

# FIRST (SCOTS) SERMONS

## “I WISH YOU ENOUGH”

Scripture Lesson: Luke 12: 13-21

*This sermon was preached by Pastor Mary Robinson on Sunday, August 3, 2025  
at First (Scots) Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina.*

### Luke 12: 13-21 (NRSV)

#### The Parable of the Rich Fool

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 (THE MESSAGE)

#### The Story of the Greedy Farmer

13 Someone out of the crowd said, “Teacher, order my brother to give me a fair share of the family inheritance.”  
14 He replied, “Mister, what makes you think it’s any of my business to be a judge or mediator for you?”  
15 Speaking to the people, he went on, “Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot.”  
16-19 Then he told them this story: “The farm of a certain rich man produced a terrific crop. He talked to himself: ‘What can I do? My barn isn’t big enough for this harvest.’ Then he said, ‘Here’s what I’ll do: I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll gather in all my grain and goods, and I’ll say to myself, Self, you’ve done well! You’ve got it made and can now retire. Take it easy and have the time of your life!’  
20 “Just then God showed up and said, ‘Fool! Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods—who gets it?’  
21 “That’s what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God.”

#### I Wish You Enough

Leader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Greed. Greed. Greed. The Rich Fool in our parable this morning was full of greed, was he not? And Jesus told him to beware of all covetousness; for a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

One of our Adult Sunday School classes, years ago—I believe it was "Mere Christians"—studied a series by John Ortberg entitled: "When the Game of Life Is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box." And we've all heard the saying: "He who dies with the most toys, wins." Gimme, gimme, gimme. How much is enough?

There are two ways to get enough: One is to accumulate more, the other is to desire less. But often we're greedy. We can't pass up a deal. We can purchase almost anything on eBay or Temu these days. Just this past week an Australian man sold his complete life—his home, his possessions, his job, and his friends. The bidding had gotten to 400,000 pounds before the ad was pulled. Not so long ago, a 20-year-old student in the US put his "soul" up for sale on eBay. The bidding went to \$400 before eBay removed the ad.

They say the only reason a great many American families don't own an elephant is that they have never been offered an elephant for a dollar down and easy weekly payments. All joking aside—what value would you put on your life this morning?

Have you ever wondered what you would grab from the house, after your family, of course, if there was a fire? Greg and I actually had a house fire in 1989—on his birthday, no less. I grabbed as many of our family photo albums as I could carry.

But the man in Jesus' parable wasn't a fool because he was rich. He had gotten what he had honestly—through the productiveness of his hand. He was a fool because he forgot what was really important. He was a fool because he decided for himself what was really important. He was a fool because he thought: "I've done all this! I will pull down these warehouses, and build bigger ones."

In this parable, Jesus gives us a lesson on the failures of selfishness and overindulgence. How much is enough? When John D. Rockefeller was the richest man in the world, someone asked him how much money was enough. He replied, "Just a little bit more."

The accumulation of possessions will not provide worldly happiness. Happiness should not depend on what we have. God wants us to enjoy a full, complete, and balanced life, and he has made provisions through his Word for us to be fulfilled in that way. He promises to provide for our every need—not want, but need. He has promised to give us the desires of our hearts. This does not mean he will give us everything we want, but that he will give us a new set of desires when we follow him.

When we want what others have, it is called covetousness, and to covet what others have can lead to despair. So... how much is too much? The more one saves, the more he wants; and the more he wants of this world, the less he cares for the world to come. This was said by the famous minister, Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

We can be content with what we have only when we keep our priorities clear, which should be to "seek first the kingdom of God." When we do this, our needs will be met.

So... when does desire become coveting? Desire becomes sin when it fails to include the love of God or men. We are to love God enough to be contented and to love men enough not to envy. Covetousness is a craving or desire for more—a dissatisfaction with what is enough. It leads us to believe that our happiness comes from things rather than from God. It feeds our appetite and passion for pleasure through the accumulation of stuff. Covetousness not only drives us to accumulate more, it compels us to desire what belongs to others.

But wealth is not a permanent possession. You never see a U-Haul behind a hearse. Someone else gets what we have when we die. Every penny we hoard is left behind. So worldly possessions do not impress God.

Don't get me wrong here—it is not wrong for a person to desire to have a better quality of life. It is not wrong to want a better job that pays more money. It is not wrong to enjoy the better things in life. In fact, it is

not wrong to be rich. These things become wrong for the believer when they become the driving force of their lives. As I stated earlier—it is the issue of priority. Jesus warned that we cannot serve God and money. It is the love of money that he warns us about.

There's a big difference between the excitement of wanting to get something and the actual feeling you have once you get it. No matter how much things promise to satisfy us, they always fall short. Sooner or later, we're out chasing something else. Oftentimes, we have not finished payments on the last item that we just had to have. All of us have items that it seemed like we just had to have, but now that we have them, we don't know why we desperately needed them—because we rarely use them.

The rich man believes that his abundant harvest is his. He does not show any awareness that his harvest is a gift from God. His plan in verse 18 is so self-centered. He does not mention the farm laborers who worked hard to help him with the harvest. He says "my crop, my barn, my grain, my goods, and my soul." Actually, the words "I" and "my" are used 11 times.

Conversations can often reveal what people are like. It is said that Eleanor Roosevelt could talk for two and a half hours without referring to herself. At the other extreme, it's been said that Elizabeth Taylor referred to herself every 60 seconds.

The rich man believed his soul would find rest and satisfaction in storing the abundance of his wealth in bigger barns. But God said he was a "fool." He learns too late that his soul is not his, but a gift from God. In fact, the language used by Christ here denotes the repayment of a loan. His soul was not his, but God's—and God called it in. The question now moves to who will inherit this man's wealth.

If you think you are not like the rich man in this parable, think about this: If you have money in the bank this morning, money in your wallet, or a dish in your house that has spare change in it, then right at this moment, you are in the wealthiest 8% of the world's population. If you learned to read in elementary school, then you are better off than 2 billion people in this world today. If you have food at home, live in a house, and have a bed to sleep on, then you are wealthier than 75% of the world's population.

If God demanded your soul of you, where would your wealth—your treasure—be stored? We all need to take inventory of where we stand with God. Are we the blessed who have stored up treasure in heaven with God in Christ? Or this morning, are we rich with material possessions?

The pastor was invited to dinner in the home of a very wealthy man in Texas. After the meal, the host led him to a place where they could get a good view of the surrounding areas. Pointing to the oil wells dotting the landscape, he boasted, "Twenty-five years ago I had nothing. Now, as far as you can see, it's all mine." Looking in the opposite direction at his sprawling fields of grain, he said, "That's all mine." Turning east toward huge herds of cattle, he bragged, "They're all mine." Then pointing to the west and a beautiful forest, he exclaimed, "That too is all mine."

He paused, expecting the pastor to compliment him on his great success. The pastor, however, placing one hand on the man's shoulder and pointing heavenward with the other, simply said, "How much do you have in that direction?" The man stared blankly for a moment, then hung his head and confessed, "I never thought of that."

Some people make some big mistakes in life: 1—in planning for themselves, they forget others. 2—in considering their material goods, they forget the giver. 3—in providing for their bodies, they forget their soul.

The young man in this parable came asking about material wealth, and Christ turned his eyes to his eternal wealth. We, too, should look heavenward and store our treasures there, where moths and rust can't

destroy and thieves cannot steal. Our life is not about us or our possessions, but about others. It is about ministering to others, serving others, and helping others. This is how to be rich toward God. This is what gives us contentment that comes not from our possessions but from Christ. This contentment is there in all situations—whether fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. Contentment comes from him, not from our possessions.

Also, true contentment comes from living life with an attitude of gratitude, from living life understanding that everything pales in comparison to knowing Christ and following Christ. We must develop an attitude of thankfulness for what God has given us. We need to cherish our relationship with Jesus. When we understand what we deserve and compare it with what we have received in Jesus Christ, we can truly be content.

The apostle Paul looked to the Lord in every circumstance to help him to be content. We can't become complacent when times are good, but we must look to the Lord for strength when times are rough. His strength is sufficient. Contentment is reaching the state of mind that we are at peace with where we are and who we are in Christ.

To get there, we must refuse to compare ourselves with others. There will always be others who have more than you—but remember, there are many more who have less than what you have. Almost all of us here have perfectly good stuff sitting in our attics, garages, or closets, doing absolutely nothing for the kingdom of God. It feels so good when May rolls around and we look through our stuff to see what we can donate to the youth auction! Most of what we are saving will not be wanted by our children or grandchildren when we die. Most of our stuff was accumulated by wanting more than what we truly needed, and then hoarding it just in case we might need it in the future.

Just like the rich man, we're busy collecting for that "one day," when tonight might be the night that God requires our souls. If you died today, would your attic and garage speak in favor or against you? Did you know that the most dangerous word in the English language is said to be the word—"tomorrow"?

I will leave you with this one thought: What if all you had when you woke up this morning was what you thanked God for last night? Hear this again: What if all you had when you woke up this morning was what you thanked God for last night?

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray: Let us pray: O God, we come before You with a heart full of thanks. Thank You for the breath in our lungs, for the gift of this day, for the beauty that surrounds us. Thank You for the people You have placed in our lives—for family, for friends, for kind strangers. For love that comforts, for trials that strengthen, and for Your presence that never leaves me. Thank You for the food on our tables, the shelter over our heads, the peace in moments of stillness, and the hope that carries us forward. Help us, Lord, to never take these blessings for granted. Teach us to see Your hand in the smallest things, to rejoice in simplicity, to share freely from the abundance You've given us. In all things, may my life reflect Your goodness, and may gratitude be the song of my soul. Grant us contentment today and always. Amen.