

Luke 12:13–21, 33–34

Grace to you and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

In today's Gospel, Jesus warns us against greed. In particular He tells us to make a treasure in heaven rather than on the earth, that is *to watch were we put our hearts*. Actually, I borrowed this bit about treasure and hearts from next week's Gospel, but it just sums everything up so nicely. Jesus says, "Make... an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." So then, my question for today is, *where are our hearts?*

Of course, in one way of speaking our hearts are in our chests. We know this, because, if they were not, we would not feel them beating—and we would be dead.

But there's another way of talking as well, the way we speak when we say, for example, "home is where the heart is," or when we tell someone to "put a little heart into" something, or when we "give our heart" to someone. In these ways of speaking, our heart is our innermost self, the core of our personhood. In this way of speaking, our bodies can be somewhere in the physical world, and our hearts, our innermost selves, can be somewhere else.

So where are our hearts? Are they at home somewhere? Have we put them into something? Have we given them to someone?

Well, in today's Gospel, Jesus warns us against all kinds of greed. This is because we tend to put our hearts into material things, things that thieves can steal, things that moths can eat up—finite things, things that come from the earth *and return to the earth*. In the Gospel parable, for example, a rich man already has some barns, but then he gets so much stuff that it won't fit in his barns, so he decides to tear these barns down and build big bigger ones. His heart is in his things, and one might say that he has such a big heart that he needs a really big place to put it. This sort of greed is easy to spot—the greed of the rich who already have more than enough, but

want more. Now I imagine that few of us are as rich as this rich man, but of course we are all rich to one degree or another. We can all think of people who have less money than we do. And I imagine that we often treasure whatever wealth we do have a little too much. I imagine that there are lots of things here on earth in which we try to place our hearts. When I was a student, for example, I had a friend—this wasn't me, but my friend—and my friend had a favourite spoon. He called it "the One Spoon." For him, it was the perfect spoon. This is of course rather charming. He was a charming fellow, but I wonder: did he perhaps place a little too much of his heart in this spoon?

Well, in any case, besides money and spoons, there are many other places where we try to put our hearts. Note well that, Jesus, tells us to be on guard against "*all kinds* of greed." So what other kinds of greed are there? Well, we can be greedy for some very good things: honour, security, the good of our family and friends, and of course food. And there are bad things too—people love to hold on to their grudges and prejudice and anxiety.

The love of money and material possessions, and other things, even good things like friends and family, can be a sort of greed that keeps our hearts in the things of the earth, stuck deep in the earth, mired in the muck, rather than in heaven.

So, how do we guard against this? Well, as Jesus says, we can give alms. We can look at our money and try not to put our hearts there. We can instead look at other people and try to put our hearts in them, to give away our money to and for *them*. We can avoid putting too much of our trust in material things (and indeed, back when I was a student, my friend *did share* his spoon). We can seek not to be overly concerned with status. We can look to the goods *of others*, as well as of our own family and friends—still seeking to put our hearts in our family and friends, but not in such a way that they get bound up there and are no longer free for other

people. And we can try to give up our grudges and prejudice and fear. We can try to take our hearts and put them in the good of other people. In other words, we can do our best to put our hearts into the hands of God, so that they will be free and active in His heaven rather than buried and sealed up in the earth.

We can—but have we? Do we? Will we?

Well, to answer this question, I turn to a wise man by the name of Jack Benny. Jack Benny, who lived from 1894 to 1974, was a famous comedian of radio and early television—and he was famous for being cheap. There is one sketch in particular in which Jack is walking down an alley when a man stops him and asks him for a match. When Jack goes to get the match, the man pulls out a gun, tells him that he’s being robbed and says, “GIVE ME YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE.” Then there’s a stretch of silence, and the man *repeats his demand*, “YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE.” Finally Jack responds, “I’m thinking it over!”<sup>1</sup>

There it is.

When it comes to the choice about where we will put our hearts, whether in our money or in our lives—that is in the true lives that God wants us to live—*aren’t we all really thinking it over*, to one degree or another? Has anyone ever gone to the grave not still thinking it over?

Well there is One Human Being Who has, and because He has—all of us are saved.<sup>2</sup> This is of course the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Word of God, the One Who Is, and Does, what He says—and what He Says Is: “Make...an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near

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<sup>1</sup>“American Tobacco Company Lucky Strike The Jack Benny Program.” Aired on NBC, Sunday April 4, 1948. The quoted words appear on page 1 of the script, which may be found at [https://www.otrr.org/FILES/Scripts\\_pdf/Jack%20Benny%20Program/Jack%20Benny%20Program%201948%20Apr-Jun.pdf](https://www.otrr.org/FILES/Scripts_pdf/Jack%20Benny%20Program/Jack%20Benny%20Program%201948%20Apr-Jun.pdf) (Accessed July 31, 2025.)

<sup>2</sup> Jesus, like one of us, also prays that “this cup might pass” (Matt 26:39, Mark 14:36, and Luke 22:42). This is a very human prayer. It does seem to me though to be a sort of seeking of escape. That’s okay though. The Church properly condemned Monothelitism, the doctrine that Christ had only one will. Christ’s divine will strives with His human will and brings it in line—ultimately Christ acts only in love for us.

and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” You see, the Lord’s treasure is us. We are where His Heart Is. And He makes us into an unfailing treasure in Heaven—where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

By this I mean, that, seeing us placing our hearts into the things that thieves might steal and moths destroy, that is burying them in the earth and sealing them up, *seeing this*, He lays aside His glory. He comes down and becomes one of us. By His death, he descends into the tomb, deep into the earth—*into the place where we have all put our hearts*. And then He gathers them all up, and takes them out of the earth, and He ascends with them into heaven.

In other words, Christ’s Heart is always in and for us. But so that our hearts might also be in Him—in the Heaven that is God’s innermost Self—He descends to the dead, gathers up all our hearts, and then rises with them, up into His Own Heart—and He does all this while we are still thinking it over.

This is Good News. It reminds me of a particular Norwegian fairy tale<sup>3</sup> with an evil giant who can’t be killed because he’s hidden his heart outside of his body in the egg of a duck—and, of course, he’s screwed when the noble prince finds this duck-egg and starts to squeeze it. I think that we are something like happy versions of this evil giant. Though rather than being hidden in the egg of a duck, our hearts are hidden in Christ—and no one can attack them there, not sin, or death, or hell, or even we ourselves. Our hearts are safe from every thief and moth—up in Christ with God. This is not to say that our hearts are hidden off somewhere like this giant’s duck egg. No, Christ is in and through all things, and so are our hearts—not sealed up somewhere, but present and active—in ourselves, in everyone else, and through the whole Creation. So let us do

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<sup>3</sup> “The Giant Who Had No Heart in His Body.”

our best to stop thinking over where we will put our hearts, and instead get to work where they are—right here with Christ in God. Amen.

preached on August 3, AD 2025  
at St. Andrew's Memorial Anglican Church, Kitchener, Ontario  
by David Boehmer