

POOR IS RICH Luke 12:13-34

Many years ago, the poet Rudyard Kipling was giving the commencement address at the McGill University in Montreal, Canada. He is what he said ... Be aware of an overconcern for money, position and fame. He said “Someday you will meet a man who cares for none of these things. Then you will know how poor you really are!

The fact is this ... you can be as rich beyond your wildest dreams here on earth and yet be extremely poor! And the adverse is true ... you can be as poor as can be here on earth and yet be far richer than the billionaires of this world.

Barbara Hutton was a prime example of that! There was a movie titled “Poor Little Rich Girl: The Barbara Hutton Story” that portrays how all of her riches were of no value compared to how poor her life was. ([Show Graphic](#)).

Listen to the summary of her life as portrayed in the movie ...

She was the heiress to the retail tycoon Frank Winfield Woolworth. Hutton was one of the wealthiest women in the world. She endured a childhood marked by the early loss of her mother at age five and the neglect of her father, setting the stage for a life of difficulty forming relationships. Married and divorced seven times, she acquired grand foreign titles but was maliciously treated and often exploited by several of her husbands. While publicly she was much envied for her possessions, her beauty and her apparent life of leisure, privately she remained deeply insecure, often taking refuge in drink, drugs, and playboys.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poor_Little_Rich_Girl:_The_Barbara_Hutton_Story

Now I want you to compare that true story with a story that may not be a true story but it is certainly a story of truth ...

The story goes that a tax assessor came to the home of a poor Christian worker to determine the amount of taxes he would have to pay. The Christians said “I’m a very wealthy man”

- First, I have everlasting life.
- Second, I have a home reserved for me in heaven

- Third, I have an inheritance that can never be lost
 - Fourth, I have peace in my heart and joy unspeakable
 - Fifth, I have a loving, faithful wife that the Bible says is worth more than precious stones.
 - Sixth, I have healthy, obedient children
 - Seventh, I have loyal friends
 - Eighth, I have comfort for my sorrows and strength for my burdens
 - And ninth ... I have a Savior, Jesus Christ, who supplies all my needs.
- The auditor closed his book. “Truly you are a very rich man but your assets are not subject to taxation.

The Bible no doubt proclaims that those rich in the world’s goods are often poor in what God sees as wealth or riches.

PROVERBS 13:7 says ⁷ **One person pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.**

It is truly possible to be poor and yet be very rich.

I want us to turn to **LUKE 12:13-34** this morning. I know that we have used a portion of this passage already in this sermon series ... but it still has more to tell us that we have not covered.

Let me set the stage for you ...

Jesus is in the midst of a major speaking engagement. Listen to how **Luke 12:1** describes it ... **Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another,**

Right in the midst of this major sermon ... in front of all these people a man stands up ... interrupts the whole event ... to ask Jesus to do something for him. **VERSE 13** tells us that he says ... **“Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”**

We really don’t know much about this guy! We don’t even know his name.

- We know that he is more interested in worldly riches than he is in heavenly riches! We know that because Jesus is offering heavenly riches and this man only cares about an inheritance

- And we also know that he is more interested in himself than he is in Jesus. He is rude to Jesus by interrupting him about something that is completely selfish.
- And we also know that he is willing to try anything to get what he wants because he circumvents the judicial system ... according to VERSE 14 ... and goes to a well-respected Rabbi.
- AND ... we know what Jesus sees right through him. Listen to what he says in response to this man in **VERSE 15 ... “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.**

This man has no clue what really makes a person rich! He is trying to find it in worldly things and not eternal things.

Jesus ... being the Master Teacher ... takes full advantage of what has just happened and teaches about what makes someone rich and what makes them poor.

He tells a parable of a farmer whose fields produce a bumper crop. Rather than using the extra crops to feed the poor ... he wanted to keep it all for himself. So, he decided to build bigger barns so he could hoard the crop. The end result was that God takes his life and everything he kept was lost. You can read about that in **VERSES 16-20.**

After telling the story ... or parable ... maybe as his introduction to his sermon he is about to preach ... *He gives us 6 Lessons* concerning choosing God’s poverty over the world’s riches.

1. Choosing God’s Poverty ... Wipes Out Our Worry

VERSES 22 & 24-26 ... ²² Then 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 ... ²⁴ Consider 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! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”

I had an uncle who used to live in the country just outside of Moonsville. He never locked his doors to his house. He said that if there is anything in there that someone needs bad enough to walk in and take ... then they need it worse than he did! WOW! What if we all had that kind of attitude? What if we held all that God has blessed us with, with such a loose grip? I wonder if we would spend less time worrying and more time enjoying the things that God is doing?

Most of you know that I was a stock broker at one time. I learned a lot about people during that time. One of the lessons that I learned was there is a generation of people in our society that hold tight to their money! They would call several times a week to see how their money was doing. Those people are the ones that went through the “Depression.” They went through a time when everything was scarce. In fact ... some of them missed several meals ... and some even lost their homes. They would always say they were being thrifty or careful. BUT the truth was ... they were worrying! “What if I don’t have this money to fall back on ... then what?” And my first thought is this ... “THEN GOD!”

Jesus tells us in this sermon that if God can take care of the birds of the air ... and we are more important to Him than they are ... then isn’t He going to take care of us? When we worry ... then we are basically saying that we don’t trust what we are putting our faith in to come through. And guess what ... we are right if we are putting our faith in worldly riches!

2. Choosing God’s Poverty ... Pinpoints Our Priorities

VERSES 23 & 29-31 ... ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes ... ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

There is probably nothing that tells you better of what is most important to you than your checkbook ... or for some it would be your “online pay”. If you were to take out your either of those right now and take a look ... where would you find that the majority of your money goes? Does it go for clothes? Then that is your priority. Does it go for entertainment? Then that is your priority. Whatever the majority goes for is what is most important to you.

But Jim ... that is not fair! I have to pay my bills right? Absolutely! Nothing brings dishonor to God any more than when His children do not pay their bills! BUT ... how many of our bills are their ... not because we needed the things to exist ... but we just wanted them!

3. Choosing God's Poverty ... Fortifies Our Faith

VERSES 27-28 ... ²⁷ "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If 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—you of little faith!

Another thing that God's poverty does is it fortifies your faith. When it comes to a point that you cannot trust in your worldly riches any longer ... when it has run out ... then what? Then your faith is going to be tested! Will you trust God to provide for you?

There may be times when God calls you to give when you don't think you have anything to spare. Why do you think He does that? I think it is to see if we will trust in Him. I think it is to see if we will put our faith in Him to provide for us!

My guess is ... if we were to be real honest this morning ... we put more faith in our money than we do God! Someday our money will not come through ... then what?

4. Choosing God's Poverty ... Imitates Immanuel

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

You are most like God when you are giving! This verse right here tells us that God is in the business of giving. The most famous verse in the Bible reiterates that ... **JOHN 3:16** says **God so loved the world that He gave ...** We are most like God when we are giving! So if you want to be passionate about your godliness ... then you have to have a mindset that puts God's Poverty first ... far above worldly riches!

5. Choosing God's Poverty ... Demands Our Dedication

VERSE 33 ... ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

I am going to ask you a really tough question right now ... if you had a dream tonight and God told you in that dream that He wanted you to sell everything you have and give away the proceeds ... would you? Would you completely sell out to God's poverty?

The way that we answer that question tells us where our dedication is. IF we are dedicated to God and His kingdom ... then we will be a giving people. If we are dedicated to ourselves ... like the rich farmer was ... then we will be a hoarding people.

6. Choosing God's Poverty ... Locates Our Love

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

You invest in things you love ... right? I know fellows that spend hours every week on their cars. They wash and wax it. They are constantly tuning it up. They even take Q-tips and wipe out every nook and cranny in the interior. They love their cars! You lean up against that car ... and you would think that you had shot their wife. In fact ... they might not get as upset if you did.

Your love is exposed by the generosity that you extend toward the object of that love! When you love God ... you are generous toward God and His Kingdom. You are willing to be poor in this world for the sake of God's riches. When you love yourself ... you spend everything you have on yourself.

Listen to this ... God has invested in. He has blessed you with things ... but those things are not yours! They are God's. And the way that you use those things determines whether you have chosen God's poverty or the world's riches.

Worldly riches can ...

- Buy a bed but not sleep
- Books but not intelligence
- Food but not appetite
- Finery but not beauty
- A house but not a home

- Medicine but not health
- Luxuries but not culture
- Fun but not happiness.

If you want the things that really matter and really last ... then you have to choose God's poverty over the world's riches.