

July 16th, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Title: Dying the American Dream
Sermon Text: (Luke 12:15-21)

Historian Edward Gibbon wrote in his book the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire summarized five characteristics on full display that destroyed them.

“The five marks of the Roman decaying culture: Concern with displaying affluence instead of building wealth; Obsession with sex and perversions of sex; Art becomes freakish and sensationalistic instead of creative and original; Widening disparity between very rich and very poor; Increased demand to live off the state.” — Edward Gibbon

I am sure you have heard this before, but if you haven’t it will be good to take note of; it is called the Life Cycle of a Nation. Throughout history, Biblical and secular, societies, and cultures, seem to follow a particular trend.

Bondage
Spiritual Faith
Courage
Liberty
Abundance
Selfishness
Complacency
Apathy
Dependence
Back to Bondage

It has been said that what one generation accumulates, the next generation dissipates.

Economists, published in the last year their findings that of Wealthy Families 70% of one generations’ wealth is lost by the second generation, and 90% of a generation’s wealth is squandered by the third generation.

It has turned out that the American Dream for one generation of people turns into a nightmare for others. And what many people consider to be Living; when you lay it against the backdrop of scripture, is not a picture of someone living a dream, but rather just dying to live.

I want to tell you today that none other than the Lord Jesus Himself warned us about a Life Lived in Pursuit of what has collectively been called the American Dream. — I’m for America! — I want nothing to do with Dreams.

Four things to see in these 8 verses.

A Mistaken Thought – “And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And He said unto him, **Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?**” – vs 13-14

**Note – There are at least two things that stand out about this exchange Jesus had with a man, who by the grace of God remains unnamed.*

- **He has No Awareness of the Word of God** – “And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”

1. – This has absolutely nothing to do with the things Jesus was preaching.

- Listen to the list of things that Jesus had been speaking to the multitude about in chapter 12:

- the Hypocrisy of the Pharisees
- the Revealing of all Secrets at the Judgment
- The warning of persecution
- The promise of protection
- The blessing of boldness
- The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit
- The promise of the Holy Spirit to be with them during their future trials.

*Note – Christ had been preaching on the heavy things, the heavenly things, the holy things, and the hard things; and it is here, this unnamed man blurts out to Jesus – **“MY BROTHER WON’ T SHARE!”**

The preaching and teaching and very Words of the Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of Heaven and Earth, Savior of Men, and Lamb of God, were met with a Childish Disconnect, and a Clueless Disregard by a man worried more about his pile of temporary dirt, than Light from the Eternal Judge!

Here is one of the brightest signs of immaturity for anyone to see. – When you want Jesus to speak to what you are interested in, more than you getting interested in what Jesus is speaking to.

- Christ was preaching on Safety and Security in God, Judgment to Come, Persecution to Arrive, Freedoms to be taken; and it is almost as though this man says, FINE, But what about THIS?

- Rule Number One to stay Spiritually Cognitive. – Never demand that the Lord speak to what YOU are interested in; you had better get Interested in Whatever it is, that the Lord is speaking to! – Got IT!

- **He had no Concept of the Work of Christ – “speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance.”**

*Note – What in the world did that have to do with the mission of Christ? – Not a Blooming Thing!

*Note – The Custom of the day was this; whenever there was an inheritance dispute, or legal dispute over properties or monies, it would be the scribes, and magistrates to settle it.

- To have Jesus speak to this now meant:

- He had no idea what Jesus came to do.

And/or - He knew what the magistrates and scribes would say, and didn’t want to hear it.

And/or – They had already been to the magistrates and scribes, and it had already been ruled or settled.

*Note – The Lord Jesus did not come to earth to rearrange the temporary belongings of temporary people on their way to hell.

- The Disciples thought He Came to Establish the Kingdom.

- This man thought He could set his brother straight!

*Note – In one respect this is no different than Martha telling Jesus that He needed to get on to Mary for sitting with Him instead of washing dishes.

All of that being said, this man is no different than ordinary religious Baptists today, who listens to the Word of God like a hound dog listens to Latin Poetry.

*Note – Now note this – Not paying attention to the things of Jesus brought about one of the clearest and sternest warnings from Jesus.

- This moment began with a Mistaken Thought!

A Serious Warning - “And he said unto them, **Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**”

*Note – The Lord uses this man’s childishness, to teach about a sin of true wickedness that disconnects us from the things of God.

- The Warning Against Covetousness – “Take heed and beware of covetousness.”

1.) What is Covetousness?

a.) Definition – “greed, exploitation of an advantage, or others, fraudulency, or avarice.”

*Note – One language expert put it like this, in addition to these definitions it is – “entire disregard of the rights of others, a word active in meaning and wide in scope.”

- Gain without thought of others
- Gain without satisfaction of limit
- Gain for the sake of Gain

The easiest way that I can understand it, is simply this – Wanting what’s not yours to Want! – Don’t want what God doesn’t have for you to Want!

It is the Proverbist in Proverbs 30:8-9 – that captures the Spirit of the man who knows no covetousness – “**Remove far from me vanity and lies: Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, And say, Who is the LORD? Or lest I be poor, and steal, And take the name of my God in vain.**”

How serious is Covetousness?

Well first of all it is in God’s Top Ten! – Exodus 20:17 – “**Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.**”

Now some may say, preacher it’s just another sin . . . meaning you don’t have any idea how serious sin is.

- Preacher covetousness is common, it is natural, it’s just part of human nature...

Know this:

1 - It is Abhorring to God.

Psalm 10:3 – “**For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, And blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.**”

2 – It is Infuriating to God.

Jeremiah 6:13, when the Lord was recording His fury with Israel for Jeremiah to write, He said – “**For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness;**” –

- Friend, there is nothing dumber than hiding in a doomed crowd.

3 – It is Shame-Worthy to God

Strict instructions are given to the Christian in the New Testament to shame Christians who behave covetously – 1st Corinthians 5:11 – “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.”

- In Ephesians 5, 3-5, the Lord said to the Christians at Ephesus, “let it not be once named among you.”

- and We could go on and on, but for time’s sake you have the idea that

Now here really is the point - Covetousness is a sin. – All by itself. – It needs no qualifications, explanations, or rationalizations, ever since God has been writing things down for man, He told Him that Covetousness is an evil in the heart of man that God hates.

- The Wisdom Against Covetousness -

*Note - Here Jesus doesn’t explain to them the divine sin of covetousness, but the practical effect of it. Here is a grace and a mercy not to be overlooked.

- The Lord God NEVER has to explain anything to us about His commands. He has the right to say “Don’t.” – and leave it right there, and when He does that, we say yes Lord with no questions asked.

- But here, He gives them some Wisdom to go along with the Warning.

1.) “for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

a.) This is Life Filled with Emptiness!

b.) Life “consisteth not” –

(1.) meaning, purpose, satisfaction, substance, vibrance, cognizance, have NO connection to any material thing on earth.

- Satisfaction and fulfillment DOES NOT COME through granted desires!

- Desiring what’s not yours to desire is not merely a sin, it is a Waste of Life! – It is a Waste of Time. It is a Snipe hunt in pursuit of something that does not satisfy.

- It is here where the American Dream turns into a nightmare for the multitudes. As we use to say back in the 90’s, people spend money they don’t have to buy things they don’t need to impress people they don’t know or even like, and they heap misery upon misery upon misery.

- If you’re not satisfied with all you have why do you want more of it?

- “Life does not come with Gain!” – Heart Satisfaction does not come with Gain!”

- The Bible tells us in 1st Timothy 6:5 that Evil men – “suppose that gain is godliness.”

*Note – Now we said all of that to say this – Jesus said, Be Aware of This – Be Alert to This. The man who asked the

question at the beginning was completely ignorant of the cancer of covetousness that was poisoning him.

- We see A Mistaken Thought - - A serious Warning.

A Tragic Picture – vs 16-20 – “And he spake a parable unto them, saying, **The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.”**

*Note- Our Lord used this warning and this moment to present this parable. Some have called this the parable of the Rich Fool.

(Mind you, he is not condemned because he is rich, he will be condemned because he was a fool.)

Let's note three big issues with this farmer.

- The Providence he Silently Ignored – “**The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentiful.**”

- The ground of the rich man, made the rich man richer...

*Note – When Jesus introduces us to this man, he has already made his fortune. We don't know if his farm had made him this fortune, or if his fortune afforded him this farm.

- The God of the ground saw to it that his field was abundantly fruitful.

- As we have said many times, there is not a farmer on earth who can grow beans. – He

can plant them, he can water them, he can weed them, but he has no power to put life in them.

- But now note this: - Eleven times he refers to himself!
- What shall I do – I have no room – my fruits – This will I do – I will pull down my barns – I will bestow - my fruits and my goods -and I will say –to My Soul, Soul, (you have my permission to take it easy from now on)

- This man was as clueless to the things of God as the man who asked the question in the first place.

Notice the things that He claimed as being in His Power –

- My Fruits – My Barns – My goods – My Soul – My Lifetime (many years)

- the Bible says of the wicked that “**God is not in all of his thoughts.**” Psalm 10:4 – Here, God is not in ANY of His thoughts.

- The Problem that Didn't Exist – “**What shall I do, I have no room where to bestow my fruits?**”

*Note – He was just too blessed! – Man, what a problem! I have more than I can hold!

- now just because he had no room, didn't mean that someone didn't have room.

- the problem was not too much of a blessing
– the problem was too wicked of a mind!

(Now some stuffed shirt corporate lawyer might say – There is no legal or Biblical command for him to give away all of his excess. There is no law that says, you can only have so much! – You're right. There is no law that says it.

- But there is a Lord God that does!

2 Corinthians 8:13-14 – “For *I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:*”

There is no law that demands people give away their abundance – but there is a Lord that is to be the Leader of your Heart, that governs, guides, and manages all He has given you for the betterment of His kingdom...not ours!

Here is a man who cannot handle Wealth! – He can consume it, He can use it, He can wallow in it, - But He cannot handle it with Spiritual Wisdom.

- The Presumption that Destroyed His Soul – “...*This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.*”

*Note – I will paraphrase Warren Wiersbe who said essentially this man displays the two most common lies people live by and with.

- Life is satisfied on earth – And Death too far away to think about.

1.) He presumed continued success.

What is the rule when it comes to investing in the stock market? – Past results are no guarantee of future performance!

a.) His own failure to recognize that the God of the ground, can cut off the fruit of the ground without notice was born of his godless thinking.

2.) He presumed an independent life – “*I will say to my soul, soul...take thine ease.*”

Who in the world says you have permission to go to work tomorrow or stay home? What in the world gave you the idea that you can live a life independent from the God that made you.

- Ezekiel 18:4 – “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die.”

To the Christian – “you are not your own – ye are bought with a price.”

- Who told him he could sit down?

The sin of all sins that gives birth to all other sins, is the sin of independence from God. Like a one note banjo we sing it often, you are Free in Christ, but you are not Independent from God.

3. He presumed lasting a long time – “*many years*”

A Final Word – vs 20-21 – “*But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*”

- He is Mindless - Fool – One with no sense; no reasoning; no logic, no thinking ability.

- He is Clueless – “this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

- He is Speechless – “whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”

- He is Repetitious – “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

- Countless multitudes have picked up his torch, and carried on his tradition, and strutted in his parade of fools.

Conclusion:

In North Africa the natives have a very easy way to capture monkeys. A gourd, with a hole just sufficiently large so that a monkey can thrust his hand into it, is filled with nuts and fastened firmly to a branch of a tree at sunset. During the night a monkey will discover the scent of food, and its source, and will put his hand into the gourd and grasp a handful of nuts. But the hole is too small for the monkey to withdraw his clenched fist, and he has not sense enough to let go of his bounty so that he may escape. Thus he pulls and pulls without success, and when morning comes he is quickly and easily taken.