

A Rich Fool

by Bryan Gibson

(Luke 12:16-21 NKJV) Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. {17} And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ {18} So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. {19} And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’ {20} But God said to him, ‘**Fool!** This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ {21} So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

This man is called a fool, because he made some foolish mistakes:

Foolishly, he asked the question, “What shall I do?” to the wrong person—himself.

“...He thought *within himself*, saying, ‘what shall I do...’ Things would have worked out a lot better if the “what shall I do” had been directed to the Lord. The Lord’s answer would have been far different than the one he came up with. When Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, Saul asked, “What shall I do, Lord?” (Acts 22:10). That’s the very question we need to ask about everything related to our soul’s salvation.

He foolishly forgot the source of his blessings.

My crops, my barns, my goods—say it long enough and you begin to believe it. What a contrast to the attitude expressed by David: “Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all...all things come from you” (1 Chronicles 29:12, 14). If this fool had remembered the source of his riches, he wouldn’t have made the next mistake...

Instead of sharing what he had, he foolishly stored it all up—for himself.

When his ground “yielded plentifully,” he had plenty of opportunities to do good—the kind of good discussed in the following passage: “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:17-19). This is what the Lord would have told the rich man—if he had asked.

He foolishly counted on having “many years.”

“Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” But before he could even get comfortable, the Lord said, “Tonight your soul will be required of you.” The only thing he had plenty of now was regret. If only he had learned the lesson James tried to impress upon his readers: “Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we

will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit': whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that'" (James 4:13-15).

He foolishly thought "things" could feed his soul.

He was wrong when he said, "*Soul*, you have many goods laid up for many years," because when it came time for the Lord to judge his *soul*, it was lacking the things it needed the most. "One's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses"—that's the very point Jesus was making in this parable (Luke 12:15). "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you" (John 6:27).