daily, through prayer, reading of scriptures, and meditating how we can better apply God’s grace in this world.



picture from
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/eighth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/eighth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Set your mind on Christ and on sharing love as He did. You will find that you enable others to share love more fully as well, that life is richer for all.