

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM

Learning from the Parables & Practice of Jesus (Part 5)

The Parable of the Bigger Barns ***Luke 12:13-34***

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

¹⁴Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

¹⁶And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop."

A Key Question: Whose land is it?

¹⁷He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' ¹⁸"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." '

- A world of "accumulative anxiety"
- A "tear-down" society
- A culture where the "good life" is defined in terms of ease, gluttony, and euphoria

²⁰"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' ²¹"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

²²Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes."

²⁴Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!

²⁵Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁶Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

²⁷"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸If that is how God

clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

²⁹And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.

³⁰For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

We are called to live “upside-down” from the way the pagan world lives. Our citizenship in the Kingdom of God will show itself in the different way we handle three realities:

1. Our Passions --
2. Our Piety --
3. Our Possessions --

³²Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

³³Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Christian commitment to financial stewardship has three profound benefits:

1. It keeps us from being slaves to the Kingdom of Thingdom.
2. It moves us progressively into that life-giving Kingdom where our true allegiance and our genuine security is rooted in God.
3. It allows us to be practically and positively part of God’s good work – the King’s reign --in the world.

For Personal Reflection

1. What is your view of the “land” you are farming? Who owns it? What are the implications of that?
2. Do you suffer at all from “accumulative anxiety,” the “tear-down impulse,” the popular notions of the “good life”?
3. Is it clear from the way you handle your passions, piety, and possessions, which Kingdom you belong to?
4. What practical steps could you take to grow in your stewardship?