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Text: Luke 12:13-21

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Pentecost 10

## I HAVE ENOUGH

“Watch out,” says Jesus, “lest your possessions take possession of you!”

That is something we need to hear, although it may be difficult for us to hear this word since we live in a society which assumes that you should accumulate as much as you can. Work hard. Get as much as you can. Isn't that the way it is?

So what is going on here? What is Jesus saying? When we listen carefully, we can hear Jesus teaching us two very important lessons.

Jesus tells a parable about a rich man whose land produced abundantly and he implies that this man did wrong. The question is, what did he do wrong? Was it wrong for him to be rich? No. The fact is, God had given this man his riches.

This is the first truth. *God is the Giver of all that we have!* Look at yourself. God has made you the very special person that you are. God has given you your mind and your body, your talents and abilities. God has given you opportunities to learn and work, a place to live, food to eat, clothes to wear. God has given you money and possessions and assets. In fact, all that you have comes from God.

So, what did the man in the parable do wrong? Was it that he wanted to build larger barns to store all his grain and goods?

I haven't built any barns lately, but I have bought bigger and better computers. I remember one of the first computers we bought. It had a pentium processor and a 20 meg hard drive. And I thought, Wow! Such speed. Such a large storage capacity. But, you know, in a couple of years the computer didn't seem so fast any more. And the hard drive was about full. And so we bought a new computer. Isn't that the way it goes? Is this wrong?

In the parable, the man's plan to build larger barns was actually a wise business decision. God expects us to take care of what we have. Building larger barns was not the problem.

So what is Jesus saying? When we listen carefully we hear Jesus condemning the man in the parable because he wanted to use his wealth only for himself. “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” He was interested only in himself. That was the problem.

This brings us to the second basic truth. *God has blessed you so that you can be a blessing to others.* I think of Anita, a successful businesswoman, who said, “I don't know why God gave me a talent for making money, but I am sure this is what I am meant to do. The more I make, the more I can give away. I can support youth programs, sponsor entire mission teams, buy food for the hungry - if I left my work to serve the poor myself, I'd be only one set of hands. This way, I can multiply what I could do alone.” What was true for Anita is true for you. God has blessed you for a purpose, so that you can be a blessing to others.

This is what baptism does. Baptism turns your life around. No longer is life turned in on yourself, so that all you can think about is “me, me, me.” No longer is the purpose of life just to cater to what you want. When you are baptized you are raised to a new life, a life with God! You have a new focus for your life, a new way of living! God becomes your life!

And that changes how you relate to your possessions. No longer do your possessions possess you. You receive your possessions as a gift and you use them in ways that glorify God. Greed is replaced with generosity. Eat, drink and be merry is replaced with eat, drink, and be merciful. Love for self is replaced with love for the neighbor. When Christ comes into your life through baptism, your life gets turned around.

Each day, though, is a new challenge. It is so tempting to fall back into a “me” focused life. But thanks be to God, the power of Baptism to change us sticks with us! That’s what the Bible reading from Colossians tells us. “If you have been raised with Christ (it is talking about baptism), seek the things that are above.” Put to death whatever in you that is earthly - like greed. Turn away from that and clothe yourself with Christ. God is now your life! Then you will see that all you have is from God and you will see that God has blessed you so that you can be a blessing to others. When your life is God, you are rich. You have something which can never be taken away from you!

I like the way the children’s book *I Have Enough Stuff* says it. “I have a kite with colored string, and a baseball bat to swing, and a bird that likes to sing. I have a lizard and some frogs, and a kitten and two dogs, and a fort made out of logs. I have three arrows and a bow, and a flute that I can blow, and some mittens for the snow. Is that enough stuff? I have Jesus as my Friend, and my soul He saved from sin, and His love will never end! Yes, I have enough.

“But my kite crashed in a tree, and I struck out one-two-three, and my bird just looks at me. My lizard and the frogs, ran away from those two dogs. And my kitten’s now a cat, eating well and getting fat. And the logs that made my fort, fit me best when I was short. Now my arrows have been lost, and the flute my father tossed, and my mittens lost in frost. But I still have enough.

“I have Jesus as my Friend, and my soul He saved from sin, and His love will never end! Yes, I have enough!”