

Gathering in the Word

How we view GOD does shape our faith and values!

- ✓ GOD is with us every day!
- ✓ Every spot & place is holy!
- ✓ Everyone is GOD's child!
- ✓ Our cares are near to GOD heart!
- ✓ GOD's eye is on the sparrow and we know GOD is watching us!

Healthy visions of God always affirm that GOD loves others—including those whose differences and oddness is problematic!ⁱ Healthy visions of GOD always affirms that GOD loves others; so too ought Christians!

Hearing the Word

Luke 12:13-21 (The VOICE Bible)

In the kingdom of God, money is valued in a very different way. In fact, concern for money can easily turn the spiritual life into a lukewarm, halfhearted affair.

¹³ A person in the crowd got Jesus' attention.

Person in the Crowd: Teacher, intervene and tell my brother to share the family inheritance with me.

Jesus: ¹⁴ Since when am I your judge or arbitrator?

¹⁵ Then He used that opportunity to speak to the crowd.

Jesus: You'd better be on your guard against any type of greed, for a person's life is not about having a lot of possessions.

¹⁶ (then, beginning another parable) A wealthy man owned some land that produced a huge harvest. ¹⁷ He often thought to himself, "I have a problem here. I don't have anywhere to store all my crops. What should I do?" ¹⁸ I know! I'll tear down my small barns and build even bigger ones, and then I'll have plenty of storage space for my grain and all my other goods. ¹⁹ Then I'll be able to say to myself, 'I have it made! I can relax and take it easy for years! So I'll just sit back, eat, drink, and have a good time!'"

²⁰ Then God interrupted the man's conversation with himself. "Excuse Me, Mr. Brilliant, but your time has come. Tonight you will die. Now who will enjoy everything you've earned and saved?"

²¹ This is how it will be for people who accumulate huge assets for themselves but have no assets in relation to God.

In Luke 12 (13-21), a stranger approaches Jesus with a practical matter involving a family argument: "Teacher, intervene and tell my brother to share the family inheritance with me." It's not really a question, is it? It's a demand and Jesus seems a little upset. Basically Jesus says, "Mister, I don't know who you are or what you're talking about! I am not a judge and have no authority here at all."

Here Jesus has been teaching (like Matthew's Sermon on the Mount) important spiritual matters and has just given a set of instructions to the disciples about how they are

to rely on the Holy Spirit when the face opposition. So what's going on?

Well this man is preoccupied with money. He hasn't been listening to Jesus talk and teaching; so the moment there's a let up in Jesus' teaching—he bursts in with his inheritance question.

So Jesus being Jesus—uses the occasion and offers a parable and a story:

- ✓ The main character is not a spiritual person.
- ✓ The person is called a “fool” – a powerful word biblically speaking!
- ✓ In Wisdom literature of the OT—a fool was anyone who fails to notice how the world works, thus adapting himself/herself accordingly:
 - Fools are the one who spit into the wind.
 - Fools are those who saw off the branch they're sitting on.
 - Fools are those who constantly try to row their boat against the current because they don't pay attention to how life works.
 - Fools are also un-teachable.
 - Fools also refuse to listen when *others* point these things out for them!
 - Fools become an island unto themselves.

In the parable of the foolish man: The sin of this rich man here is that he has isolated himself from everyone else—even GOD. Not only does he fail to see GOD—he doesn't take note of all those little reminders of GOD that surround each of us every day. What are those reminders?

Other people!

Possessions possess us. Care for possessions makes it more difficult to truly care for what God cares for.

Possessions distract us from the fullness of life.

Possessions distract us from true wealth; from what is rich in the eyes of God.

Doing the Word

So what is the Word of God for us this first Sunday of August 2013?

1. ONE: SEE THE IMAGES OF GOD AROUND US!

Look around you all the time and see GOD all over!

2. TWO: YOU ARE THE IMAGE OF GOD TO FAMILY, NEIGHBORS & STRANGERS AND TO YOUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS @ TFCCCH!

Visa versa: You are GOD's image to others!

3. THREE: BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR TO OTHERS AROUND—THOSE WHO YOU KNOW AND THOSE YOU DON'T KNOW OR LIKE!

- ✓ Especially to those who don't like or don't like you!
- ✓ Especially to strangers!
- ✓ Especially to those estranged, alienated, at odds with, on bad terms with you, your family and even our Church!

Sent in the Word

Today's story & parable began with a man asking Jesus to arbitrate ("*adjudicate, pass judgment, decide, mediate*") an inheritance dispute with his brother—a fairly common dispute among agrarian peoples even today. Jesus hears it as a question of greed (v. 15). In fact, Luke often adds a commentary of what a parable by Jesus means and in this case he frames the parable with two summaries: v. 15 & 21.

v. 15 – “You’d better be on guard against any type of greed, for a person’s life is not about having a lot of possessions.”

v. 21 – “This is how it will be for people who accumulate huge assets for themselves but have no assets in relation to GOD.”

The kind of faith that Jesus intends us to have is the kind that goes beyond going to church for an hour a week, or even doing a good deed from time to time. It's a faith that springs up from within us. It's an interior way of living, being, and interacting with the world and everything in it.

And, if we have this faith that Jesus compels us towards, then we don't need anyone to arbitrate a dispute over our inheritance. We don't build larger and larger barns to hold more and more stuff.

It's the path of the fool, in Jesus' language.

But, to live predisposed to seeking GOD is being rich towards GOD.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

i GOD's Transpersonality:

- ✓ GOD is the circle whose center is everywhere!
- ✓ GOD is the inner movement and energetic force within all things!
- ✓ GOD's circumference is nowhere, unbounded and unlimited in care and activity!
- ✓ GOD's transpersonality keeps us from absolutizing our relationship to GOD to the detriment of other's well-being!
- ✓ GOD's is always with us and with everyone else!
- ✓ GOD loves us and also our enemies those who continually "push our buttons"!
- ✓ GOD's energy encompasses all of us—including President of the U.S. Barak Obama and Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives John Boehner; believer and atheist; pacifist and terrorist, humankind and the non-human world!