

Here these Words again from Jesus our Lord. A reading from Luke 12:16-21, *Then (Jesus) told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' 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. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' 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?' So, it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."*

Relax, eat drink, and be merry. The rich man got that part right, but for all the wrong reasons. And Jesus criticizes him for it!

Did you catch the number of times that rich farmer used the word 'I' or 'my' in this parable that Jesus told? Maybe somewhere around nine or ten. Whatever the number is, it is a lot for just a few verses. I suppose the point is that the struggle for us is that God gives us all the things of life, house and home, spouse and children, land and animals, food, and shelter and everything. When we forget it is so easy to forget that God is the behind everything we see, touch, feel, smell and taste. It is easy to take all this for granted.

Of course who can blame this rich man. In his mind he had a good plan. He worked hard and the plan worked. Now He could enjoy the fruit of his labor. Relax, eat, drink, and be merry. Except for one thing. The rich man in the story simply forgets that God is the giver of all good gifts and now his life is about to end and a the old saying goes, you can not take it with you.

During these days we drive down the road and see the crops growing and we can certainly are thankful for the farmers who plants, cares for a crop all the way through harvest time. Do we see that is God the Father Almighty who provides the farmer with the skill, knowledge, and strength, along with the sun and rain, who is the source behind all these gifts. One member of another congregation I served, who farmed certainly saw God in all this. He often spoke that from one seed planted you got one hundred kernels one hundred days later.

When God created this world, He gave mankind the opportunity to be a co-worker in caring for this creation. "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden and to care for it and tend it," Genesis 2:15. This work was to be a joy. Tragically, mankind fell into sin, ate the forbidden fruit. The work that was intended to be a joy and a delight, became dull and burdensome. King Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes, the second chapter complains about this. You work yourself to the bone and look what it gets you. When you die, it all gets left to all who follow to enjoy. The riches that one accumulates does not bring about true meaning. In the end it comes down to our relationship with God and seeing the Lord as provider and enjoying all these gifts. "Relax, eat, drink, and be merry."

But again we can by In the words of St. Paul, "Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."

The Psalms have a word for a person not interested in God or a relationship with Him. Psalm 14:1, "The fool says in his own heart, 'there is no God.'" That is the same word Jesus Christ, the Son of God begotten of the God the Father from eternity calls the Man in the story. A fool.

The problem was not that man was rich. He is the fool because he has left God, the giver all good gifts out of all his plans. He has not thought about his eternity. He has no relationship with the Lord. It is all about him.

Jesus tells this parable as a response to a questioner who wanted Jesus to divide an inheritance with his brother. Jesus who knows the hearts of all quickly sensed that there was more going on here than just fair distribution. There was greed and coveting involved. Jesus could see his heart was not in the right place. Disputes of this kind arise because people set their hearts on the wrong kind of riches. God offers a better way, a way that is not dependent on earthly wealth and success as the true source of meaning. Those things kind of come and go. The true joy and riches that are eternal cannot be found in the stuff of this world. They are gracious gifts of our heavenly Father who gives both eternal riches and unending joy in our earthly lives through the life of His Son Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came into this world as King of kings and Lord of lords. He came having no fancy clothes and no place to lay his head. Yet at the last every

knee will bend and bow before him. Why, because he was poor? No, because he carried out His Father's will to save us. He came to buy us back from sin, death, and devil. Not with silver and gold through shedding His own precious blood on the cross through His atoning sacrifice. Through His innocent suffering and death and his glorious resurrections he has claimed us as His sons and daughters. We have a priceless inheritance that is not measured in dollars and cents, in land and animals that we may own, or even the number of barns we fill up. As God's children through His grace and faith in Jesus Christ, we are destined to inherit everything that is His, and that means everything.

So, with our lives in Christ, having died to our old sinful self with all its fleshy desires in holy Baptism and raised to new life in Him who saved us we can truly say, "Relax, eat, drink, and be merry." Relax, because of faith and your baptism give you the assurance of God's love, care, and promise for you. Eat, the heavenly food feasting on God's Word and the bread of life from the Lord's Supper, and drink from the Cup of Blessing. And lastly be merry for what an inheritance we have received from Christ.

Therefore, we can and should give thanks for all the blessings and abundant harvests we experience, and the material blessing receive.

And may this bring us all the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.