

a heavenly picture and it is one that is helpful to us all. The rich fool is that because he consistently struggles to get more and more and actually attains his ends. He builds bigger storage units while he keeps this stuff to himself and insists that his soul will have all that it needs---ever. But he did not take into account the fact of death and on the very night of triumph he is taken away from all his stuff and the Lord simply says...who will get these things now? It is more important in the teaching of the Lord to lay up treasures for yourself in heaven that to secure gluttonous amounts here on earth for no eternal purpose. (Editor's note: there is a lot of data in Ecclesiastes to illustrate this, cf, chapter 2)

II. The point of the parable:

Unless we are careful, prosperity may alienate us and self-satisfaction may isolate us from the needs of others or the potential meaningless status of our own things. God's gifts and blessing are given to us that we might be aware of Him and we should not be preoccupied with things rather than with our Lord. It is a particular lesson to believers who often do not have "much" in worldly terms and think that if they did their contribution to the kingdom would be greater. Greed, gain and selfishness are vicious foes. If the Lord prospers one we praise the Lord but if greed and gain for self-purposes are the motivating goals...that is a bad sign.

III. The Lesson: Once again the basic lesson may be summarized simple in these three steps:

- A. Be productive, work hard, but trust God primarily!
- B. Let God's gifts to you be shared with others as well as His work!
- C. View all that you have as the blessing of grace and pray to be a good steward with it (1 Cor 4)

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MESSAGE # 4: THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT---LET US LEARN TO SHOW LOVE IN FORGIVENESS

Biblical Passage: Luke 7:35 ff, Matthew 18:23 ff

I. Introducing the parabolic study