IN WHAT LIFE CONSISTS…

1. Not in the abundance of possessions
2. But in being rich toward God

A young man was walking down the road one day and found gold coin. After that, he always kept his eyes fastened on road in hope of finding more coins. In course of his life he picked up a great deal of silver and gold. But during that time, he also never saw the flowers on the roadside or flowing streams or mountains. He caught no glimpse of blue sky or white clouds or shining stars. He kept his eyes glued to the muddy road where he found treasure. When he died a rich old man, he knew the earth only as a dirty road in which to pick up money as he walked along. As far as he knew, life consisted of looking at road for treasure.

But is that all there is to life? Far from it. What is there to life? Many say if you have your health, family, friends, you have it all. Others talk about enjoying it while you can.

But Jesus teaches us to take our eyes off the things of this world and look heavenward. We learn from Jesus IN WHAT LIFE CONSISTS. The fool thinks it consists in the abundance of possessions, while the Christian knows it consists in being rich toward God.

In our text, someone in that crowd asked Jesus: Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. The man wanted Jesus to use his influence to make his brother give him his share of the inheritance.

But Jesus refused: Man, who appointed me to be a judge or an arbitrator over you? The Lord could see the man’s greedy eye. Jesus strongly reminded him that his work was not to be a judge or arbitrator. The man misunderstood that Jesus came to save the world from their sin and teach people God’s Word so they would know him as their Savior. Jesus then used this occasion to warn the man and others about the sin of greed.

He told them: Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because a man’s life is not measured by how many possessions he has. Christians need to be constantly on guard that greed does not take hold of their heart. Greed is desiring - a craving - to have more. A man can possess all kinds of earthly goods, but they will not guarantee that his life will be saved. So it is foolish to place riches and life on the same level. This point Jesus emphasizes with a parable.

The land of a certain rich man produced very well. He was thinking to himself, What will I do, because I do not have anywhere to store my crops? He said, This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and goods. And I will tell my soul, Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry.

The man in the parable was prosperous land owner. He had a good year – a bumper crop. He made an honest living. He was not bad or evil. People would probably say he is a model businessman.

But he had a problem. He did not have enough room to store all the crops. He then came upon the idea to build bigger and better barns so he could store it all. He was striving to lay up earthly treasures.

With that he imagines his future is secure. He thought he is now enough stored up to last for many years. He dreamed about his life in the future. He was sure his possessions guaranteed him a life of ease and pleasure. Now he would be able to retire comfortably. He was ready to enjoy some well-deserved leisure time.

People today look at him and call him an honest and wise planner. He would have life made. The world would praise him for being self-sufficient.
But God’s view of him was quite different. God called him a **fool**. The man had elaborate plans, but he ignored God in his planning. He spoke to himself with no thought of God. He never bothered to thank God for his abundant blessings. He was so taken up with the gifts, he forgot the **Giver of all**.

He kept saying: **my grain, my goods** and so on. He failed to realize that all things are the Lord’s and he is just a steward/manager of them. He thought life consisted in the abundance of possessions. It is like holding $1 bill in front of your eyes. The closer you look at it, the less you see of everything else.

In forgetting about God, he also failed to realize that God was in control of life-time. Sure, the man was thinking about the future, but he failed to include God in his plans. He forgot David once said: **Lord, my times are in your hands**. Without God, plans are incomplete. Without God, life is empty, as we heard Solomon tell us in the Old Testament lesson.

Yes, the man was a **fool** because he thought life consisted in the abundance of possessions. He had a rude awakening. God reminded him who really owns all things and who was omitted in his planning. God called him a **fool**.

A **fool** is one who is ignorant of what the real situation is. Scripture says: **The fool says in his heart: There is no g**. He forgot about God. He thought his possessions assured him of a life of ease and pleasure for years to come.

However, that was not to be. **This night your soul will be demanded fr you**. The man went to bed as he did any other night, but this was his last. That **very night** God required him to give an account. The man who was rich in his life, was now spiritually poor.

God sentenced him to a fool’s death – eternity in hell. With all the man’s plans for the future, he never took into consideration God or his son Jesus and that led to a fool’s death in hell forever.

Jesus warns us that this rich fool would not be alone in hell. He says: **That is how it will be for anyone who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God**. This fool’s mistake is same mistake made by many today and it leads to their soul’s destruction. Anyone whose heart desires more and more earthly possessions will begin to store up money or possessions for years to lie ahead. More and more he begins to consider his possessions as the most important thing in his life. God is forgotten in the planning. He **stores up treasures for himself, but is not rich toward God**.

Then God demands his life from him in middle of his planning. He would have to leave all his riches behind. He stands before God as a spiritual beggar whom God must send to eternal punishment. What foolishness.

How different is the life of the one who knows life consists in being **rich toward God**. One who is **rich toward God** depends entirely on God for all things. He **seeks God’s kingdom and his righteousness first**. That does not mean a Christian sits around idly, waiting for God to dump things in his lap. A Christian still needs to work hard to provide food and clothing for himself and family, but he does not worry that he has not stored up enough for his future life. A Christian leaves the future and what he needs for it in God’s hands.

A Christian also includes God in all his plans - whether it is planning a meal, a wardrobe, vacation, to where check goes. But sometimes we are like the rich fool and ignore God in planning. But when you make plans, ask your self: **Would God be pleased with plan? Would Jesus be welcomed and feel comfortable at party - would God be ashamed of my behavior?**

At other times we think our future is secure if we lay up enough earthly possessions. I have heard many say: **If I put so much away, I will be able to retire in comfort - have so many years to enjoy**. But that sounds like fool in parable. He had plans for future. He thought
he would have many years ahead of him, but did not. He was called to account that night.

There is nothing wrong with thinking and planning for the future, but we need to include God in our plans. There is also nothing wrong with riches – they are blessings from God. Many a believer has been wealthy: Abraham, David, and Solomon, the richest man there ever was. But the problem comes when greed enters the picture and puts earthly possessions and life on same level. A Christian knows there is more to life than abundance of earthly possessions.

So we need to be on guard against greed. People do not talk about greed – or coveting – as sin anymore. They call someone like rich fool enterprising – a real go-getter. But it is greed, plain and simple. Greed is sin - enough to send a person to hell forever. Greed leads to other sins. Paul writes: Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge them into complete destruction and utter ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evils. By striving for money, some have wandered away from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains.

Again, there is nothing wrong with money – it is the love of money that leads one to wander from the faith and end up like the rich fool. We may be rich in this life, but you cannot take riches with you when you die nor can they help you when God calls you to account. Jesus is the only one who helps then. Without Jesus, we are spiritually poor and will end up in the spiritual poor-house of hell. Hell is full of fools who thought they were rich by depending on earthly possessions.

But depending on God, we are rich. We are rich because we know life consists in being rich toward God. A Christian is totally dependent on God because as the Scriptures point out: It is in him we live and move and have our being. Our existence depends on God. Without him, we are dead.

So when you make plans - whether it is planning what to watch on TV or for future, include God in plans. And do not worry about future - leave that in God’s hands. He will take care of it for you. Depend entirely on God.

Trusting in God, you know there are more important riches than earthly possessions. The greatest treasures you have are forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. These are the only riches that guarantee eternal life. They are not riches we leave behind for others when we die. They are riches God has freely given us in Christ. Jesus guarantees it with his life, death and resurrection.

So do not become too attached to things of this world. They do not last. But store up for yourself heavenly treasures which last. That is being rich toward God. And remember to be thankful for all God has given you.

And if you do not have a great abundance of possessions or earthly wealth, so what? Life does not consist on those things. Life depends on God. So leave it in God’s hands. Let’s learn to be content with what we do have. Life’s worth is not measured by abundance of possessions - only a hell-bound fool thinks that. But life consists in being rich toward God, totally dependent on him for all things. Amen.