

The title for today's message comes from Ecclesiastes chapter 1: **Vanity of Vanities, All is Vanity**

Jesus said: **"Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness,**
Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

This morning, I would like us all to think about our own money, our own life, and see what Jesus has to say about it.

Today our text begins with an incident happening in Galilee where Jesus once again is speaking to a very large crowd, numbered in the thousands.

Now, its from this large crowd a young man called out to Jesus, saying:
"Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me

Now, you might think this was an unusual request, but according to Jewish law a Rabi, which Jesus was considered to be.

Could resolve a dispute over a mans inheritance. Therefore the man wanted Jesus to help him solve his problem.

Still today, there's nothing greater than an inheritance to break up family or to divide brothers. Its all vanity.

Here we see that Jesus refused to get caught up in what He probably thought was a petty family squabble.

Non the less, Jesus was greatly concerned with the larger problem at hand here, man's vanity regarding earthly things.

So Jesus said: *"Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."*

Another words, life is worth much more than all the wealth in the world. And there's no better way to illustrate this, than by telling a parable.

Jesus said: *“The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ 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. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’*

Look, there's so much wrong with all this. Here's a financially successful man, who God has blessed with wisdom. Yet, Jesus calls him, a fool!

Now to understand all this you must first realize that this is not a parable about money.

Rather, its a parable about values, and what's important in our life. With that said, let me suggest four things, this man did wrong.

First, he was a fool because; he may have had full barns, but he had an empty heart.

Yes, he was rich in man's eyes, but, poor in God's eyes. Which is something we all should ask ourselves; Are we rich in God's eyes, or poor?

Look, its alright to make investments, as long as we understand that the best investment we can make, is in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is our only sure future, and we can be sure God will be with us, whether or not Wall Street rises, or falls.

Someone once wrote a story, about a successful peasant farmer, who was not satisfied with his lot. No matter how much he had, he wanted more.

One day the farmer received a great offer. He was told for 1000 rubles, he could buy all the land he could walk around, in a day.

The only catch was, he had to be back at his starting point by sundown, or he would lose it all.

So, early the next morning he started out walking at a fast pace. By midday, he was very tired, but he kept going, covering more and more ground.

Well into the afternoon, he realized that his vanity had taken him far from his starting point.

So, he picked up his pace, and as the sun began to sink low in the sky, he began to run. Knowing what would happen if he didn't get back before sundown.

As the sun began to sink below the horizon, he finally came within sight of the finish line, his heart pounding, and gasping for breath.

He called upon every bit of strength left in his body, and he staggered across the finish line, just before the sun disappeared. He won! - Or did he?

It seems the man immediately collapsed, blood began rushing from his mouth, and within seconds, he was dead.

Soon afterwards, his servants dug a grave. It wasn't much over six feet long and three feet wide.

About the size of a coffin today. Oh, by the way, the title of the story: How Much Land Does a Man Need?

The moral of the story is; all a man really needs, is a 6 foot by 3 foot piece of land, so were better off putting our love elsewhere.

We must see Its God that will be our rock, our sanity, and our security; not our mutual fund.

Its God that offers you peace, and calm, that you so desperately seek. The man in the parable was a fool because he loved himself.

Secondly he was a fool because; he overestimated his own value, he believed he was set for years to come. He was truly foolish.

Yet his foolishness is not, that he was a wealthy man, no. His foolishness was in his self pride. His vanity.

My friends, we all need to understand the role of grace, and mystery in life, or we too might fall pray to the sin of thinking too highly of ourselves.

Third, this man was a fool because; he forgot what his true purpose in life was really all about.

He thought his purpose was all about commodities and markets. But, Jesus thought in deeper terms, such as mankind and the common good.

This is the purpose of the man in the parable, as well as you and I here today.

Look, our purpose in life goes far beyond tally sheets, investments, and saving accounts.

Our real purpose is that of our humanity. It gets down to that old tension between becoming, and being.

We spend too much of our time concentrating on what we can do for ourselves, that we lose sight of, what we have become.

My friends, our purpose in life isn't to be successful, its to be faithful. Its not to amass things of this world, but rather its to grow closer to God.

And, its not to take care of ourselves either, but to take care of others. That's our purpose, and it's the foolish, who will never grasp it.

Fourth, this man was a fool because; he forgot about time. His whole attitude in life was that time is unlimited.

Our life is moving toward a new life, not our death. How many times have you thought about this.

As Christians we spend all our lives preparing to live, not for the moment, but for eternity.

Sure they say; Its good to save our money for a rainy day, but its perilous to save our life, for a rainy day.

Time might just run out on us. Its true, the clock is relentless. It beats us down. Its always ticking.

Regardless of what we do, or fail to do, the clock keeps ticking. Its a fool that says: "Heaven can wait." As Solomon said: **Vanity of Vanities, All is Vanity.**

Amen

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.