



“Fool” Part 2...who is in control?

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LUKE 12:22-40 *Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23 "Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. 24 "Consider the ravens, for*

they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? 25 "And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 26 "If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? 27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 "If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? 29 "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. 32 "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 "Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. 34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 35 "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; 36 "and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. 37 "Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. 38 "And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. 39 "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 40 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Earlier in this chapter...at the beginning of this subject matter, Jesus had told a stark parable wherein He audaciously referred to the individual who was operating according to his flesh and according to the world as a “fool.” The warnings He was issuing therein may have been directed toward His apostles, but such was a ‘shot across the bow’ for all of us.

Sadly, few folks will be able to deal with this level of faith message. For many, this chapter will only create a “deer-in-the-headlights” scenario, and that is actually more often the norm rather than the exception. Jesus said in John 16:12, “*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*” I guess that such is common in ministry because Paul virtually spoke the same thing in 1 Corinthians 3: 1-2: “*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able...*” But thankfully, truth is not mandated by what is culturally acceptable, despite what we might hear today.

What separates the spiritual child from the spiritually mature is often the great chasm of “eternal perspective.” A spiritual life is one that is geared up for the “after life eternity” rather than the here and now, and that is quite honestly a rare and defining characteristic today. Truthfully, it seems that if we are not chasing *after* the material, we are worried *about* the care of our material and ultimately wondering how we are going to *pay* for our material.

The world can be so unrelenting in this matter. The worldly “selling of happiness” can become so all-consuming, and even debilitating as it sucks the very life out of us. Life as God intended for us cannot be purchased. And if that is a fact, our lives should be clearly lived differently and thus be obvious to everyone who *IS* watching, by the way.

Luke 11:33, 36 *“No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a basket. Instead, it is put on a lampstand to give light to all who enter the room” ... “If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight is shining on you.”*

Jesus doesn't scold His listener or threaten them, but rather patiently reasons with them. He calls upon them to “consider” what He was saying. For it's an easy thing to fall into without some committed focus to the contrary. Often we begin to make spiritually irrational decisions for the sake of our physical well-being or worse, for the sake of simple *desire*, and our spiritual life then of course takes the “back-seat.”

We need to go on record that Jesus is not suggesting herein that one should not work or not be industrious! He is not saying that we should live our lives ‘off the cuff’ and ‘fly by the seat of our pants’ in some fatalistic ‘c'est la vie’ lifestyle. We know that in fact He taught just the opposite. He is not suggesting that we just let the winds of life blow us around and that we should live like hobo's in a refrigerator box in the alley. Jesus planned ahead (John 12:6). He taught the wisdom of careful and wise vocational efforts (Luke 16:8). And He taught faithfully working in our employment (Eph 4:28).

This passage is also not saying that if we just “surrender all” that we will never suffer or go through hardship. Certainly there have been plenty of faithful saints who have suffered and in fact many have even died for their faith and lifestyle. Despite the modern mantra, Christianity is not easy. It is not the hedge against the ‘bumps’ of living in this world. But Christ does, throughout all of scripture, promise to never leave us.

Note verse 31: *“Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you.”* If we believe we have been born to fulfill both a corporate and personal mission, then it goes without saying that to ‘take the wheel’ of our lives, and the control, the direction, and the decisions therein, one greatly runs the risk that he or she will never experience or fulfill that purpose for which they were created!

The scripture tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith. (Hebrews 11:6) Essentially *faith* is *trust*. So do you trust Him or not? Do our emotions, our moods, our desires and passions supersede His plans for us? Is it not imminently possible...yes, even *likely*, that we can sabotage an awesome journey by fearing the unknown or lusting after the same? Either way we can sure mess things up! 1 Corinthians 2:9 reminds us of the promise! *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* Such simply means that what He has in mind for you is much greater than anything we can come up with for yourselves. Do you believe that Christian?

Much of the angst we experience in this matter is because we so often do not have a clear picture of just what a redeemed life is to actually look like, and we therefore just tend to make it up as we go along. Jesus scripturally calls upon the believer to live with a peaceful heart, work with diligence, (2 Thess 3) and hold our possessions lightly...always being good stewards of what He has given us to care for. We are to ‘live on mission’ and in a constant state of worship. Life in unity with the brothers and sisters that are a part of our body, seeking manifest

holiness and to be a “people set apart.” We are to live life with gusto (Col 3:23) and in all things glorify Him and reflect His light of love to those around us, and through it all still trust Him for the ultimate care and direction of our lives. Without learning these things...without grasping clearly the model He presented, we are left to flounder and stumble our way...slaves to our passions...prisoners to our whims and emotions. A ‘tumbleweed in the wind.’

But the righteous life in Christ can essentially be summed up in verse 31: “...*seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.*” Matthews’s account of the verse adds the word “first”... “seek **first** the kingdom of God.” Notice the careful language use herein. This does not just speak of an *eternal* realm for the believer to look forward to living in one day. This is not a call to an extreme austere lifestyle...a boring and benign 80 years so we might “get ours” in heaven someday. The Kingdom of God is *here*, and abides **around** us and **in** us that are His children, and we are to live dynamically in it. Our focus and our priorities as believers are to live boldly and without fear within that kingdom realm and to place its care and it’s advancement above all else.

Verse 31 is one of the foundational verses of the Christian faith, in that if we would practice this verse we would be well on our way to holy and dynamic living. But most see this verse as “optional” in the Christian life. In truth, we seek first our *own* kingdom and our *own* well-being, and we ultimately lose both! Because try as we may, we will never find a “middle road” of faith, despite the thousands that try to acquire such. It is not scriptural. It is not His nature. God wants *all* of us.

It is those that reject and deny this explicit verse that fail to experience joy in their lives and in the end often turn away from the faith. This verb “seek,” has in its original meaning the idea “to crave and strive after.” **Strive?** Yes...and that despite the vast majority of the modern religious world that wants to reject all work and effort in Christianity! *Their* “kingdom” is found on Sundays in the padded theatre seating and the plush air-conditioned multi-million dollar buildings...doors closed against a lost, dying, and suffering world outside. How glad I am that Jesus did not come and seek to establish such a kingdom! For He would have never been taken to the cross...He never would have died, and I would still be lost for eternity in my sin!

God longs to bless His kids! He *wants* you to be *joyous* and *blessed*! We must know that the answer to holy living isn’t to purposely live in poverty either. That lifestyle has its own unique pains and distractions! His desire is that believers rid themselves of any weight...financial or otherwise that would hamper our service to Him and our enjoyment of His greater blessings. So many of us own just enough, are involved in secular pursuits to such a degree, and have just enough distractions and debts that we never see the great and the grand things of God’s kingdom and His plan for us! It comes down to the simple premise that we are just not investing in the right things! **Nothing** should come between us and our God or our service and relationship with Him!

Herein lies the dilemma. We read about what scripture says life in the eternal will be like: *the service, the worship, the union life between believers, etc*, and the reality is that a lot of us just don’t get into those things here without a fair amount of compulsion. If that lifestyle is not your desire here and now, why would you want that forever in eternity? Usually, we are just motivated by the ultimate prospect of death and fear of the alternative.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” So let’s ponder upon that question: *Where is your treasure today? What holds the greatest value and elicits the greatest passion and motivation?*

It's not hard to see where and what is one's love and priority. At least it's not to those around us! We are so reluctant to look honestly at this verse and ask ourselves this crucial question. Is your treasure in this world? Is it your career? Your family? Your possessions? Or is your treasure in Christ and His kingdom? The answer controls our lives, our decisions, and our destiny, *our eternity*.

Verse 35 says "*Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning.*" The New Living Translation renders this verse, as "*Be dressed for service and well prepared.*" The true servant of Christ is to be diligently and faithfully about the business of the kingdom until His return. We are called to be forever ready to depart this life on any given day and to know we have "finished well."

Verse 35 may seem ambiguous to us, but the listener then would have clearly understood what He was saying. In the days of Christ, a belt was worn around the waist that was drawn up to hold the long, flowing garments close to the body when a person was preparing to walk quickly or run. This was especially true when a person was going into battle! Jesus was calling upon His disciples to be prepared to *move*. Move into battle, move to depart this world, always able to be mobile and ready to serve Him in any and every way!

We are called to keep "...*your lamps burning.*" The lamp naturally was to burn to provide sight for the path ahead. When we fail to keep the lamp burning, we do not know where we are going and are sure to spend a lifetime stumbling around in the dark without direction. And this is *our* responsibility and does not just happen on its own. "*YOU keep your lamp burning...*"

There will certainly come a day, a day which seems to be imminent, when the 'groom' will return and He is frankly wondering just who will be here waiting? Verse 36 cuts to the chase: *is He your master?* Are we "watching" for His return, or are we busy about the things of this world? Luke 18 "*...But when I, the Son of Man, return, how many will I find who have faith?*" He said that He has gone "*...to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*" Jn 14:2-3

Our text tells us that at that coming party, Jesus Himself will be host and will serve us! Can you imagine? Seems incredible, had it not been for the fact that He has been doing that for such a long time already. Notice that Jesus says it is the one who is diligent and constant in their life...in their "watching" for His return that is "blessed." So our peace in God is conditional. We don't like to admit that, but Jesus says it's true!

Scripture is relentless on this issue: peace comes only through diligent and faithful service and being watchful for our Master's return. We start this race thinking that such will be a breeze, because we're in love. But it isn't long before we come to realize that such a life is harder than one thinks! For the world is diligent in *it's* message...*unrelenting* even, and a lover of Christ can ill afford to let down his guard even for a moment.

It has been said that "A Christian either leaves his wealth or goes to it." Where is your treasure? What are you investing in today? How we can attempt to "straddle the line" on this matter, and any such attempt means we lose on both accounts. We lose in this life...having never experienced the joys of His kingdom here and now, and fail to ever know our ultimate purpose and path that God so lovingly made us for! And then, we can go on to fail to know His eternity, because we were never really His, just nice churchgoers playing church on Sunday.

James 5:8 "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."