

S.B. 1361
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Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel Brighton by Mr J.K. Popham on
Wednesday evening 31st May 1922

Text: Luke 12. verse 21

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God

The text you are acquainted with, a certain rich man was prosperous. He had enough to live on, so he thought he would retire, and he congratulated himself upon his position. Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat drink and be merry. He laid up treasure for himself, he seems by the record, to have had thought only for himself. Now God takes the man in hand, calls him a fool, and calls him away from this life and all he possessed. Then that had application. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?" (Mark 8 verse 36).

May the Holy Ghost set this on our hearts with such authority, in such penetrating light, as to make us feel the uncertainty of all things here below, and of our own life. And save us from thinking we have a treasure in any possession, which shall continue, on which we may live, and be comfortable. For if we are so instructed, we shall be saved from the folly, of these poor sordid men. And Christ uses this as, a ground for a lesson or parable, as its great use. It tells us that to lay up treasure for ourselves is folly, to look on what God has given us as if it were immutable, and must continue, and be ours for many years, is a most grievous folly. That riches, if we have them, may take to themselves wings, by divine commandment, and flee away, and moreover this may be intimated to us. The offence it is to God, for a poor dependant creature, to regard himself as independent of anyone, and of God, because he has so much. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God". (1 Timothy 6.17):

And may it be a charge to any, who may be tempted, to regard what God has given them, and say here, we have enough. Here if we live, we have quite enough for so many years, that we can rest and be content. This is a great lesson, and may we not miss it, for if we do, our case will be very serious indeed. Beware of saying "Soul thou hast so much, Soul thou art independent, thou hast no need of labour for the future". God grant that we may not so speak. "For what is your life ? it is even a vapour," (James 4 verse 14). What is our foundation ?, the dust. Our foundation is in the dust, that is all. In whose hands are we ? In God's hand. Our breath is in His hand.

O this dependence, how repugnant to pride. How beautiful to faith, how honouring to God. How staying to the soul, this our dependence. So when a man lays up treasure for himself, he is poor. He may be rich as men speak, as he himself judges, but he is poor, because he is not rich with respect to God, and is not rich toward God. He is rich with respect to himself, rich with respect, as he thinks, and speaks, to his possessions, rich in these respects to God, in whom he lives and moves and has his being. God who can take his breath away. God in whose hand his destiny is, his eternal destiny. With respect to God he is poor. O how poor. His poverty is the poverty of death. Dead in trespasses and sins. It is the poverty of ignorance. It is not good for the soul to be without knowledge. A man without knowledge of God, is liable to be tossed about a thousand times a day, in his mind, for he has no resting place. He has no definite end, he is poor with respect to knowledge. He is poor in all respects when God is before us, and no word can sufficiently express this man's poverty.

Poor for eternity, no righteousness, no purity, no faith, no uprightness, no fear of God. How poor is he, he gathers with Bunyan's muck-raker a few straws of earthly possession, and yet with respect to God, has not a thread, has not a hope. His state is expressed by Paul in the Ephesians "without Christ....., having no hope, and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2 verse 12). There arises out of this a question. What is it to be rich toward God ? What would be esteemed riches toward God ? Well the first thing I would name is life, eternal life, "I give unto them (my sheep) eternal life". (John 10 verse 28). Life is wealth, pure, holy, blessed, everlasting life. This is wealth indeed, and it is with respect to God, true riches. Without it his soul indeed is poor. A living soul must be rich, rich in a life that is incorruptible, that respects God, as God for its end, its great object.

My friends if we are born again, we are rich people. Nothing can make us poor, if we have this eternal life in our souls. Nothing can be called poverty, strictly with respect to our souls, if we are born again. O what a mercy it is to be born again, and to be assured that it is so. Now some evidences of this will come out, and we may look at these evidences, as being riches, first of all faith. "Hearken my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him ?". (James 2 verse 5). O if you have faith, true faith, what rich people you are. Faith that gave you divine strength and substance in you soul, that is evidence of things not seen. Faith that makes God real and great, and glorious, and high above all.

Faith that honours God, faith that, if I may so express it, is the guardian of God's interests in your soul, and of your own interests. Faith that will not listen to the evil report, that a wicked heart brings up of God. Faith that desires God, that is a hunger, a cry, an eye, a look, a hand. O faith is a great thing, and this is rich toward, or with respect to God. It sets Him above all else. I am sure you know that, some of you, who is like God to you. Whose name, whose honour, whose glory can be compared in your mind with God's. It sets Him above all else, "Who is a God like unto Thee," (Micah 7 verse 18). "Be Thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength;" (Psalm 21 verse 13). is the language of true faith. Ah, God sometimes is very real, and very near, and very glorious, in the eyes of a believer. And the world proportionally sinks into insignificance, and our possessions, our poverty, or our comparative wealth are, from the perplexity of poverty, and the pinch of it. May all of them under the influence of faith just sink into proper nothingness. And the souls says, I have enough if I have God . Toplady well expresses it

I'm rich to all the intents of bliss,
If thou, O God, art mine. 940 verse 5 Gadsby's.

Any place is easy to faith, any position is easy to faith, we can say it, but if we come into it, then we prove it. The will of God to faith, is a bed. "The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush:" (Deuteronomy 33 verse 16). is everything. The favour of God is better than life, The face of God, even Jesus Christ, is glorious. The blood of Christ is wonderful. The righteousness of Christ is the only seamless, spotless robe, in the eye of faith, that a sinner can need. So if we have faith, we have in this respect, a treasure respecting God. Faith that is real lives in heaven, it lives in a sinners heart. Faith brings a sinner and God near to each other, sets up, if one may so speak, a contact between a sinner and God. It sets up inter-communications between a sinner and God, and be sure of this, if you have faith, however dead you may become in your feelings, however distant, there will be times when you can honestly say, and profess before God, that you can never be content, apart from Himself.

Cannot some of you, set your seal to that statement, and say, that is true. Whatever claims the world may have, whatever beauty there may be in this or that position, whatever attraction there may be, in this or that pleasure, there will come, my friends, to the child of God, a time when he can honestly say, None but Jesus. Nothing but the cross, nothing but His fountain of merit, nothing but His righteousness, nothing but His grace, nothing but His favour, nothing but His blessed power in the soul will satisfy you. I may say, happy man, who can thus speak, happy who can thus profess to God.

The possession of faith, as a grace is therefore riches, true great riches. And this again may be said, faith is a wealth with respect to its acting, and it stands and works, in the power of God. A man is rich who has faith, to look at a mountain, and say to it depart. He is rich who in a storm, can say, God will bring me through. In a fire can find one walking with him, like unto the Son of God. He is a rich man, who is not daunted, by forbidding circumstances, but can say with the Psalmist - "O God, my heart is fixed;" (Psalm 57 verse 7), my heart is fixed, I will trust and not be afraid. Sometimes there is fear, then faith will bring the sinner to say "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee". (Psalm 56 verse 3). So this faith, in this, its acting, is real wealth. God gives us to perceive it, it moves towards the blood of Christ. It pleads it, and that is a great thing, with respect to God, for it is the will of God that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. And faith honours the Son, when it goes to His precious blood, that blood that can cleanse from all sin, that can give union with the Lamb. That can cement union of the soul with God.

He that has rich faith, O the honour it puts on Christ. It goes to His righteousness. "I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only." (Psalm 71 verse 16). That is what faith says. There is no robe but this, will suit a sinner, who is conscious of his filthy garments. This faith is rich in its going out to the cross of Christ. David's faith went to this, he said "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." (Psalm 23 verse 1). He will take care of me, lions roar, wild beasts frighten me sometimes, I am afraid of being overcome, by this sin or that, but faith says, you have got God, who cares for you. Doth not God care for sparrows? Faith says to the soul "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Matthew 10 verse 31). You are of more value than anything in the sight of God, so faith in this is very rich, very blessed. It goes to the promises of God, and asks an interest in them, and the fulfilment of them. What the Lord has promised, a living soul says, may I never lack. What He gives to His saints, I do pray, He will give to me. May my lot be with them, my portion with their portion. This is faith, a man is rich toward God, if he has this faith, and when it is in exercise, by the power of the Eternal Spirit.

And I may say this, a man is rich toward God, with respect to his tears. "Put thou my tears into thy bottle" (Psalm 56 verse 8). Many tears have no respect to God, but some tears have, when you drop a tear over your hard heart, over your wandering disposition, over indwelling sin. When you drop a tear over an absent God, and when you mourn over that which drove Him away from your breast. And confess the sin, and pray that the Lord would graciously forgive it.

And that He would come again, and bless you with another visit, and make His abode with you. The sinner yet weeps over sin, in spite of their richness toward God. How many tears are shed over the loss of substance, loss of health, loss of friends, and there is no respect to God in all those. But when a sinner's heart weeps, and he says I wish the Lord were with me, I wish I had more grace, I wish I were more tender, I wish I could fear God more, I wish I had faith to cast my burdens on the Lord, I wish He would speak peace to my soul, I wish He would sanctify my troubles to me. Why that person is rich. Christ dropped many a tear for him, now he drops tears for Christ.

A faithful friend of grief partakes;
But union can be none
Betwixt a heart like melting wax
And hearts as hard as stone. (785 verse 10 Gadsby's)

But when you feel your heart move after God, and faith says, you have sinned here and there, go confess it and mourn before Him. That person is rich, even in his tears. He is rich in his prayers, his approaches to God are wonderful. Sometimes it is as if a word does the whole business. A sigh and strong cries go out of your heart, and the work is done.

Prayer was appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give. (882 verse 1 Gadsby's)

And He does bow down His ear to hear the cries of His people. Our lack proves this often, to have no prayer is poverty. Our wealth in this respect, is having that poured, into our hearts "And I will pour upon the house, of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications." (Zechariah 12 verse 10). When a sinner deals with God, he is trafficking at the best market, and he can buy without money, and trade without a stock, because all is in God, in Christ.

His prayers out of an empty heart, go to a full God. His prayers about his sins, go to a sin-forgiving God. His prayers for justification, go to Him who justifieth the ungodly, who believeth in Jesus. His prayers for strength, go to the mighty God of Israel, who cannot lie. His prayers for guidance, in and through his difficulties, go to Him who is wisdom. "I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions." (Proverbs 8 verse 12). Now I ask, is not this praying person rich towards Go ? How poor is he, who goes to his substance, and says "This is my life". How rich is he, who goes to God and says "

God of my life to thee I call (967 verse 1 Gadsby's)

Who goes to a full Christ for supplies of all sorts. Who goes to a pitying Christ, and asks Him to pity and bless. So when one is rich toward God, with respect to God, he is indeed rich. It is as if the word should say Now you put your matters and concerns, business and troubles into My hands, I am your advocate, and you shall not ask in vain. These cries, sighs and confessions, shall not be in vain, there shall come to you good returns "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" (Luke 6 verse 38). Why brethren we have a good God.

Sanctified afflictions are riches toward, or with respect to God. When a wayward son has been chastened by his father, and is subdued, and brought, and enabled to reflect, and behave as he ought. What fruit there is growing out of chastisement, when God lays on His rod, when He rebukes for sin, when He gives the soft heart, a broken and submissive mind, when He takes away the insubordination of the will. And enables a sinner to come and say, Thy kingdom come, into this wild heart. Thy will be done as it is in heaven. This bears fruit, O good fruit. The chastising is glorifying to God, and profitable, exceedingly so. That word then is exemplified in the chastised child. "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." (Hebrews 12 verses 9,10). A man is not poor with respect to God, who has an affliction sanctified to him, whose mind has been softened, whose affections have been placed, and set on things above, where Christ sitteth. And who has been brought to see, the infinite value of grace, and of an interest in God. And the vanity, uncertainty, and insufficiency of all created good.

My friends it is wrong, to look upon anything here as solid and abiding, but it is a solid act of faith, that will do your souls good, when you have it, that respects the Almighty and says. O for grace to submit to it, O for wisdom to walk in the midst of trouble. The Psalmist said "Though I walk in the midst of trouble". (Psalm 138 verse 7), walk by faith in the midst of trouble. A man is rich toward God when he has hope in God. That ye may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. Hope has respect to God's engagements, with respect to Christ's fulness, faithfulness, with respect to the future. Hope is not present possession. "For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that

we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Romans 8 verse 24,25).

Look for a moment or two, at one or two particulars, in this matter of hope through grace. Is it not the sweet feeling, that a sinner has wrought in him, that the God of all grace will bless him, justify him, sanctify him, help him, support him, bring him through all his troubles. and land him in glory at last. Is not that through grace, that looks to the blood of Christ, that hopes all that heaven has good, that thinks what the blood of Christ has wrought, Invaluable blood. O that blood that cleanses from all sin. Has it not often been your petition - Lord cleanse my soul from sin, by the blood of Jesus Christ. Hope goes to the atonement, hope says to the troubled soul "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him." (Psalm 42 verse 11). Hope in His mercy, the Psalmist says "For with the Lord there is mercy," (Psalm 130 verse 7), and "That thou mayest be feared" (Psalm 130 verse 4) "And with Him is plenteous redemption" (Psalm 130 verse 7). Therefore says the Psalmist to the Lord "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning:" (Psalm 130 verse 6). I look for the Lord and hope in His mercy. When you are in trouble hope looks for deliverance. When in perplexity hope casts a look to Him, for wisdom, who is able to bring you through. Rich ? Yes rich in faith, rich in this blessed hope. Good hope through grace.

A sinner is rich toward God in love. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." (Psalm 119 verse 165). And when Christ is in your heart, love is there. When He is before your faith, love is there. When He is in your hope, love is there. When you see Him in the flesh, then you love Him. When you see Him in trouble, you love Him. Leave Christ out, very quickly sometimes, Love goes to Him. There is none like Him, none to be compared with Him.

Now if a man just thinks of himself, like this prosperous farmer was, in love with himself, and all he had. Everything was his own, in himself. Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. Let care fly away, now let anxiety about tomorrow be gone. What spiritual poverty.

Amen