

Pentecost 8                      8/3/25  
 St. Luke 12:13-21              13C

TAKE CARE, AND BE ON YOUR GUARD AGAINST ALL COVETOUSNESS, FOR ONE'S LIFE DOES NOT CONSIST IN THE ABUNDANCE OF HIS POSSESSIONS.

Do you remember God's words to Adam in the Garden? God said to Adam, "*Subdue it*" (1:28). All that God had created was there to serve Adam and he was to subdue God's creation and have dominion over it all. Turns out, Adam had more than a little trouble listening to God. And so do we. Instead of subduing what God has entrusted to us and being master of it, we allow our money and stuff to be our masters and we find ourselves enslaved to them.

How true are the words of the book of Proverbs, *Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and **neither are the eyes of man*** (27:20, NIV).

Look at how the eyes of man reared its head in our Gospel. Notice how much and how often our friend uses that little word, "my" -- "my crops," "my barns," "my grain," "my goods." This rich fool mentions himself 12 times in this short parable. By his thinking, everything was his and everything -- even his future -- depended on him. He staked his security, including his eternal security, on himself. But in the end, his "gods" were unable to deliver. He lost everything. That was his folly: he centered his life on goods instead of God. His hoped-for ease and joy was totally materialistic. He most certainly had his daily bread; he was not suffering want, but he wanted more, more, more. Because we live on this earth today, we are attracted to earthly stuff.

Do you happen to recall the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Commandments? What Jesus is really doing in this morning's Gospel is giving us a life's lesson on

these two Commandments. These two Commandments are all about having a holy heart, free from envy and jealousy; they forbid us from coveting. “Coveting” may be a word we do not use every day, but it is a SINFUL LONGING for that which is not yours. And we hear Jesus say to us today, *“Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions”* (v. 15). Jesus echoes the Commandments this morning because coveting keeps you from being truly happy and contented.

Maybe we could think of it this way: We had a most interesting episode happen on vacation. There was a bad storm that knocked out the electricity. And, no electricity meant no coffee. That was not good. And I’m guessing it would not be good for you, either.

I’m going to take a wild guess that you have a lot of electrical things in home, electrical things you are quite fond of. Things like a hot water heater. Am I way off base on that? You have a hot water heater because you have running water in your home. Anyone want to go back to getting a pail of water from the well, or maybe even the river, and heating it on the stove? Anyone?

And that same electricity runs your air conditioning to keep you cool in the summer heat. Not such a bad thing, is it?

And you ranchers, out making hay. Want to trade your John Deere – your air-conditioned John Deere – for a sickle bar mower pulled by a team of horses?

My Dear Friends in Christ, clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, are all gifts from God. This is one of the reasons God does not want us to steal from our neighbor. Nor, does the Lord our God want us to

be jealous or envious. He wants us to have a holy heart filled with contentment at what He has given us.

Stuff, material goods, is, in and of itself, is not bad. The problem for here -- our sinful, covetous **hearts**.

Far too often our attitude is the same as that of the rich fool, "Eat, drink, and be merry." And we justify it, "You only go around once". Far too often we live only for the pleasure of the moment, the here and now. And, if you hurt your neighbor, what is that to you?

You are angry at your neighbor – the "why" doesn't matter – you're just angry, so you gossip, you defame and discredit your neighbor. Like toothpaste once it's out of the tube, once your good name and reputation are destroyed, how do you get it back?

God has given you a wife, a helpmate, but she just doesn't understand you. So, you engage in that secret affair. No one will ever know about, right? And if in the end, you hurt your wife, your children, so what; you got what you wanted. And furthermore, if your behavior results in pregnancy, that life can be ended in abortion because that is what is best ... for you. Well, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you may die, right!

I may live well beyond my means and accumulate a great deal of debt that I can't even begin to pay back. So, the retailer that I owe money to may have to raise their prices to cover their loss. The bank may have to charge more for interest on loans to cover their loss. Everybody is affected and everybody pays because I want to have my toys and live for the pleasure of the moment and it's always – always – **about ME!**

You know who wasn't all about the ME? Jesus. He was content to do His Father's will, even when that meant humbling Himself to be born of a virgin and taking on human flesh and bone. Upon His human frame, He

took on all of your sins – including your sin of loving money and stuff more than God; your sin of seeking happiness and security in barns and bigger barns; your sins of jealousy, envy, and hording – and He carried them all to the cross. There, He entrusted Himself totally and fully to the Father's will, knowing that His death was the Father's will. And because the Son did the Father's will on that cross, the GOOD NEWS, for you, Dear Child of God, is that you are forgiven all your sins. And the Son rose to life again the 3<sup>rd</sup> day to bring you that forgiveness, and life, and salvation

In the new birth of your Baptism, you have died to sin, including the sin of coveting, and been raised to live a new life in Christ. Listen to the words of Paul you have heard read,

*If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth...When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

Raised as a new creation in Christ, with the heart and mind of Christ, we subdue our earthly goods, they do not subdue us. We see that all that we have is a trust from God. That is because He wants us to enjoy the gift of life that He has given us, and He want to ease the burden of life in a world cursed by sin. So, He opens His hand to give food and drink, air conditioning and heating, indoor plumbing and hot water heaters, eyeglasses and blood pressure medicine, and the money and the freedom and the time and the car and all that we need to go to our granddaughter's dance recital.

And yes, He opens His hand to give us stuff that we may care for our neighbor in their need. Jesus has delivered us from coveting, and we want only what Jesus wants for our neighbor. So, when you come to here to the Lord's Table, you are willingly saying that you will bear your neighbor's

burdens and carry their sorrows, just as has Jesus has carried your burdens and sorrows, and carried you. So, God gives you money, and stuff, and health, and freedom, and opportunity, to be Christ to your neighbor.

So let us look with the eyes of faith to God, who opens His hand and gives all that need for our body and life.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.