

## THE BIG IDEA: It's impossible to be greedy and godly.

### The Take-Off

Last week, we started a five-week miniseries called [GUARDRAILS] based on Jesus' teaching in **Luke 12**. As is often the case with Jesus, it didn't start in the shallow end - He jumped right into it by warning us to guard against hypocrisy.

How does Jesus follow that up? By talking about money, of course!

What Jesus taught in one sitting, we're going to address in two: this week we'll talk about guarding ourselves against greed, and then next week against anxiety.

For today, we'll be in **Luke 12:13-21**, and we're going to need to do a little bit of work before we can talk about the 2 guard rails that will keep us from greed.

Let's answer a few questions, and then we'll talk about the takeaways for us:

- What is greed?
- Why is Jesus talking about it?

First: WHAT IS GREED?

Webster defines greed as "a selfish and excessive desire for more of something than is needed"

A shorter definition could simply be that "Greed wants more than we need."

Second: WHY IS JESUS TALKING ABOUT IT?

If you heard last week's message, you know that Jesus was warning His disciples to guard against hypocrisy

As soon as He finished, someone in the crowd told Jesus to settle a dispute about money.

Now, we don't know any more than that, so let's give this man the benefit of the doubt that he simply recognized the authority of Jesus and wanted Him to help.

But there was SOME reason why Jesus took this time to address money, greed and anxiety, and my guess would be that Jesus knew that there was a motive behind the question: GREED.

Jesus quickly dismissed the man and then took the opportunity to address it by telling a parable, and it's in the parable that we find 2 specific guardrails that can keep us from being wrecked by greed.

Let's read it, and then we'll highlight the guardrails.

## 1. GUARDRAIL ONE: We fear scarcity

- a. Let's state the obvious: we live in a world of scarcity.
- b. I think we've got a picture of scarcity.
- c. **[IMAGE / Bread Aisle]**
- d. Money's gone before the bills, stuff breaks, bodies get run down.
- e. Bottom line: things run out. Scarcity is real, but the first guardrail to greed isn't scarcity; it's the fear of it.
- f. Remember that the man in the parable was ALREADY rich and that he ALREADY had a lot of stuff.
- g. Jesus was teaching this to make a point about the dangers of "the abundance of possessions" - about not letting our possessions possess us
- h. So he already has enough, but he didn't think that he had enough.
- i. Now, THAT is something we can all relate to.
- j. If I asked you how much money you need to feel secure, you would probably say, "More than I have now."
- k. That is exactly where this rich fool is. Even though he has enough, he fears not having enough, and so he builds bigger barns.
- l. What we need to understand is that 100% of this scarcity mentality is rooted in FEAR
- m. We can relate to this guardrail. It's the reason storage is such a big business in our culture.
- n. We hold onto things that we may never use because we're afraid that once we let them go, we may need them again.
- o. 80 year old couple, worth 20 million, suddenly afraid of the what if of sickness.
- p. This rich man turned inward - in **verses 17-19**, we find 10 personal pronouns.
- q. When we fear running out, we'll never have the freedom to let go.
- r. Greed feels like it never has enough, and so even if we have enough, we can begin to fear potential scarcity and we take on this philosophy.
- s. **[MUSIC CLIP - Livin' on a Prayer]**

- t. We start to think that it all relies on what we have, what we can keep, and how long we can hold on to what we've got.
- u. We fear scarcity, so we hold onto what we've got more tightly, and we run into the second guardrail.

## 2. GUARDRAIL TWO: We forget eternity

- a. The clue to the second guardrail is found in the last 2 verses: God calls the man a fool and Jesus warns us that the same will happen to anyone who takes care of himself and isn't rich toward God.
- b. Translation: we forget eternity.
- c. We begin to think that THIS life is all that matters, and we make every decision based on 78.94 years.
- d. **James 4:14** / This life that is just a vapor.
- e. Let's say eternity was 321 million years. Our lives compared to that would be like a 2 liter drink in the equivalent of FOUR OLYMPIC SWIMMING POOLS.
- f. When we put all of our focus on the least valuable, we often end up losing what's most valuable.
- g. A spouse focused on a career coming home to find the other spouse gone.
- h. This man has lost sight of what matters most of all.
- i. God has set eternity in our hearts, and we would be wise to live with forever in mind.
- j. Not just for our eternal sake, but for the eternal purposes of God.
  - **Ephesians 3:6, 11** / What is the eternal purpose of God? For Gentiles (us) to be one with Jews!
  - **Romans 8:28** / He uses everything in our lives according to that purpose
- k. When we forget eternity, we forget that even the abundance in our lives has a purpose, and we forget that we have a Father who gives us good things to enjoy and to share
- l. **1 Timothy 6:17-19** / "take hold of the life that is truly life"
- m. We can't take hold of that life if we are still holding tightly to this life

### The Landing

How does this play out practically? When we remember eternity and that we have an abundant God who richly provides everything for our enjoyment, then we can live lives free of the fear of scarcity.

Whether we have a lot of a little, our trust is in the God who provides, not in the things we possess.

[Story of the returned \$676 cashier's check and the "We Rise by lifting Others" GoFundMe campaign]

Godliness is marked by contentment, and contentment leads to hands that are open.

Greediness is marked by fear, and fear leads to hands that are closed.

**It's impossible to be greedy and godly**, and i want to pray that you would choose to be godly.

Let's pray.