

*Introduction:*

This parable begins with a very domestic and legal problem. A man wants his brother to divide his inheritance with him. Possibly his father has died and it is time to sort out the legal matters. The man did the right thing by asking for advice. However, Jesus is not a judge who sorts out legal problems. Jesus sees the real problem. This man has come with his mind made up. He wants Jesus to take his side and make his brother share the inheritance. It is possible that the man is in fact morally and legally entitled to a share of the inheritance. However, Jesus immediately sees that the man doesn't want legal justice. He doesn't give any indication that he is *grateful* that there is an inheritance he can share. The real problem is greed. A person's character is not measured by gratitude for what they receive and what they do with their wealth. Jesus says be on guard against "all kinds of greed." This greed includes the desire status, position, money, praise and possessions.

The man in the parable makes some false assumptions. Firstly, he assumes that he will live to enjoy his crops. Secondly, he assumes that they will not decay or "depreciate" in value and that no one will come and take them away. He thinks that the "good life" is to take life easy, eating and drinking and being merry". Greed prevents deeper thought about what is really of value and important. This man is deceived. He uses the word "my" constantly and not "God's". He assumes that God has given him his crops *for him* to enjoy and to share. Actually, he *has* worked hard on fertile ground. He is blessed: however, his anxiety and greed take away that which he in fact *should* have and enjoy. In the end, he will not enjoy but someone else will.

*Notes*

1. Note in verse 12, Jesus had said that the Holy Spirit will teach you what to say. The man then asks this question. He could solve the problem himself. He wasn't listening!
2. Traditionally, the older brother should receive 2/3 the younger 1/3
3. Crops, like blessings cannot simply be stored. They must be celebrated and used.
4. John Wesley lived on 28 British pounds all his life, even though his stipend increased.

*Questions*

1. If you are entitled to an inheritance, what should you do? How important is gratitude?
2. V. 17. The man was successful, but then he worried about preserving his assets. Do we do this? What should a Christian think and feel about this?
3. What does it mean to be "rich towards God?" (Luke 12:33) Does this mean that we should literally give absolutely everything away and "trust God?"?

*Conclusion*

Jesus tells this story to answer a question about greed. The rich man never once mentions God or anyone else. He just thinks of himself. As Christians, our first priority must be listening to Jesus. Often he answers our questions as we listen to him. This man was a fool because he was completely unaware of the bigger picture of eternity and eternal values. The fool puts often good, but lesser things first before the life and death matters. The rich wise person knows that true satisfaction and the future is based on faith in God who provides all that truly matters. This parable reminds us of the true value of both work and rest. We provide for ourselves and families and communities. When we work and share and put greed aside, then we are all happy and wealthy.