

Scarcity or Abundance?

Luke 12:13-21

INTRO:

Scarcity . . . or . . . abundance? A Scarcity mindset is ... worrying that you do not have enough. An Abundance mindset is... trusting that you will or do have enough. **Which sounds better to you?**

We are blessed with the abundance of God's gifts. Material abundance is a gift, not necessarily our possessions, not the insurance against the impending tragedies of life. It is in the provisions of God for our life and sustenance. **In God, is there scarcity, or is there abundance?**

ME:

I feel the most stressed out when I have in the back of my mind that I don't have enough resources to do what ever I am trying to do. That is a scarcity mindset. I am the most calm when I trust that all the resources are there to do whatever I need to do , or whatever God calls me to do.

YOU:

Do you focus on scarcity or on abundance? Let's see what Jesus can teach us about this:

but first let's pray...

GOD:

Luke 12:13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." 16 Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. 17 And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

WE:

Luke's gospel seems to be quite the collection of *pithy* and *punchy* wisdom sayings in this twelfth chapter. The text today started with a question about **inheritance** and finishes up with a **moralizing command** with the parable of the rich man, or maybe better the rich fool.

The man is rich and has a lot of land. So rich that he can tear down his barns and build new ones, for more storage. The problem is the guy's con-

confidence in his riches. He does not make the connection between his fortune and God's graciousness or his responsibility to that graciousness. Only the rich man speaks — to himself. When you are this rich, you are your own council, I guess. *He doesn't even talk to God!* He just does what he thinks is best and he eats and he drink and he is merry.

God talks to him, though. God unexpectantly speaks words of truth to him. Not judgement . . . *just the facts ma'am*. His insecurity is revealed, because riches do not help one be immune from death. It is the facts of life . . . we die. Life has its limits. His building campaign crumbles and so does his false sense of security. His foolishness is unmasked.

They say this text is non-christological. There is no savior in the story, no redeemer. In fact, even though the story is told by Jesus, anyone could have told it.

It is unwise to try to secure our lives with material things.

Here is a parable about life, about the facts of life — our lives do not consist in the abundance of our possessions

Most of the teaching was directed mainly to his disciples, but then a man in the crowd said to him, “**Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.**” It may have been common to take domestic disputes to respected teachers or rabbis for guidance, but it must have been very disappointing to Jesus to be talking about serious spiritual things and have

someone make a selfish demand like this. The issue exposed the materialistic obsession of the man's life and brought another warning from Jesus.

Jesus told them a parable about a rich man's ground that produced a good crop. The fact that he was already a rich man means that he was both a good farmer and a good manager. He had experienced good harvests before, enough that his barns did not have room for the new crop. He already had more than he could consume. Faced with no place to store his new crop, he decided he would tear down the barns he had and build some bigger ones. Then he would have room to store all of the excess grain. It sounded like the good business plan of a wise businessman. But then he said to himself something that betrayed the basic orientation of his life: **"You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."** The man was greedy, self-centered, incapable of seeing beyond himself, and unmoved to share his good fortune with anyone else. He didn't see himself as a steward of the goods given to him by the good providence of God.

The rich man could not see beyond himself. He could not see beyond this world. He had enough to take life easy. He could spend his life eating, drinking, and having fun. But God called the man a fool. That very night the man would die, and God asked him, **"Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"** His abundance could not accompany him into the new world for which he had not prepared himself. Jesus said, **"This is how**

it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." We can be rich in this world's abundance and have a scarcity in heavenly possessions.

Do you ever add to the abundance of others? It may only take a second or a few minutes. It doesn't even have to cost you anything, or at least one more than a stamp. Let me demonstrate:

An airline pilot flying between Spain and England received a very special note from a passenger recently, sharing it on social media. The passenger, mindful of a recent pilot-caused airline crash in the French Alps, wrote a heartfelt thank you for a safe flight to her family back home, appreciative, perhaps for the first time, of someone she had taken for granted every time she set foot on an airplane. **"You're making a massive difference and you're the reason I can smile tonight,"** she writes. **When was the last time you truly saw and appreciated one of the "invisible" people who deeply impact your life every day?** Perhaps gratitude and mindfulness of such folks will help you see your life in a new light. Shifting from scarcity to abundance.

THE SERMON IN A SENTENCE:

We have all we need to do what God wants us to do, we should remember that and get busy doing what God wants us to do.

YOU:

Do you feel like you have all you need to do what God wants you to do ? How will you work to remember this? How will you tune yourself to recognize the abundance there is in Christ? How will you abandoned a scarcity way of thinking about life?

CLOSE:

A party of pioneers on the Oregon Trail suffered for weeks from a scarcity of water and grass for their animals. Most of the wagons had broken down, causing endless delays in the stifling heat. A feeling of fretfulness and futility prevailed. Optimism and cheer were gone. Courage was in limited supply.

One night the leaders called a meeting to air complaints. When they gathered around the campfire, one man stood up and said, "**Before we begin our grief session, don't you think we should at least first thank God that he has brought us this far with no loss of life, with no serious trouble from the Indians, and that we have enough strength left to finish our journey?**"

The other settlers agreed. After the brief prayer, all that could be heard was the cries of a distant pack of wolves. There was otherwise stone silence

around the campfire, because no one had any grievances they felt were important enough to voice.

They suddenly realized if they couldn't be satisfied with what they'd received, they could at least be thankful for what they'd escaped. Thankfulness enabled them to see the mercies of God they had been overlooking. From scarcity to abundance. Now go and do likewise . . .

Let's pray together first...