

Fear and Fears - Part 5

The Fear Of Not Having Enough

Luke 12:13-21

As I speak, the payday for the PowerBall lottery is cresting over 1 billion dollars, one billion dollars. They say by Wednesday when they draw those next numbers it'll be at about 1.3 billion dollars. Is there any surprise there they're lining up in droves to buy these tickets? I mean around the block for every, you know, 7-Eleven out there, they are buying lottery tickets and why not? Every commercial tells us, makes me ask, will I have enough to live comfortably in retirement? Am I going to be okay if I lose my job, I mean unemployment numbers aren't good, I got to wonder if I lose my job how long will it take me to get another one, to be gainfully employed again. If you're just starting out you got to wonder, hey in this economy with the way that the lending is am I going to be able to scrape enough money together for the down payment that I need to buy a house, am I going to be a renter for the rest of my life? Maybe you're at the other end of this, and you're thinking my failure to launch children, am I going to be bankrolling them for the next three decades? What happens if I get sick? I mean with all that's going on I could have some protracted illness I might need a ton of money just to take care of my medical bills. With the economy in China this week I mean everybody is writing these books about the doom and gloom, and the stock market if it tanks what's going to happen? I mean it's going to help to have a billion dollars in the bank I think. So I can understand people standing in line to buy a lottery ticket.

Now, with all that's going on in the world you can say you'd have to be crazy not to. That's what I'm hearing. Every news story I read, yeah I got to do it. Well, if you're thinking you'd be crazy to pass on an opportunity for a billion dollars and you're thinking about what kind of financial security would that provide me with, wouldn't that be great? I want you to always remember the 12th chapter of Luke. Next time matter of fact you hear the words "financial security" I want you to think Luke chapter 12. Matter of fact I want you to think Luke chapter 12 verses 13 through 21 because Jesus needs to enter your mind at that point and take conventional wisdom and flip it on its head and say, "Oh, you understand do you?" Well you need to think of this a little bit differently than you thought about it. You need to let Christ and His words in Luke 12 verses 13 to 21 really do the kind of faith stretching that he intends to do as he addresses someone in the crowd who seems to ask a very reasonable question about finances. You can be ready to have the words of Christ rearrange you priorities and I need you to think differently about all the hype of financial security.

Well, what do you mean Mike? This is legitimate stuff. Oh, I understand. There are a lot of things that the Bible saying me be judicious and being prudent and being thoughtful. I would be a fool for me as the Bible says in the book of Proverbs to not think about my financial future. Look what takes place in this passage. Read it along with me. Follow a long as I read it for you and our preaching portion this morning, Luke chapter 12 verses 13 through 21. As in the middle of this discussion that we have recorded for us in the passage, someone in the crowd, verse 13 says, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Now that seems like a reasonable request particularly if we're going to look at the biblical rules for the inheritance that the Bible talks about two or three times in the Old Testament. Here we have a rabbi, a teacher of the law, someone important, he's working miracles. I mean if anyone can make my brother look at the biblical requirements about equity, fairness and dividing the inheritance, it ought to be Jesus. So Jesus can you deal with this, because I've got some financial issues going down here that just aren't right. I'm entitled to this money and I'm not getting it.

And Jesus said, verse 14, note it carefully, "Where's your brother, bring him here, I'll straighten him out." No, that's what the Bible would say if you were writing the Bible. That's not what the Bible says. Jesus did not respond that way. He said something that seems very rude for gentle Jesus, meek and mild to say. He says, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" Oh, about that time your jaw, what? Don't you care about the equity in me getting what I should have coming to me? I mean you want people to treat me unjustly regarding the money that's due, are you telling me you don't care about my finances? I'm not talking about robbing a bank or doing anything, I just want to have what I'm entitled to. Jesus responds the way he does because he has x-ray vision, looking right through the forehead of this man. And he says, not just to him, notice this, he steps out of the crowd asks the question and then in verse 15, it doesn't say, "He", that is Jesus said to him the man, he says it to everyone there. Let me just use

this question as a teaching opportunity. He said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness.” There’s a word you probably didn’t use this morning before you came to church. Covetousness, I mean that’s an old Bible word isn’t it? Covetousness, cupidity in old English, is the word we get; I think it traveled through Latin before we got it into English which meant simply greed, to be greedy. Of course it harkens back to the words translated into English from the Hebrew in Exodus 20 that you shall not covet, the tenth commandment in Exodus 20. You shall not covet. I shall not be greedy. I shall not set my gaze on things that I want, coming from the Hebrew word, pleasant, not on things that I think would make my life more pleasant. Stop setting your gaze on those things, and make sure your heart is guarded against that kind of focus in your life. Explanation in the bottom of verse 15, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. Verse 16, so he told them a parable, saying – now I’m going to tell a story Jesus says in response to what you just asked me about regarding the problem that I see in your heart that all of us are susceptible to, this thing called covetousness or greed. I want you to all think about this story now that is going to relate to and address this problem that’s just been raised in this discussion.

He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully,” Now look at the parallel here. We’ve got a man who is coming apparently he’s got food in his belly and clothes on his back. He’s got enough, that’s the definition of rich, you’ve got more than you need and he’s got an inheritance that’s coming to him so now he’s going to boost his net worth, he’s going to have more money and it’s just like the man who’s got plenty and now he’s got a bumper crop, his land produces plentifully. Now what do I do? He says, “I know what I want to do, I’ve got to respond to all this windfall of income he thought to himself, verse 17. “What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?” And he said, “I’ll do this; I’ll tear down my barns and I’ll build larger ones, and there I will store my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Hey Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years, now relax, eat, drink, be happy, be merry.”” But God said to him, you don’t see God tossing these words around very often, at least not directly in second person discourse but here it comes, “Fool!” He doesn’t say that’s really good estate plan, that’s excellent, your 401K has done so super good, very prudent of you. God says to the man who took all this effort because there was something behind his forehead called greed, covetousness and he worked so hard to amass this wealth, he said “You’re a fool”. Why? Well because there’s something going on that you couldn’t see and couldn’t foresee and that is tonight you’re going to die. This night your soul is required of you, and let me ask you a rhetorical question. All that stuff that you saved up for you, I just want you to think, the things that you prepared, who’s will they be? Who’s going to get all that?

Verse 21 the punch line, so is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. Now again, this is going to be a hard sermon to try to deal with in your brain for a lot of reasons. One of them is because if you’re biblical literate you’re going to think of all these passages in the Bible and you’re going to say, “Well there’s a place for this, I mean Proverbs chapter 6 calls me lazy, calls me a sluggard if I don’t act at least like the ant who goes out there and works hard to store up stuff for the winter so that when it’s lean times then he can have food in the winter time. So I mean I’ve got to save.” No, you’re right, you’re chided for being frivolous with our money, not saving it, not preparing for the future, you’re right. And even the illustration itself that Jesus uses, I mean Jesus must not have read Genesis 41 because in that passage His own father the first person of the Godhead, He revealed to Joseph he better build some big barns and silos and store up all this grain because the hard times were coming. And so you know I don’t think building barns and putting extra food away, and might have exceeded the FDIC limit on the insured amount in my bank account. I mean I have to open a second bank account maybe a brokerage account, I mean there are things I got to do to be careful here about my future. No I understand, it’s going to make this sermon hard and some authors have rightly said, “And rightfully so God is giving us principles in contrast in the scripture so that we can be super careful about where we are not violating either side of this” I cannot be someone who fails to prudently plan for the future. I should be concerned about future planning like an ant going about my work to store some things away. But a passage like this calls the man a fool who is storing things away apparently revealing his motive with this line, “relax, eat, drink and be merry” I want to have a comfortable retirement and I better work at this really hard and build new buildings to put my stuff in, in response to a man who is already diagnosed with the problem of greed. I better be careful I’m not doing these things because I’m greedy.

You have to understand the balance that’s going on in this passage. It is giving us a problem that if it’s not diagnosed in our heart, we can bring a lot of spiritually sounding kinds of arguments to rationalize me doing something out of greed and covetousness that looks on the surface like someone else is doing it that has perfectly godly altruistic virtuous motives. Now, you have to know the context which I hope is governed in your own thinking by the title of this series. Well you’re thinking the title of this series that Pastor Mike is preaching through is called, “Fear and Fears” so we know we’re talking about his ultimate fear of God that we already discussed and all these

other fears that are in the passage and those fears are bad and the fear of God, the biblical fear of God, that's a good thing. So are we really talking about fear? Yes, that is what we're talking about, matters of fact look right above this passage in verse number 11. We leave the former discussion with Jesus talking about not being anxious about how I'm going to answer when I'm dragged in before the rulers and authorities of the synagogue. Do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself. Now look down at verse 22 now. The next discussion we're going to have another exhortation not to be anxious about my life. And he's going to talk about all these basics of life; we'll get to that Lord willing next time. And he says, "Listen; here are the issues that book end this particular interruption and this parable. Don't worry, don't worry." I'm just trying to help you define the distinction here. There is a biblical godly motive to put away some money in a 401K, saving for tomorrow. Be sure that I have an emergency account so if I get a flat tire I can buy new tires for my car, fine, biblical. But being concerned and prudent to save up for future needs either seen or unforeseen that is a concern that is biblical and godly but whenever it turns into anxiety and there is in my life the symptom of worry. Let's use some other words here, stressful, anxious, brooding, that kind of feeling of [vocalization] "what-if", when it gets to that place, it reveals that I've got a problem and underneath it must reveal that there's something going on that shows that I move from concern to anxiety and that is based on a misperception, a false assumption. A connection I've made in my mind that is unbiblical and that's the thing Jesus is trying to show.

He shows it in the most dramatic way of a guy who's trying to get financial security and the day he finally achieves it he dies. That's ironic. Well, so much for financial security because when you got it, you die. So all that stuff you hoarded up for yourself, you're not going to get it. Not to mention this line where it says in verse 15, you know life does not consist in the abundance of your possessions. We'll talk about that more but just on the surface let's start with this. When it comes to life, physical life or the fulfillment of life it's really not about money and that's where he starts. In other words to invert that, think now with me, when I start feeling anxious about my bank account, my quarterly statements, when I look at my 401K, when I look at the stock market this week, if I start to worry about all those things I started with, the reason people line up to get the billion dollar payoff, because I know I'm afraid then I know I've got a problem about what I believe regarding money. I think money that there's a necessary correspondence between having that money and the things I think I really need. And that is I need security, I need protection, I need safeguards against the future, against the unknowns. I live in a world that runs on money and I need things that are going to cost me so I afraid, and if I want to be not afraid, umm money will help me.

Not only that, it's sure is nice to have money. I can buy a lot of things that I like and if I really want fulfillment I want life, a kind of life that says, "Oh, this is living". Well, it doesn't consist in the abundance of my possessions. Jesus said but if I'm believing wrongly about money, well then I think it does. Of course, there's real living if I could just have those things. Number one on your outline, let's jot it down this way, the first observation we can make about this passage is that Jesus is trying to turn conventional wisdom on it's head by saying this, you better not equate money with joy and security because there is no necessary correspondence between those two things.

1. Don't Equate Money With Joy And Security

They don't necessarily go together. You need to realize that. Now once you jot that down find in your Bibles the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. You haven't been there lately right? Sounds like an apocryphal book. No, it's in your Bibles, look it up, Ecclesiastes chapter 2 and as you're turning to that passage after you jot that down I'd like you to remember who wrote the book. Sunday School Graduates, who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes? Solomon. Who was his father? Less people answered that, but you know that, give it a moment. Yes, that's right, David. David the first king, the first monarch of Israel, he was known for being a warrior. He expanded the borders; he was a great military leader starting in the plains there in the valley, killing Goliath. He comes onto the scene the great warrior, his hands the Bible says, skilled in battle to secure the borders of the land. He overtakes the city of the Jebusites he sets up his kingdom in Jerusalem and he's got peace on all of his borders and then Solomon comes along and he sticks a silver spoon in his mouth and we have the most prosperous king if Israel, who now with economic prosperity and political peace. He sits there and expands everything in the kingdom at least in terms of its economic depth. He builds Solomon's temple, he builds the royal portico and the palace. He does all these things and has everything he can possibly want financially thanks to his father for securing the border and vanquishing his enemies. At the end of his life he writes this book. Ecclesiastes this is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word stands for the Preacher. And basically he's saying I got some things to preach at you here regarding what I've learned being the richest person in the ancient world. And when it comes to any other king in Jerusalem I had more than anybody. I had more than any leader, any judge, any prophet. I had it all. He says this in Ecclesiastes chapter 2, which by the



way when you read this it is about money though what starts with this line, I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure". Well, it's about pleasure, here the thing, why do people buy tickets for the lottery? It's not because as I heard one person say yesterday, if I won I would bathe in it he said. I would bathe in the money. I'm thinking gross. You don't want to bathe in the money. And of course he's being rhetorical, metaphorical, or silly or stupid, but you don't want to bathe in 100 dollar bills. You don't want to bathe in 20 dollar bills, you don't want to bathe in money, it does nothing for you, they're pieces of paper. But the only reason you have affinity for the pieces of paper is you know you could walk through South Coast Plaza with all that money and buy what ever you want and you could have pleasure, you could have happiness if only you had all that money. See there's the connection that we make in our minds, the more money the more fulfillment the more happiness, the more security the more protection the more safe guards. That's the connection people make and that's what the advertising industries are all about. That's how they're selling lottery tickets. This is why you need this. You'll be happy, you'll be secure. Which by the way, how does that work out for all the lottery winners? Google it. If the sermon gets boring Google that, okay, "Lottery Winners", "The curse of the lottery winners". A million ways to search it, it doesn't turn out well for these folks.

But yet here is the thought. I want to be as fulfilled as possible. I said, "Come, I'm going to test you with pleasure, enjoy yourself." Behold this was also a hoot, it was great, a love note" This was also; you know the theme of the book? Vanity, nothing, useless. What? By the way, when you hear the curse of the lottery winners, and then you go out and buy your lottery ticket, umm I know you think, and it is, and I grew up in a church that are just like the churches here, a lot of times they'll have the testimonies, special Men's you know breakfast on Saturday, they bring the great athlete, he comes up, he's become a Christian now and he says he had it all, he's had the Porsche, he had girls, I had a big house and then I became a Christian and it was all for nothing, and it didn't fulfill me. You'll hear the testimony the celebrity and all these rich people and they tell you, and I know you think same reason you buy a lottery ticket when you hear the curse of the lottery winners you think well, let me try. Right? I can do it. I think I can navigate this. Because it will make me happy, I know it will.

At some point you're going to have to start believing the testimonials of these people. Here he says I got to tell you, I had it all, I had everything that could make me possibly happy and he says it didn't work, it was vanity. Instead of laughter, it's mad and of pleasure what use is it? Really? I want to laugh more, I want to have better stuff, I want more pleasure in my life that would be great. Verse 3, I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine – my heart still guiding me with wisdom – I'm not going to fall down drunk, I was out there trying to do the best thing that would make me the happiest and how to lay a hold on folly, I just wanted fun and laughter and happiness till I might see what was good for the children of men to do under heaven the few days of their life. I know I didn't have much time but, life is short I'm going to live it to the fullest.

Verse 4, I made great works. Guess what? That costs a lot of money. I built houses; I can barely pay for the one I've got. This guy's got multiple, of course he's the king. Build houses, costs a lot of money, planted vineyards for myself. I made gardens and parks. I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees and had all the greatest food, I had all the property I had to irrigate them, verse 6, I made for myself pools with which to water the forest of growing trees. I had people waiting on me, I bought male and female slaves, I had slaves that were born in my house and knew nothing but serving me, the master, I had it all. I had the possessions of herds and flocks any animal I wanted for dinner. I just say, "This is what I want." I had it in my reserves. I had the ultimate pantry, more than any who have gone before me in Jerusalem. I was rich. I gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. And forget going to Best Buy to buy the best stereo in the Magnolia section of the store. I just bought bands and had them come in and provide. I've got singers. Men and women singers and talk about pleasure man, I had women down the hall, I had many concubines, the delight of the sons of man. I had everything so I became great and I surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me, I wasn't nuts, I was strategically thoughtfully doing things that would make me happy. Whatever my eyes desired I didn't keep from them, I kept from my heart no pleasures, for my heart found pleasure in all the toil and this was my reward for my toil these intermediate punctuated feelings of euphoria and happiness and I bought another thing and that made me happy and that wore off and I bought something else and did something else and I had something else, then I sat back pushed away from the table and put my feet up, verse 11, and I looked at all that my hands had done and the toil I expended in doing it and behold it was all vanity, striving after the wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

I know you think this must be some dusty Old Testament time there was no Best Buy back then. I mean everything



was dirty and ancient. It would be much better now. And I'll kind of look past the lottery winning curse. I mean if I were rich it would be okay. At some point you've got to start believing all this. The ultimate vanity, vanity all is vanity I suppose would be putting a barrel in your mouth and pulling the trigger, don't you think? Isn't that someone saying it's all for nothing? You know this, studies have been done right here in California that say your likelihood of committing suicide and saying life is not worth living, it goes up exponentially with the more money you make. Do you know the study that was done, the one I'm referring to, the Federal Reserve for some weird reason put this study together in California out of San Francisco and they said this. That you can track the statistics of suicide based on the income of the neighborhood that you live in. And in some comparisons depending upon what data you look at in that study you can see twice the likelihood of killing yourself based on whether you live in this rich neighborhood or not. Now what is with that?

Reminds me of the old poem "Richard Cory". You Lit majors might remember Edwin Robinson wrote the Pulitzer Prize, I mean they've written books about him such an amazing poet and American author or if you're a hippie from the 60's Simon and Garfunkel wrote a song about the same thing called Richard Cory. Anybody remember that? Look it up on YouTube if this sermon gets boring. Um, we have free WiFi here. Richard Cory, now Simon and Garfunkel they expand on it but the whole point of it is the same that it's always been, it is an Ecclesiastes song. It is about this man who is richer than rich and we all envy him and Robinson wrote this poem during the time when we're going into the depression so people were eating bread and there was a great line in the poem that talks about we cursed our bread we longed for the meat and here was Richard Cory, richer than kings, and we all wanted to be like him. In the last line of the poem of course is he puts a bullet in his head. That's been going on from the beginning. People saying I had it all and its vanity, vanity all is for nothing, it's chasing after the wind, it's eating a sandwich of air, it doesn't fulfill. Now I know we can look and say, you know what? If I'm in a poorer strata and I can look across at the bigger houses and better cars and bigger paychecks I just think if I get there it'll be great. Well the people that get there, we got to some point believe them. They're going to say, "You know what guys? You're chasing after the wind." There is not a necessary correlation between riches and joy and fulfillment. It's just not there. There's no necessary correlation there.

Well, what about security? That one you can't much argue with. You're in Ecclesiastes chapter 2, flip ahead to chapter 5 real quickly. As though I had time to show you this passage let's do it anyway. We'll do half of it, how's that? Jump into verse 10, at some point you can do the whole chapter. Chapter 5 is a great chapter of Ecclesiastes. Look at verse 10; you want to talk about security and protection? I want to be financially secure, the next time you see the juxtaposition of the word financial and security I want you to think of Ecclesiastes chapter 5. First of all you got to know the more money you have the more you're going to want money. Verse 10, it is addictive; he who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. There's an aspect of this seeking after being rich. The reason you buy the lottery ticket there's something about that, that once you get it, you want more. Now isn't that, can't we in a microcosm see that from the time you started in the workforce and if you are like most people you got bigger paychecks the longer you went a long and you realize wow, you're right, I mean I thought if I just had that, if I could just make 25 thousand dollars that would be awesome. And it ain't so awesome anymore. I mean that's what your pool repair costs this year, right? It's too uncomfortable to laugh at that one for most of us.

Verse 11, oh and by the way, when goods increase they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes, and the Hebrew word if you've heard me teach on this passage before, is the word, it's an intensified word it's like to gaze at them, to keep watching them. I think and rightly so I think the commentators that talk about the idea of the form of the language which here, the idea of I got to keep an eye on it. It's funny how that works. I mean you didn't really worry about the really expensive security system when you lived in the one bedroom apartment. Now we need cameras and are electric fences legal in Orange County? I mean listen I know what happens, you get more stuff and there's more things that you have to pay for to maintain all that stuff, it's costly to maintain it. Oh and by the way verse number 12 there's something stressful about having all this stuff. Sweet is the sleep of the laborer, oh man, yeah nothing much better than having a good nights sleep, so good that you call it sweet. Wow, that would be great. Whether he eats little or much, man, he's sleeping away, snoring away and he's just a laborer. Oh but the stomach of the rich will not let him sleep. I think that's poetic, more than just the fact that you stuff your face before bed. It's a lot of stress, a lot of stuff, I've gone way up the ladder here in the job and making all this money, got all this responsibility, I can't even sleep at night anymore. There's a grievous evil that I've seen under the sun: riches that were kept by their owner to his hurt. Talk about security that doesn't sound like security to me.



Not to mention its very uncertain look at verse 14. And those riches, a lot of people they amass a lot of riches and then it's lost in a bad venture. I don't know how many times I can tell you about people just as a pastor getting to know families and people, they come into their inheritance they get this windfall they do something in their business and they get a big payday and then all of a sudden you find within two years, five years, seven years, eight years, it's gone. Of course you got to invest it and this you've got to turn into lots of money, invest it in this; you've got to put it. Yeah doesn't sound like security. At the end of the thing there's nothing to pass onto your kids, he's a father of a son, and he has nothing in his hand. Not to mention he's going to die. You want to talk about fleeting, you want to talk about no security, go back to the idea of tonight your soul is required of you. He says think about it, he came from his mother's womb and shall he go again, naked he came and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry with him in his hand. Like that old line when Carnegie died, I think it was Carnagy, they asked a question on the news, how much did he leave behind and the snarky pithy answer was everything, all of it. As Jay Vernon Magee use to say there's no U-haul behind the hearse, right? You can't take it with you. Well, yes that's true but it's nice to have it while we're here. I understand that's what we think but in reality it's such a short term thing that according to this passage it can be addictive, it's costly to maintain, it's stressful, it's uncertain.

Not to mention verse 17, it doesn't exempt you from life's problems. Moreover all his days, this rich man, all his days he eats in darkness. Guess what? It gets dark for rich people just like it does for poor people. Much vexation and even you can say that's a compounded problem for the rich, there's even more frustration and annoyance and vexation and sickness. I don't care what kind of expensive yoga classes you take, I don't care what kind of supplement, I don't care if you get your blood changed out every week from some rich healthy people somewhere around the country you are going to get sick. Rich people and poor people, you can't get around it. Not to mention you're going to have fights with your wife, I bet you're going to kick the dog; you're going to get mad. Rich people get just as mad as poor people. Even with the rich people with all this security for their life, this fortress they're building, their eating their bread in darkness, vexation, sickness and anger.

See it's the fool to use Christ's word about the Father to this rich man. It's the fool who pursues money in search of joy. It's the fool that pursues money in search of security. And that is based on the wrong assumption that there's a necessary correlation between those two things. Well, I've experienced the more money I have been secure, and when I had a problem I had money to pay for it. There can be a connection, you can see that money can sometimes be used for those things and maybe some purchase made you really happy. But in reality there's no necessary correspondence between the two. And just breaking that myth may start to help us be freed from the real problem in the passage. And the real problem in the passage is the guarding of my heart. Look at it verse 15, Luke 12:15. He said to them, "Take care and be on guard against all covetousness". Now where does coveting take place? In the invisible recesses of my imagination. It's the tenth commandment that says, listen, you're going to look through the window of your house and you're going to see your neighbor. And you're going to see your neighbor's stuff, and you're going to see your neighbor's house, and you're going to see your neighbor's beautiful wife and you're going to see your neighbor's herds, you're going to see all that he has and you're going to be tempted to say as the Hebrew word puts it, the pleasantness of all that and you're going to gaze at that thing. How great that would be for me. That's coveting.

Translate it from the Old English, which I think came through Latin, it's the cupidity the covetousness, the greed of it all. And by the way, Jesus was trying to illustrate this with the rich man, who has a bumper crop, look at how many times you see first person pronouns, the shift and the focus of this, is not about what can I do with what God has given me it's how can I make myself happy. I, me, mine, my, why? Because I want to relax, and I'd like to eat, and I'd like to drink, and I'd like to be married. The focus is me. Now, there's one sin we so easily overlook and that's the self-focused orientation and let's just combine those two in the second point the way we word it. Put it down this way if you would, we need to beware the selfish sin of greed.

2. Beware The Selfish Sin Of Greed

Guard your heart against that, that's the idea. Covetousness is greed. And the illustration adds this descriptive, it's a selfish sin. It's a focus on who I am and what I'm going to get and the pleasantness that I could experience if I just had more. Be careful with that, beware the selfish sin of greed. Well, I picture rich people being greedy. And even in this passage it says the land of a rich man produced plenty and you know I'm not rich. If I said, let's see a show of hands of all the rich people here, I doubt it would be every hand would shoot up, I'm rich. You'd probably go, [hand



gesture pointing] I parked next to that guy, that guy is rich. Turn with me if you would to 1 Timothy chapter 6. I know it's easy to see the sin of selfish greed in someone who you think they've got more than enough. He's buying his second Tesla? Come on man, because you're driving around in a Honda. But I just want to ask you this question? As if they cared, but let's just say the saints in heaven decided to take a little interest in Compass Bible Church this weekend, they want to look over the rails of heaven. Oh that preacher down there, that little church in the edge of that nation called America, look at those guys, they're having a sermon on materialism and greed and covetousness. Let's check in on those, oh yeah, look at those there. And when you're sitting there going, that guy's rich over there, he's rich. Do you think the saints in heaven are looking at you going you're right man, you're just barely making it but that guy's rich. That's what I call the "L-shaped Amen", remember what that is? [Holding arms up in an L shape] - Preach it pastor this guy needs it. Do you think any of the saints in heaven are going to engage in the L-shaped Amen? Do you think they're going to say Amen to your L-shaped Amen? No way. The definition of rich is an interesting definition. We often think of someone else and it doesn't apply to you. Look at this passage if you would, look at verse 7. 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 7, we brought nothing into the world we cannot take anything out of it either but if we have food and clothing with these we will be content.

So he's staring with a baseline, here's the benchmark if you have food and you have clothing that should be enough for us to say we got what we need because the opposite of covetousness, here it is, it's contentment. That's where it starts. Godliness with contentment it's a great thing to have, it's great gain. Some people are trying to use Christianity as gain for their economic greedy covetous excesses. No, no, Christianity if you have food you can be content. If that's the baseline, I just got to ask you, is there anything processing through your small intestine right now? That's kind of personal Pastor Mike. No, you've got food in your belly do you not? So you've got food you haven't even processed yet. Right, you had breakfast. Well, I didn't have breakfast I rushed to church, I kind of slept. Last night, you had enough caloric intake to cover this morning, am I right? Feel stuff going on in here right now? You got food, and you can probably make it to lunch with out fainting, you will. As a matter of fact we have a scale in the lobby if you want we can find out we're having way more calories than any of us need. Am I right? So you got food. Matters of fact you are rich in food. I can go to your house; I want to see your pantry. I could probably hang out there for a long time just out of what you took from your haul from Costco this week alone is probably plenty for you for quite some, you have food. You're rich in food. And clothing? Not a naked person in the room. Not a naked person. You've got clothes. Matter of fact when you went looking for your house or even your apartment you wanted a big closet. Why did you want such a big closet? Because have you seen my wife's clothes? Oh yeah, but you only have one pair of pants, only one shirt. You got plenty of clothes. Matter of fact you are rich in clothes. You are rich in clothes and you are rich in food. I can prove that too you, half an hour this afternoon at your house, I can prove it to you. You're rich.

This passage is about contentment, saying here is the baseline, beyond that we're talking about riches. You really got to have more than that; you're pursuing something that's beyond your basic to need. You're not living under the underpass, maybe a small apartment, maybe a smaller condo, may not be the best house in your neighborhood but you got plenty in terms of covering, clothing and food. As a matter of fact, I looked this up this week saying, what's the whole one percent? What income do you need for that? And it's funny because I read all these articles and all these financial websites, well here's what the one percenters because that's the whole political, one percenters. Those nasty one percenters. You know everyone in the room is probably a one percenter. Here's the stats, if you made \$1500 in the last year, you gave more than that to your kids for allowance probably, right? 15 hundred dollars, even right there you're in the top 75% of earners in the world right now. If you made \$25,000 last year, right? \$25,000 they won't even let you into the border of Orange County without making that much. \$25,000 Do you realize you're in the top 10% of earners in the world, right now, in this day, right now. And if you pulled down \$50,000 welcome to the one percent club. You're in the 1% club. International world, the global earnings for a household, your household brought in \$50,000. One percenter. I didn't think I was a one percenter. That's why you need such a big closet, right? You are a one percenter, you're rich.

Now the simpleton preaching this passage the pastor who's not going to think, you know, contextually about this could easily try to make you feel bad about having \$50,000 a year or far more like most of you have. But see that's not what the Bible says. This is not about the issue of how big your inheritance is it's not really an issue of how much money you make. It is an issue of the heart and whether you have going on in your heart the selfish covetousness, the greed that Jesus says, don't let that happen. Be on guard, take care, don't let that into your life, because if you do, your, verse 9 – are you still in 1 Timothy 6? – your desire to be rich will lead you into – now highlight these words – temptation, there's the first thing, here's the second thing, snare, there's the second word to

highlight, a trap, there's a carrot there, go get it, go get it, and then snap, it closes on you. That's a snare, a trap. Temptation. Snare. Here's another one to highlight, many senseless, there's a descriptive word. You will do things that heaven's saints will lean over and say that's crazy what they just did, whoo, crazy, senseless and harmful. Do you think coveting is prohibited because God's trying to make sure you eat your little bowl of rice and you never get steak? No. He's not about trying to keep you from anything; this is because God does not want you to be tempted to be trapped, to do stupid senseless things and to be harmed. Those are harmful desires and they plunge men into, here's another word to highlight, ruin and another word, destruction. Now if I said there's something out there at Toy-R-U's for your kids that if you buy it, it's going to lead them into temptation, a snare, senseless, harmful desires, ruin and destruction, are you going to buy that for them? Well my kid, he's pretty savvy, he can probably steer clear of it. When you do read about the curse of the lotto winners I know you think, I think I can handle it, I pray a lot. I'd figure it out. And by the way speaking of the lottery, those of you with a lottery ticket in your pocket, no one buys a lottery ticket who does not desire to be rich, particularly this week, right? The passage says right here, hey those who desire to be rich, I'm talking right now to you, temptation snare senseless harmful desires ruin and destruction because I love the thought of having a billion dollars.

Look at the next line, for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. Through craving, this craving, some have wandered away from the faith, they use to sit next to us and now they're gone and they pierce, another word to highlight, themselves with many pangs. You've got to guard your heart, beware the selfish sin of greed. That should not be what consumes your heart. That should not be the craving. What kind of craving should I have? Verse 11, I'm glad you asked. But as for you oh man of God, even if you're just sitting there with food and clothing, flee the things of wanting to be rich, pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. What are the rich suppose to do? Verse 17, you are rich, I'm rich, the Bible says this, as for the rich in the present age charge them not to be haughty, tell them not to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches. There's no necessary guarantee that you'll have something there to protect you, to safeguard you against the unforeseen problems of the future. It's uncertain. Set your hope rather on God, now here's a twist, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. Oh there's something weird. So God can provide you with money that is enjoyable and yet he says guard your heart. Saying like the man said I just got to have the money that's due me, its right, I need to get every penny that I should get. I should get it. That kind of concern, he says, be careful, guard your heart covetousness, instead as the illustration makes clear, the man who had plenty, the rich man produced plentifully, his crops did so he came into more money, he made sure he got every dime of it.

What are we suppose to do? Verse 18, be good, tell them to do good, be rich in good works, generous and ready to share. Don't get me started on that. You understand here's one of the problems, not only are you more likely to kill yourself based on your income you are less likely to be generous. Less likely. If I were to just for the sake of illustration divide our crowd up here. You guys minimum wagers right here, minimum wage, sorry. Middle income, upper middle income. Hey, richy rich people over here, super rich, whooo, God's blessing, blessing them, right? The Bible says we ought to be, if you're rich, generous and ready to share. Do you know that the more you move from this side of the auditorium to this side, generosity starts to dissipate? The richer you are, the less generous you are, that is statistically proven. On the back I put some book, "Passing the Plate" the Oxford Press Study. Look at the data, a lot of data in that book from the University about American giving trends. It says the more money you make the less you give. That's just the standard, and I know you're sitting over there, hey rich people over there you're going, "Hey man, my check has got a lot of zeros on it baby, I'm doing a lot here. This church, all my charities [vocalizing]" And over here, you're feeling bad because your check is really small. Your little transfer of funds doesn't even, it's small. You guys are giving more on average, percentage wise, based on your gross income than these guys. That's the stats and it's consistent in just about every evangelical church in the country. You feel better because your check is bigger but just like Jesus pointed out in Mark chapter 12 the widow who just had a couple coins and tossed them in, he said, oh look at that, that is huge giving because it wasn't about the dollar amount it was about the percentage that was given. Now I'm going to blow your mind based on that book. Look it up. You know the more biblical and orthodox your theology is, the less you give. What? No way man. Yes, it's exactly right. You know you go down the street to the cults that are meeting this morning, talking about all their extra revelation from God and another testament of Jesus and all that, the cults out give us per capita than evangelical churches every time. Now think about that. The richer you are in material things and the richer you are doctrinally and theologically the less likely you are to be generous. And the Bible says hey guys if you got it going right in the verse 6 to 11 in terms of theology and you got a lot going on material wealth verse 17-19 then I'm telling you, you ought to be generous. Why? I think we're back to Ecclesiastes chapter 2 and chapter 5. There's something about money that messes with our heart, and it gives us a lot of rationalization as to why we're not covetous when in fact we are. Be



Careful, all I can do is give you the biblical data. You're going to have to sit there in your own heart and sort this out, because you can rationalize this and you got to make decisions about putting money into your retirement, you got to make decisions about investment you got to make decisions about futures and all that, I understand that. But make sure you understand you're not answering to me, you're not answering to your family even, you're going to answer to God ultimately. And make sure when you say, "Well I got reasons for investing here, I've got reasons for saving this, I've got reasons for piling that up." Just make sure you're ready for the day when the Bible says, God is going to reveal everything. Everything hidden in darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts. Just know you have to answer to Him one day about how you treated your money. Because heavens looking over the rails going look at those rich people in Orange County. Well, I'm not rich; I'm only making you know \$25,000 a year. Top ten percent of even our generation in the world.

As long as we're in 1 Timothy 6 can you read verse 19? If we really take this to heart we say okay listen I'm not going to clench these worldly possessions that God has given me. I'm going to do good works, I'm going to be ready to share and I'm going to be generous. If you do that you'll thus be storing up treasure for yourselves as a good foundation for the future, capital F. The future, the coming kingdom of Jesus that I'm storing up treasure in heaven. So that they may take hold of that which is truly life. Now that ties us back to our passage. Luke chapter 12 look at it there it's printed on your worksheet. The bottom of verse 15 the punch line to this man is for one's life does not consist, it is not made up, the component parts of real life does not consist in how much stuff you have and the abundance of your possessions. That's not that point, why? Because he goes back to verse 20 at the end of this parable and he says, listen when God says you're dead, you're dead. And when God says he wants to grant you enjoyment, He's going to grant you enjoyment. If there's no, here is how we started, no necessary correlation between money and joy and security than here's the point. When it comes to those things and everything else we crave as human beings the provider of all those things is not money, let's be very clear, it's God. Jot it down, number three, you got to realize that God provides what we crave, it's not money.

3. Realize God Provides What We Crave [Not Money]

God provides what we crave. He can let you take a hold of that which is truly life and it is not necessarily related to money. I can prove this for you real simply. Here's some familiar verses for you, Psalm 127 verses 1 and 2. It starts this way, unless the Lord builds the house, those who labor, labor in vain. What's the point? It means let's just say, if I'm building barns and I'm putting, let's just use financial as the illustration. If I want to build those barns and I want to build up this portfolio and I want to have this huge retirement. Listen, if you set out to that, unless the Lord wants to accomplish that it's not going to be accomplished. Now let's talk about the security part of it. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. If you're storing up money because you need financial security you need to take those two words and you need to cleave those two words and to realize if I need financial security I need God's security because God is the giver of security and it's not my money. Now I'm going to save up because I know that there may be lean days when I can't possibly earn money because I'll be senile or whatever that's great. Save your money, but when it comes down to it I don't put my hope on that because I realize security comes from God and not my money. And sometimes he'll use his people for that, sometimes he'll use my family for that. God will do it, I need to trust Him.

David let that shift in his life, didn't he? When we meet David as a young teenager he standing in the valley in the shadow of Goliath and he's got what in his hand? A slingshot. It's not one of these [gesture pulling slingshot] man, he's got one of these [gesture spinning slingshot]. He's got a slingshot in his hand and he's up against the latest technology on the biggest man in the Philistines and he's standing there with all that armament and he says this, "You come against me with sword and javelin, I come against you in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, who's armies you've defined. The Lord will give you into my hands this day." With what? Goliath laughed at him. Here's a little Shepard boy with his little stick and his slingshot and he says, "What am I dog that you come against me with sticks, this is crazy." And David would later with some experience under his belt he would write great songs for Israel like this, some trust in horses and chariots but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. That's how we meet him, that's how he lived till he started drawing on his retirement, looking at his quarterly statements, wondering about the armies on the borders that are sitting there with hostile threats and he says to his commander, "Oh, we got to number the troops man." Now something inherently wrong with numbering the troops? Something wrong with checking your quarterly statements to see how your investments are doing? Nothing wrong with that. There's books in the Bible that are named after God's command to number the troops, Numbers, right? But something went on through the x-ray vision that God saw through the forehead of David that was no longer trusting in the name of the



Lord, he was trusting in horses and chariots and he said get out there and count those troops. Even his commander knew it was wrong, “oh no, don’t” It cost David a lot. It cost the city a lot. It cost a contingent of the nation a lot because he let his trust be shifted, because he did not see the Lord as the provider of his security. You’ve got to make that shift in your heart. I cannot think it is my retirement and I cannot think it is a down payment. I cannot think it’s my job, it is not those things, it is God’s. He’s the giver of all these things.

And happiness I already quoted to you, remember that line, sweet is the sleep of the laborer, whether he eats a lot or a little. Nothing better than a good nights sleep, right? Now think about that, God can give that and yet someone can be really really rich and not have that. Later in the passage I stopped at verse 18, I think, but if you went on in Ecclesiastes 5 verses 19 and 20 you would see this, he says, one good thing I’ve seen is that when God gives those riches and He gives the power to enjoy them. That’s a secondary gift. He can give that gift of enjoyment without it, I can be content just with food and clothing or He can give enjoyment with the riches either way it’s a secondary gift and there’s no necessary connection between those two. The laborer can sleep sweetly and enjoy a nice peaceful night with an empty stomach and a rich guy can toss and turn and as the Proverbs say not to get personal or marital at this point but he said, “Think, I’d rather divide my food with the poor. It would be better even he’s says illustratively I’d rather live in the corner of an attic with a tiny piece of bread like a poor man than in a house with a cantankerous wife.” What’s the point? As he often says I’d rather choose wisdom than silver, I’d rather choose understanding than gold. See I would rather make good decisions in my life based on godliness, even my relationships all the things I do in personal relationships, I’d rather have all those gifts for God so I can enjoy my small piece of bread than to have a feast and have all those things fall apart because God gives enjoyment and God gives happiness, God gives joy, God gives me relational peace, God gives those things and money can’t do it.

I love this line, perhaps an obscure verse for you but worth jotting down Isaiah 29:19. The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor among mankind shall exalt in the holy one of Israel. No matter how much money you have God can provide enjoyment in this life because of your relationship with Him. And as the illustration, the parable made crystal clear as it says in James chapter 4, you can say come now I’m going to go to this city and that city, I’m going to do business there, I’m going to trade, I’m going to make a profit. And James stops them and says, “Whoa, whoa, whoa, you don’t know what tomorrow holds. You don’t know. Your life is like a vapor. Here today, gone tomorrow. Here’s what you should say, you should say, “If the Lord wills” – here’s the first line – “we will live” – we will be alive tomorrow – “and do this or that”. Nothing wrong with planning a business trip to make a profit, but I always recognize the gift of life and every advantage in business or anything else comes from God.

I’m going to ask the ushers to come down the aisles. I’d like to close by us participating in the Lord’s Supper. That may seem like a hard transition for you but it’s not. Here’s the reason. Romans 8:32. Here’s the reason. The Lord’s Supper celebrates the giving of our ultimate provision. That I have a problem of sin and I should be cast into outer darkness but God sent His son to save me, to forgive my sins, to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Now as you guys start passing those elements I want you to think about this everybody, think. He gave us our ultimate need. You believe and trust Him that He secured heaven for you and cancelled hell. Real Christians here in this room we trust in that. We trust that our Eternity, capital E, our Future, capital F, has been provided for by the giving of His son. You believe that. Here’s what it says in Romans 8 verse 32, if he did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all how will he not also with him, he’s given us Christ, graciously give us all things. He’s going to take care of your retirement. You get sick and some protracted illness, He’s going to deal with you and give you all that you need. He’s given you His son so let’s celebrate the ultimate provision of Jesus Christ. And then let us realize that any worry or anxiety about whether or not He’s going to meet my financial needs a year from now or ten years from now is really a foolish thought for us to have. And that’s something that you can detect if you look carefully at your heart because there’s something going on that shouldn’t be, that Jesus said is greed, covetousness.