

**8/3/25**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**For Group Meetings from July 27<sup>th</sup> – August 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**OUR MISSION:** As a missional congregation we ***celebrate*** Christ's presence, ***invite*** people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and ***equip*** them to ***serve*** in a broken world.

**Prayer of the Day:** Benevolent God, you are the source, the guide, and the goal of our lives. Teach us to love what is worth loving, to reject what is offensive to you, and to treasure what is precious in your sight, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER**

**Share:** How did last week's scripture (Luke 11:1-13) work in your life this week?

**Mission:**

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

**Hear:** Luke 12:13-21

**Explore Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. The man's request in v. 13 seems reasonable enough. Why do you think Jesus responds the way he does in v. 14?
2. Why does God call the man in the parable a fool? What does he do that is so foolish?
3. Do you hear Jesus' story as judgement or hope?

**Connect Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. If someone looked at how you spend your money or time, what would they say you value most?
2. How do you define a "successful" life? Has that changed throughout your life?
3. When have you felt like you had "enough"? What made you feel that way?

**Memorize this verse:** "So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God." (Luke 12:21) How can you be rich toward God?

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:**

**Obey:** During this week follow through on your intentions.

**Meditate:** Meditate on Psalm 49:1-12. How does this speak into your life?

**Reflect:** What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

## Notes for ChristCare leaders:

It's easy to assume the issue in this parable is the farmer's wealth, but I'm not so sure. I have come to believe it's much more about his isolation. Consider the little conversation he has with himself. Except it's not just to himself, it's also about himself and only himself. There is no evidence that there is anyone else in his life, anyone else he should care about, anyone else who might have contributed to or benefit from this bountiful harvest. Instead, confronted with the blessing of an abundant harvest, all he can think of is what he should do to make sure he gets the most out of it so that he can live comfortably into his old age.

More than this blatant narcissism the farmer falls prey to the notion that he can secure his own future. That he needs no one, depends on no one, and can go it alone. Which is why God calls him foolish. Because, in the end, not only is he not immune to death, but he will die alone, and all that he has stored up will not comfort or protect him, nor will it go to others who loved and respected him and can put it to good use, but instead it will all turn to dust in the wind.

In this light, I wonder how we should read the closing line, "So it will be with those who store up treasures for themselves and are not rich toward God." How can one be rich toward God without also being rich toward others? God, to paraphrase Martin Luther, needs neither our good works nor our wealth, but our neighbor does. So perhaps this parable is really about community, the community in which we find sustenance and comfort and help and hope, and the community in which and through which we experience life with God. Keep in mind that this whole parable is started by a break in a community, the central and primary community of society, a family. One brother comes seeking Jesus' intervention in a family squabble about an inheritance. And Jesus will have none of it. Recognizing that what should have been an occasion for celebration, remembrance, and gratitude has instead been turned into a moment of division, Jesus refuses to get involved directly, but instead tells the story of a man so enraptured with his good fortune that he ends up all alone.

Who was Jesus' addressing, I wonder. The man who brought the complaint? The man's brother? The disciples? The crowds? All of us today? Yes. Yet of all these options, I'm particularly interested in how we hear Jesus' words today. Because there is a profound and increasingly shared message out and about that we should not and cannot trust each other, that the world is increasingly dangerous and we should therefore be increasingly afraid. That kind of fear will not lead us forward. The regular and relentless biblical injunction "do not be afraid" is not offered simply to bolster our individual courage but to make it easier for us to turn to one another with our fears and hopes and dreams and needs in order to form a community. The Bible warns us against fear because it's really hard to care for your neighbor and create a community when you are afraid. Don't get me wrong. Community is not easy. It means putting up with people who disagree with you and annoy you and even have hurt you. Forgiveness, as well as trust, is vital. But this is God's will, that we "not be alone." And I think this farmer who was rich in possessions but absolutely dirt poor in relationships never got that message.

## Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd ([tbook@desertcross.org](mailto:tbook@desertcross.org))

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### *Traditional version:*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us  
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

### *Contemporary version:*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those  
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the  
power, and the glory are yours,  
Now and forever. Amen