



Grain

“They were simultaneously wars fought for an ideology of acquisitiveness, for subjects who sought more and better stuff as the means to the goods life as the good life.” Brad S. Gregory

Field

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” ¹⁴But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” ¹⁶Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ ¹⁸Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ ²⁰But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.” Luke 12:13-21

Thoughts by Rev. Andy Twiton, Trinity Lutheran Church, Madison, WI

Jesus’ words in the Gospel of Luke stand in stark contrast to much of our world. Jesus says, “One’s life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” But so many of us behave as if the accumulation of wealth and materials goods is the be-all, end-all of human life. If I were to ask about your “net worth,” we would all assume that I was asking about your financial value rather than your value as a child of God.

The historian Brad S. Gregory says we have replaced the “good life” with the “goods life” and reduced “freedom” to little more than having the right to buy whatever we want. And he goes on to say, “One can hardly imagine a greater contrast to what Luther meant by ‘the freedom of a Christian’: living in paradoxical bondage to selfless, loving service of your neighbors, tirelessly tending their needs whatever they might be, as a result of gratitude for the unmerited gift of God’s saving grace” (Brad S. Gregory, *Rebel in the Ranks: Martin Luther, the Reformation, and the Conflicts that Continue to Shape our World*, pg. 262).

In so many ways the parable of the Rich Fool speaks to us today. Who among us doesn’t dream of feeling secure in life? Who among us doesn’t long to feel as if we have enough to finally live, relax, and be merry?

But Jesus seems to be saying that the rich man (and all of us, really) invest our hopes in the wrong things. There’s more to human life than what we can buy and own. Furthermore, the rich man seems to have lost sight of who all this stuff belongs to and where it came from. He speaks of MY barns, MY grain, MY goods. He has forgotten that everything we have is a gift from God to be used for God’s purposes and for the good of our neighbors.

How can we as advocates proclaim the true worth of human life? How can we use our Christian freedom to “open the barn doors” for the sake of our neighbors? We were meant for a greater purpose than mere consumption. Your life consists of more than your bank account Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,
Pastor Andy