

The Priority of True Riches

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[0 : 00] We're going to turn to our Bible reading now this morning, which you'll find in Luke's Gospel, chapter 12. And if you have one of the church Bibles, it's page 871.

And we're continuing our studies here in Jesus' teaching along the road as he is leading his disciples on the road to glory. Jesus takes them on a path which leads for him through Jerusalem and the cross and explains to them along the way the priorities for everyone who follows on that road.

And that's what we're studying in these chapters together. And we come to Luke's Gospel, chapter 12, verse 13. And just notice that this follows on immediately from the previous paragraph we looked at last week, where Jesus is talking about very deep and eternal matters.

Judgment and salvation. Heaven and hell. Life and death. And verse 13, in the context of listening to all of that, we read this.

Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But he said to him, Man, who made me a judge or arbiter over you?

[1 : 30] And he said to him, Take care and be on your guard against all covetousness. For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. And he told them a parable saying, The land of a rich man produced plentifully.

And he thought to himself, What shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I'll do this. I'll tear down my barns and build larger ones. And there I'll store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, Fool, this night your soul is required of you.

And the things you've prepared, Whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself And is not rich towards God.

And he said to his disciples, Therefore I tell you, Do not be anxious about your life, What you'll eat, Nor about your body, What you'll put on. For life is more than food, And the body more than clothing.

[2 : 39] Consider the ravens. They neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouses nor barn, And yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?

And which of you, by being anxious, Can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you're not able to do as small a thing as that, Why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, How they grow.

They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, Even Solomon in all his glory Was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, Which is alive in the field today, And tomorrow is thrown into the oven, How much more will he clothe you?

O you of little faith. And do not seek what you're to eat, And what you're to drink, Nor be worried. For all the nations of the world Seek after these things, And your father knows that you need them. Instead, Seek his kingdom. These things will be added to you. Fear not, little flock, For it's your father's good pleasure To give you the kingdom.

[3 : 52] Sell your possessions And give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags That do not grow old, With a treasure in the heavens That does not fail, Where no thief approaches And no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, There will your heart be also. Stay dressed for action, And keep your lamps burning, And be like men who are waiting For their master to come home From the wedding feast, So that they may open the door to him At once when he comes and knocks.

Blessed are those servants Whom the master finds awake When he comes. Truly I say to you, He will dress himself for service, And have them recline at table, And he will come and serve them.

If he comes in the second watch Or in the third, And finds them awake, Blessed are those servants. But know this, That if the master of the house Had known at what hour The thief was coming, He would not have left his house To be broken into.

You also must be ready, For the Son of Man is coming At an hour you do not expect. Peter said, Lord, are you telling this parable For us or for all?

[5 : 04] And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful And wise manager or steward Whom his master Will set over his household To give them their portion of food At the proper time?

Blessed is that servant Whom his master will find so doing When he comes. Truly I say to you, He will set him over All his possessions. But if that servant says to himself, My master is delayed in coming, If he begins to beat The male and female servants And to eat and drink and get drunk, The master of that servant Will come on a day When he does not expect him And at an hour He does not know And will cut him in pieces And put him with The unfaithful, The unbelievers.

And that servant Who knew his master's will But did not get ready Or act according to his will Will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know And did what deserved a beating Will receive a light beating.

Here's the point. Everyone to whom much was given Of him, much will be required. And from him to whom They entrusted much, They will demand the more.

I came to cast fire on the earth And would that it were already kindled. I have a baptism to be baptized with And how great is my distress Until that is accomplished.

[6 : 36] Do you think that I have come To give peace on earth? No, I tell you, But rather division. For from now on, In one house, There will be five divided, Three against two And two against three.

They will be divided, Father against son, And son against father, Mother against daughter, And daughter against mother, Mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, And daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. Well, let's turn together To Luke's Gospel, chapter 12, And page 871, If you have a church visitor's Bible.

And the passage is all about The priority of real riches. It's been a week of news, hasn't it? About financial planning, Following the budget. All lots of talk about Planning for the future, ISAs and pension pots and so on.

And all about the prudent handling of money, And wise planning for the future. And of course, With an election coming up, The politicians know, It's the economy, stupid.

[7 : 51] And in the end, The vast majority will vote with their wallets, And so they're very focused on them. And Jesus also recognizes that, And it may be surprising to you, That he does not deny The pursuit of riches.

Indeed, in our passage today, He is giving advice On precisely how to do that successfully. Verse 33, do you see? Storing up your wealth in money bags That don't grow old, And treasures that don't ever fail, Or fall prey to the thief, Or devaluation.

Like any euros, That any of you may be foolish enough To be storing in a Greek bank account. Watch out. Make no mistake, though, Jesus wants us to be rich. He wants us to find treasure.

He wants us to find a vast And satisfying reward From our lives. And real blessing, If you look at verse 44, He says, Is to be set over All the master's possessions.

But of course, as always, We also find that Jesus Is a very contrarian Investment advisor. He now turns the view Of the world, Of the herd, On its head, Absolutely upside down.

[9 : 11] The way up, In God's index Of leading investments, Is down. And Jesus Goes massively short On what our world's market Holds long.

And he buys exclusively What our world's leaders Despise. Because according to Jesus, You get really rich, Not by getting more, But by giving more.

Not by greed, But by generosity. Not by being served, But by serving. And as always, Jesus' perspective on life In this world Flies in the face Of the perspective Of this world's Best wisdom. Which is why, Of course, He is the most divisive Figure in human history. Look at verse 51, Do you see? Do you think that I've come To bring peace on the earth? Wealth? No, I tell you, But rather division.

Wouldn't that be a great text For a Christmas carol service? Would rather prick the bubble Of Christmas sentimentality, Wouldn't it? But as soon as anybody Does talk about wealth, It does become divisive, Doesn't it?

[10 : 25] The incessant Politicking on the airwaves Since the budget Just proves that. So of course, When the subject Becomes ultimate wealth, Well, of course, It's going to be Ultimately divisive.

But the mark, According to Jesus, Of the real disciple, Of someone who has A real and living Relationship with God Through Jesus Christ, Is that they understand Where true riches, Where true and lasting Treasure is to be found.

And so they set their hearts On fully pursuing that And not pursuing The kind of riches That will ultimately fail And disappoint And disappear. And so in our text here, Jesus teaches us That that means Having a true perspective On our possessions In this world, On our preoccupations In this world, And also, Above all, On our preparedness For the world to come.

Look at verses 13 to 21. They give us a perspective On our possessions In this world, And on the real riches In our life. Jesus' point here Is absolutely clear.

He says, Only the fool Lives covetously, Forgetting that all things, Including our life itself, Are in the hands Of God alone. And that true riches Lies not In earthly treasures, Which we must all Leave behind, But in the lasting riches Of his eternal kingdom.

[11 : 56] And so the priority In this life Is therefore to enrich Our lives now In his eyes. Verse 20. To ensure That we are rich Towards God.

As I said in the reading, We won't grasp The full force Of Jesus' words here Unless we know The context. Look back to what He's been talking about. It's a solemn discourse, Isn't it?

About the weighty Matters of eternity, About coming judgment, About heaven and hell, About acceptance At God's judgment seat, Or worse, Denial, Verse 8, In front of the angels Of God. So the air is heavy With the great issues Of eternity. Life and death, Forgiveness and damnation. And yet in the midst Of that, Verse 13, Do you see?

One of the listeners Is so preoccupied With the matters Of worldly possessions And his earthly inheritance That he interrupts Jesus As if to say, Never mind that, Jesus, I need you to get On my side In my claim Against my brother In the matter Of the family will.

[13 : 08] Isn't that astonishing? And yet, You know, It's not that uncommon. I remember once Being at the door After preaching here On just such A solemn passage As this. And the only word I had from one Of the first people Who came out Was, Where did you get Your tie?

I really like it. I'd like to get one. And I wondered If they'd listen To a word That I've been Speaking about. But is that so rare?

It's very easy Just to come to church On Sunday Because that's what You do on Sunday. And yet, To sit through The whole service Without hearing Very much at all Because You're so preoccupied With something else Entirely.

And very often That thing That's preoccupying You Is a sense Of injustice In your life. A sense That something So unfair That's what's Happening to you.

Something that You want to have Fixed. And what you Really want Is to have Jesus Speaking not Words about Heaven and hell And things like that But recruiting Himself to your Case To be on your Side To have him Fix your Issue for you And find justice In that matter In your life.

[14 : 21] Isn't that right? That's what this man's Wanting in verse 13. And it's what many People want. It's what many people Think Jesus is all About. Bringing peace And justice Now in this world In the way that We think that Ought to be done.

We've already seen In verse 51 What Jesus says About peace on earth. That's not why He came. And now look at Verse 14. Wrong again. My ministry Is not to be Taken up with Justice here and Now he says.

Who made me A judge over you? In fact What he does Is he points This man To the very Great danger Inherent in That whole idea. Now we've got No idea Whether this man Had a fair case Or not.

But that's not The point Says Jesus. There's something Far more important Than getting Earthly justice In your life. Something which Can be hindered Even by a quest For justice Which might be Fair and right.

There's a real Danger According to Jesus anyway In being so Earthly minded Even about good Things That you become No heavenly Use at all.

[15 : 30] It's the very Opposite isn't it From that silly Trite little Aphorism That we so often Hear From those Social activists. But that is What Jesus Is saying here. Don't be A fool He says to the

man.

And he's fact Telling the same Thing to all of us Verse 15. Be on your guard He says Against all Covetousness All kinds Of ambition And all kinds Of pursuit Of the things Of this world Alone. Even Ambition For good And fair And right things. But excessive Pursuit Of these Seeking Abundance In them. That will Become Says Jesus A dangerous Impediment To finding The true Riches In life And the only Riches That will Ever Last.

Life Does not Consist In the abundance Of possessions. Now that whole Perspective On life Jesus Is saying Is absolutely Wrong.

Let's be Clear He's not Saying That we're Not to Have any Possessions But what He is Warning Against Is a Totally Wrong Perspective That chasing Abundance Chasing Excess A driven Sense of Needing And wanting More That is All wrong The relentless Pursuit Of anything In life And it Can be Anything That prevents Us from Seeing what Life is Really All about Now that May be Money Or an Inheritance Is here Or it Might be The relentless Pursuit Of sporting Success For you Or musical Achievement Or academic Recognition Or relationship Success Or business Success The determination To become Partner In the firm Or whatever Else it Might be In your Ambition But if it Stops you From grasping Reality It's a Disaster It blinds You To the Ultimate Truth That all Such Earthly

[17 : 35] Abundance Must be And will Be in the End Left Behind Everything That belongs To you In this Life Will be Left Behind And for Some of Us that Might be Sooner Than we Think Only what We have Become In life Will outlive The grave And how Terrible To discover Then That in Fact what We've Become in Life Is a Fool That's what Jesus answers This man In the Parable That he Tells him This man In verse 16 Is rich He's done Well in Life Well good For him No doubt He was a Skilled and Hardworking Farmer He was Keeping the Shelves of Lidl and Old He stocked With local Produce Well great We need That Nothing Wrong with That And Jesus Interestingly Does not Criticize What he Does But what He doesn't Do He points Us to What his Earthly Success Didn't Do for Him For one

Thing it Didn't Give him Peace In life It brought Him more Problems Financial Headaches How am I Going to Store all My wealth So I Don't Lose It Well that's A big Question Today Isn't It In a World of Currency Debasement In a World of Mounting Debt How not To lose Out what You have To inflation Or deflation Now Or the Next bank Crash or Whatever it Is And the More you Have the More you've Got to Lose A real Headache So he Had headaches From his Wealth Not yet The Happiness That he Thought it Was going To bring Him But in Fact this Poor man Never got There did He Because in The end He was Faced with Ultimate Loss He was So focused On what He had Gained That it Blinkered him To what he Hadn't Gained Verse 21 Riches Towards God And when God required His soul When God Brought him To judgment He's exposed As a fool Because that Is the only Wealth that Counts for Anything at All in

The end Now a Fool In the Bible's Language Doesn't mean Someone who's Intellectually Deficient It means Somebody who's Morally and Spiritually Deficient To be a Fool Is to Live life Without The right Perspective About God And about Our life As mortals And about God As our Master And our Maker Psalm 14 Says the Fool says In his Heart There is No God That doesn't Mean he's An atheist There weren't Atheists in The Bible Like there Are today But it Means That you Live Excluding God From your Heart From the Control center The thinking Part of Your life You live In other Words As if God Wasn't Really A force To be Reckoned With As if God Was just A sort Of A Distant Idea A vague Sort Of Comfort In Time Of Trouble As Psalm 10 Said God Is not In the Fool's Thoughts Your Judgments Are high Out of His Sight And so

That means That when You know That you're Living Wrongly Or without God's Priorities In view You say Well as The psalm Puts it God Has Forgotten He's Hidden His Face He'll Never See That's A fool But it's Incredibly Easy You see To believe The evangelical Faith As this Man in The parable No doubt Did But to Live Day to Day Just like That Just Pretending That God Isn't Really There What a Fatal Mistake That is Says Jesus But you Do See Says The psalmist In psalm 10 You note Mischief And vexation And you Will Take it Into Your Hands That is In the Bible That was Being read Week by Week By this Man in The synagogue Psalm 39 Oh lord Make me Know my End And what Is the Measure Of my Days Surely For Nothing Man Heaps Up Wealth And Doesn't Know Who Will Gather It Or Psalm 49 As we Sang Even The wise

Die And leave Their Wealth To Others I'll Read the Book of Ecclesiastes That calls Us to Recognize Our Mortality And to Understand That all Of life Is but Passing And God's Gift to Man is To have Joy

In knowing That what Really matters Is to Make profit And gain To find Abundance In what Lasts That is As Ecclesiastes Ends In fearing God And keeping His commandments For that Is the Whole duty Of man For God Will bring Every deed To judgment This man Had heard All of These things In church Week by Week But lived As if None of It was Actually Real In his Life In Jesus In Jesus Terms He heard The word Of God But he Didn't Do it You Friends This Passage Is a Warning Not to The Atheist Outside The church But to All of Us Inside The church

[22 : 38] Who have The bible And who Know That this Life is Not just Physical This man In the Bible Knew He had A soul He talked About it But he Made himself Believe That what His spiritual Life really Needed At the Moment Was for him To make Partner in The firm Or to focus On his Pension Or to Maximize His educational Potential So that in Future Things would be Better and Easier And more Helpful for His spiritual Life and Commitment And it's Very easy To think Like that Isn't it But the More we Do that The more We just Slip into The way Of living As if This world Was Ultimate Or at Least As if This world Were actually Much more Important Than the World to Come And the Bible is Full of Warnings to Us not To do That All the

Way Through Way back In Deuteronomy 29 God warns The people Under Moses And says Beware The poisonous Root That bears Bitter Fruit By thinking Well I'm One of God's People And I'll Be safe Though I Walk in The stubbornness Of my Heart The Hebrews Writer quotes That very Verse in Hebrews 12 To the New Testament Church And again Tells us Don't be Unholy Like that Like Esau What made Him unholy He sold His birthright For a Single meal For riches In the Present That ended Up cutting Him off From the Riches of Eternity And that Was this Man In the Parable He built His barns And he Lost his Birthright It won't Be wealth Per se Always That's the Problem And it Wasn't his Wealth That was his Problem Although Jesus does Warn us

Often About the Hardening Power of Wealth Now it Was actually His lack Of wealth Of real Wealth Of what He could Have accumulated In life But hadn't Because he Lived as if This life Was all That there Is Or at least That it was More immediately Important to Him I bet he Looked to the World In fact He probably Looked to The church Like the Wisest investor In town But as that Great investor Warren Buffett Likes to say It's when the Tide goes out That you see Who's been Swimming naked And the Tide will Go out On every Single human Being I wonder What the Man who Asked a Question to Jesus Thought Of his Answer I wonder What you Think It's a Real warning To us Friends To those Of us Who have The light Who know The truth Not to Hide from The truth Not to Live Self-absorbed Lives

That stop Us becoming Rich towards God It's so Easy for Us to Do that How we Do it Of course Will depend On our Temperament We're all Different Some of Us are Savors By nature You hold Back You despise Profligacy Well there's Good in That But of Course the Danger is Just hoarding For hoarding Sake Out of a Desire for Safety And security You end up Living miserably It's astonishing How many Older people Begin to Be like That And live In almost Poverty And then when They die They discover They've left An absolute Fortune Other people Of course Are completely Opposite They're spenders By nature They despise That kind Of thing And they Love money Because what It can Bring them In terms Of goods And possessions They can Squander Their substance Foolishly But the point Is you see Both can be Fools Can't they With no Real thought Of God But no Thought of How God's Gifts To us In this Life Are to Be stewarded For him

And not For us Not saved Selfishly Or spent Selfishly But rather Invested Wisely In lasting Treasure So as to Be rich Towards him And living Living like That Says Jesus Is to Find real Riches In life And living Like that Is to Find the Real reason For our Life on This earth And that's What follows In verses 22 to 34 Maybe you're Thinking Well that's Good That's one In the Eye For the Wealthy But I'm Not a Wealthy Person I'm not A business Person Or a Professional I'm a Student I've got No money Or I don't Have a Job Maybe I'm An asylum Seeker So I Don't have Barnes or Bank accounts To worry About this Doesn't Apply to Me Well we Don't all Have barns But we Do all Have bodies We do All have A life In this Present World And notice Verse 22 Jesus turns Directly to His disciples And he Says to Them don't You be Like that Either How could

[27 : 41] We be Like that They'd be Thinking That seems Very Unfair Well you Can Very Easily Says Jesus By being Anxious About the Things of This World Even Trivial Things Even Day to Day Things Like food And clothing Never mind Barnes and Great wealth You can be Preoccupied in Life by Things you Don't Have And things That you Think you Need As you Can By the Things that You do Have And want More of Isn't That true And Jesus Answer here Is even More Radical He Doesn't Say To his Followers You just All need To be A little Bit Less Materialistic In Life And that Will Be

Fine No He Says When you Have a Clear Perspective On Eternity Nothing Nothing In this World Will Preoccupy You Not Even The Most Basic Things In Life Like Food And Clothes Because You Are Living For A Different World Altogether You Are Living For Eternity Not For This

World See not Only Will You Be A Fool In The World To Come If You Lived Only For This Present World And Its Riches You'll Only Actually Discover True Freedom In This World If You Live Now For The World To Come That's Jesus Words You'll Be Liberated From Life's Worries Only By Trust In His Heavenly Care And You'll Be Liberated From Life's Wealth Harming You Only By Love For God's Heavenly Kingdom And That's What Verses 32 To 34 Are Teaching Us It's All About The Preoccupations In This World And The Real Reason For Life Again Jesus Main Point Is Clear Only The Faithless He Says Live Anxiously Forgetting That Their Father Is The Ruler Over All Things And Has Given Us His Eternal Kingdom And That The True Reason For Our Earthly Life Is To Seek That Kingdom And To Find That Kingdom

And To Be Taken Up With Enriching And Extending That Kingdom And So The Priority In Our Lives Now Is To Invest In That Heavenly Treasure Verse 34 Do You See For Where Your Treasure Is Your What Jesus Is Constantly Saying To His Followers Is That When You Really Grasp The Gospel You Will Have A Completely New Perspective About The Future That Transforms Your Whole Outlook On The Present And This Present Life If You See Properly What He Is Saying As He Put It Back In Chapter 11 Verse 34 In The Image Of The Eye If You See Properly What It Is All About Transforms Your Whole World Your Whole Life Right Now In The Present By Getting New Glasses When You Badly Needed Them And When You Suddenly Realize How Distorted Your Vision Had Actually Become

My Optician Tells Me I Am Her Worst Patient By Country Mile Because I Never Go To See Her There's Nothing Personal It's Just I Avoid Health Professionals Of All Kind Always Because I'm A Coward But Sometimes Reality Stares You In The Face And I Discovered I Really Was Struggling To Read I Discovered I Was Getting A Very Sore Neck Because I Had To Take My Glasses Off And Crane Down So Low To Read My Notes And I Can Hardly Read Them Now So I Been To See My Optician And I Am Humbly Limping Into The World Of Very Focal Lenses It's One Of Those Miserable Aspects Of Growing Old That You Just Have To Humbly Accept And Get On With Well I Hope My Clarity Of Vision Will Soon Be Liberating But Jesus Is Speaking

About A Far Far More Important Clarity Of Vision A Clear Perspective About Life That Will Absolutely Transform All Of Things In Life Right Now And He States It Clearly If You Look In Verses 32 And 33 First Verse 33 Do You See The Reality That The Only Thing In Life That Is Permanent The Only Thing That Can Be Relied On And Whose Treasure Is Worth Having Is The Treasure Of The Kingdom Of God A Treasure In The Heavens That Does Not Fail Where No Thief Approaches And No Moth Destroys And Therefore Clear Vision Tells You That Only A Life That Is Furnished With These Things Can Last And Can Find True And Lasting Fulfillment And Second Look At Verse 32 This Is What God Has Already Given Us For Those Who Trust In Jesus It's Your Father's Good Pleasure It's

[32 : 41] His Settled Will To Have Given You The Kingdom He Says So Fear Not The Only Thing That Lasts And That Is Worth Having In This World Has Been Promised By God To Us To His Little Flock And So When We Know That We Have The Title Deeds For Something That's Permanent For A Lasting Home Why Would We Ever Invest Ourselves In Something That Is Merely Passing The Corn The Corn The Carpet Tiles Were All Half Of Them Missing The Walls Were Tatty And The Central Heating Was Either Full On Or Full Off So It Was To Death Or Frozen To Death But It Was Only For A Time Until The New And Permanent Home Was Finished And They Knew They Were Going To Inherit Something Wonderful They Trusted Those Who Had Promised It So

Of Course They Put Up Some Pictures And They Made The Place Look Half Decent They Needed What They Needed To Do To Get By But It Would Have Been Ludicrous Wouldn't It To Spend Tens Of Thousands Of Thousands Of Pounds On That Temporary Office For Something That Was Going To Be Passing And Left Behind And Never Gone Back To Again A Colossal Waste Of Time And A Huge Diversion Of Vital Resources That Are Needed To Equip And Provide For That Which Was To Be A Permanent Ministry Well That Is How We Are To Think Of Our Whole Lives According To Jesus We Are Living Now In This World For Our Permanent Home And We Have To See With That Perspective And When We Do That Will Transform The Way We Look At Everything Even Now In This Life And Jesus Says Thinking Like That Will Mean We Are Liberated From Enslavement To Earthly Worries By Trust

In Verses 22 To 30 Are Say We Are Living Now He Says In The Care Of One Who Is Already Covenanted To Give Us His Eternal Kingdom That Which Is Permanent How Much More Then Will He Be Able To To Cop With Providing For Our Mere Temporary Needs If He Knows Our Everlasting Needs And Has Provided For Them How Much More Must He Know Our Present Needs How Much More Is The Refrain Here In These Verses Isn't It Just As It Was Back In Chapter 11 Verse 13 It's Not That We To Become Ascetics It's Not That We To Become Hermits After All Even Temporary Accommodation Needs Some Provision And Furnishings But The Point Jesus Is Making Is We Don't Need To Fear Don't Be Anxious Don't Fear Look Around Passing World He Feeds The Birds Verse 24

He Decorates The Earth With Beautiful Flowers The Glory Of The Lilies Verse 27 The Beauty Of Grasses Verse 28 That Even Just Last For A Day How Much More Does He Value You And Your Life You Have Trusted In Him Which Is Everlasting Well Verse 24 Much More Than The Birds. Verse 28 Much More Than Grass He Has Given You A Home In His Everlasting Kingdom By Giving His Own Blood In The Death Of His Son So Much Does He Love And Care For You Trust Him You Don't Need To Be Anxious About Trivial Things In This World Food And Clothes And Daily Life What Job You'll Get What Exams You'll Get Who You'll Marry Or Whether You'll Marry Where You'll Live What You'll Do Only The Faithless Like The Pagans Live With Anxiety Like That Says Jesus They Don't Know You're Heavenly Father But You Do Look At Verse 30 Your Father Knows You Need These Things So Trust Him Verse 31 Seek His Kingdom Which He's Promised You And All That You Need In This World Will Be Given To You Seek First These Earthly

[37 : 07] Things Set Your Heart On Them And You'll Be Anxious And Miserable In This Life And You'll Lose Everything In The End But Seek What Will Last You'll Be Liberated Now From Earthly Worry Even About Concerns Of The Things You Do Need In Life That That's Real That's Real That's Real That's Real That's Verses 33 And 34 Liberation From All Greed From Wrong Ambition From Things We Don't Really Need In Life Because We Have Real Security So We Don't Need To Pursue These Things That God May Give Us In Life Well Fine Or He Might Not Give Them Well Fine They Have No Permanent Value Means We Don't Need To Cling On To The Things That God Does Give Us As If They Were For Us Instead Of For Using For Him No If

His Kingdom Liberates Us We Can Become Generous Hearted People Using Our Personal Wealth And Our Passing Wealth For Gain That Is Permanent Jesus Isn't Advocating Communism In Verse 33 He Is Not Saying We Have To Give Away Everything And Pauperize Ourselves So We Become A Burden On Others Of Course Not But He Is Advocating Open Hearted And Real Generosity And He Plain He Says That Is Not Loss For Us It's Gain It's Wealth Transfer Into Non Wasting Assets Into The Place Where Your Heart Already Is He Says If You're Christ And Where Your Body Will One Day Be Permanently In The Father's Kingdom But Verse 34 Asks The Question Doesn't It Is Your Heart Really There Or Are You Perhaps Deceiving Yourself It's Very Easy To Do That He's Just Shown Us In That Parable

How Do You Know Well That's Easy Says Jesus Verse 34 Show Me Your Treasure And I'll Tell You Where Your Heart Is Where You're Invested Well That's Where You're Expecting To Make Real Gain Isn't It Your Real Citizenship Is Always Betrayed By Your Chief Concerns And Who You Support Remember Norman Tebbitt And His Cricket Test That Tells You Which Country You Really Love Well Jesus Is Just Giving Us The Wallet Test Just The Same What Things Empty Your Wallet Most That's Where You're Your Thoughts Most Even Your Prayers Is It Jesus Work And Jesus People And Their Needs And The Needs Of His Kingdom Or Is It Me And My Needs And My Comfort And My Finances And My Career And My Security And My Well Being And My Family A Pretty Penetrating Test Isn't It Especially When

We Realize That To Invest In Heavenly Treasure In The Father's Kingdom Is To To Invest In Jesus Kingdom Is To Invest In His Little Flock In His People And He Was Speaking About That Last Sunday Evening In First Corinthians Three That's How You Build For What Lasts With Gold And Silver And Precious Stones With Everlasting Treasure Building The Church Of Jesus Christ That's What It Means In Verse 33 Really To Give To The Needy And Jesus Makes That Clear And Explicit In Case We Doubted In Verses 35 To 48 Which Are All About Our Preparedness For The World To Come And The Real Reckoning For Our Lives And Again It's A Very Clear Message Only The Feckless He Says Will Live Carelessly Forgetting That Christ Is The Judge Of All Men And Will Return To Force A Reckoning On Our Lives Which Will Determine Our Future Reward Or

Loss For All Eternity And So The Priorities As For This Life Is To Be A Wise And Faithful Steward Now In Our Responsibility To Serve Christ's Household That Is His Church And Not Neglect It And Far Less To Harm It For Everyone Verse 48 To Whom Much Was Given Of Him Much Will Be Required You See Jesus Says In A Very Real Sense We Are Building Our Future Now And The Key Factor In Whether We're Building Wisely And Faithfully Or Foolishly And Wickedly Is Love And Care For The Household Of God You See Verse 43 Blessed Is The Servant Whom His Master Finds Doing That When He Comes That's The Criterion Of Jesus Judgment Now That Shouldn't Surprise Us Read Matthew Chapter 25 Where Jesus Speaks About Judgment Day And The Sheep And The Goats And It's Very Plain

[42 : 10] You Show That Your Heart Loves Jesus He Says If You Love His Brothers In The Church As You Did To The Least Of These My Brothers You Did To Me That's How We Know Says The Apostle John That We Passed From Death To Life Because We Love The Brothers And Remember John Says Love Is Not Just In Word And Talk But In Deed And Truth Deed And Truth In Love To Christ's Brothers According To Jesus Is The Criterion And A Day Of Reckoning Is Coming And So You Must All Be Ready He Says Because You Will All Be Held Responsible See Verse 35 To 40 Just Simply Say We Must All Be Ready Like Servants Waiting For The Master To Come Back From A Long Middle Eastern Wedding It Could Be Any Time It Could Be The Middle Of The Night But What A Joy To To Be Ready When He Comes And To Find That What He Is Doing Is Inviting You To His Own Table And

Serving You At A Party In Your Honor That's What Verse 37 Says What A Blessing And What A Horror Not To Be Ready Just As It's A Horror In Verse 39 To Discover A Break In You Risk Losing Everything If You're Not Ready So You Must Be Ready He Says In Verse 40 Because The Son Of Man Is Coming At An Hour You Do Not Expect And When He Returns In Glory To For Every One Of Us In Our Individual Life Beforehand Are You Ready Says Jesus Are You Active In Serving In His Household Or Are You Fast Asleep Because It's Easy To Let All Kinds Of Material Concerns Squeeze Us Out Of True Fellowship Of God Which We Find In True Fellowship With God's People Which We Find In Serving

His Household That Is His Church But If You're Not Busy Serving Christ Church As Opposed To Just Hitching A Free Ride How Do You Think That When Christ Returns On The Day Of Reckoning You Will Suddenly Be Transformed Into Somebody Who's An Experienced And Trusted Servant Who Can Be Given Much More To Do You Haven't Shown Yourself To Be Responsible So You Must Be Ready Says Jesus And All Your Gifts In The Treasure Of Serving Christ's Household Serving His Church In All The World And There's No Exception And That's What Verses 41 To 48 Tell Us We Will All Be Held Responsible See When Jesus Talks Like This We Find It So Unnerving Especially These Warnings About Loss And That's No Doubt Why Peter Says In Verse 41 Lord Who Is This For God

Doesn't Do That Kind of Dodge He Doesn't Say Well Let's Talk Hypothetically About A Particular Group Of People Jesus Looks Us In The Question Is Who Is The Faithful And Wise Steward In The New Testament Christian Leaders Are Called Stewards In God's Household Titus 1 Verse 7 Calls The Overseer That And Paul In 1 Corinthians Calls himself A Steward Of The Mysteries Of God And Of Course He Goes On To Say That It Is Important And Required Of A Steward That He Be Faithful But You See The Apostle Peter Tells Us Very Plainly In 1 Peter 4 That We Are All Stewards Of God's Varied Graces And We Are To Be Good Stewards Loving One Another Earnestly He Says From A Pure Heart That's Just What Jesus Is Painting Here In This Picture Isn't It So Graphically Blessed Is The Servant Who Is So Doing When His Master Returns But How Terrible To Be Exposed As A Fraud And As False And In The End To Have Not Had Faith To Be Unbelieving It's Not Just A Profession Of Faith You See According To Jesus But It's The Obedience Of Faith That Shows Whether Faith Is True And Real And Fruitful And That Will Happen Says Jesus And The Loss Will Be Terrible For Some Look At Verse 46 Destruction Along With All The Unfaithful The Unbelieving Those Who Have No Faith Unbelief It Seems Will Exist Even In The Household Of Christ Right Up Until The End And There Be Some Terrible Shocks On The Day When All Things Are Revealed And Some Tragic Disappointments Surely That's What Verses 47 And 48 Speak

[47 : 13] Of There'll Be Those Who Have Been Given Much But Through Half Heartedness Through Having An eye Too Much On The Treasures And The Prizes Of This Present World They Will Be Found Not To Invest It Wisely And At Last Then Too Late They'll Realize Their Loss What

Could Be Worse Than To Enter Eternity With The Ever Present Blow Of Knowing That You've Missed Out On Fully Realizing The joy Of Your Greatest Potential Of What You Could Have Been For The Cause Of The Kingdom Of God To Know That Itself Would Be To Suffer Terrible Loss To Know That Your Life's Work What You've Invested Your Life In Has All Been Burnt Up And Nothing Remains Because It Was Wood And Straw And Stubble What Will That Actually Mean Well

I Think Jesus Answer Here Is Don't Be The Person To Find That Out Don't Let That Be You Seems That There Will Be Some Perhaps Many Who Have Known Christ's Demand On Their Life But Have Resisted Have Shown Neglect For Their True Stewardship And Are Find To Be Feckless As My Dictionary Says With No Sense Of Responsibility Indifferent Lazy But Others Will Have Responded Says Jesus To The Gospel Call As Willing And Faithful Servants Loving Christ's Household Feeding His Flock Investing In The Needy Encouraging The Weak Never Giving Up The One The One To The Terrible Blow That Must Be But The Other Says Jesus Will Find No Doubt With Incredulity Perhaps His

Work For Jesus Precious People All Through His Life Abounds In Everlasting Blessing The Blessing Of More Service And Greater Responsibility Forever He Will Set Him Over All His Possessions Two Very Different Priorities In Life Leading To Two Very Different Paths Both In This World And In The World To Come Even It Seems For Those Identified As Genuine Followers Of Jesus We Can't Miss Can We Jesus Unmistakable Focus On A Dividing Of The Ways For All Eternity But As He Says In Verse 51 Where We Began He Came To Force That Division Because You Can't Have The Treasures Of Earth And The Treasures Of Heaven It's Either Treasures Riches For Yourself Or It's Riches

Towards God And Decision Has To Be Made Says Jesus Now In This World That's The Whole Reason For Our Life It's A Costly Decision To Lay Aside The Treasures Of Earthly Riches Perhaps Most Costly Of All Is When That Involves The Laying Aside Of Relationships Earthly Relationships Even Even Even Within Our Families That's What Verse 53 Speaks Of And It's Painful People Who Love Us But Whose Misplaced Love Would Stop Us From Embracing The Stewardship That Christ Himself Has Called Us To That Can Be So So Hard But What Could Be More Foolish Friends Than To Pour Your Life's Worth Into A World That's Fading And Into Riches That Will Ultimately Fail And Even Into Relationships That Will Ultimately Fade Don't Be A Fool

Says Jesus And Don't Be Afraid Have Faith And Be Fruitful And You'll Be Free Now Truly Free In This World And You Know That You Will Be Truly Fruitful For The World To Come Amen Let's Pray Fear Not Little Flock For It Is Your Father's Good Pleasure To Give You The Kingdom Sell Your Possessions And Give To The Needy Provide Your With Money Bags That Do Not Grow Old With A Treasure In The Heavens That Does Not Fail Where No Thief Approaches And No Moth Destroys For Where Your Treasure Is There Will Your Heart Be Also O God Who Has Prepared For Them That Love The Such Good Things As Past Man's Understanding Pour Into Our Hearts Such Love Toward Thee That We

[52 : 17] Loving Thee Above All Things May Obtain Thy Promises Which Exceed All That We Can Desire Through Jesus Christ Our Lord Amen