

A Successful Business Man Who Failed

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Luke 12:16-21

Luke 12:16-21, *“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

If there is anything in this world that we should hate to be, it is that we should be a failure. But the rich fool of whom we have just read in the text was a real failure.

He was, in once sense, a great success; he was a successful business man. He was not a little farmer, but he owned and operated a large estate.

If I was an artist, I would paint a picture of this successful man and place him on a huge Texas farm. Near the top of the picture, away off in the distance, I would paint some beautiful rolling hills covered with green grass upon which were Texas white-faced Hereford cattle grazing. Down in the picture I would paint some fields of beautiful grain. Next to that I would depict a beautiful home — a mansion. Nearby, I would portray a large red barn with a massive silo beside it. Somewhere in the picture, I would place this successful farmer sitting upon a large horse looking over his vast estate.

In naming the title of this picture, I would print at the bottom of the picture these words: “A successful Man.”

But God takes the brush from my hand and instead writes the words, “A miserable Failure.”

In the eyes of the world, this man was a glorious success, but in the eyes of God he was a miserable failure. As the world looks at him and declares that he is rich, God pronounces him a pauper. The world would call him a genius, but God called him a fool.

Why was he a foolish man? Let us consider why.

He left God out of his life.

Psalms 9:17, *“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”*

In all his planning, he deliberately left God out. He talked about “*my fruits*”, “*my barns*”, “*my goods*”.

God had given this man all that he needed to become a success: A strong and healthy body, the sunshine and the rain, the rotation of the seasons, the fertility of the soil; all of which made his success possible.

He had thrown some seed in the ground, and for every handful God had given him a bushel in return. God had given him everything and he was not willing to give God anything in return.

Napoleon’s attitude.

Napoleon had planned to invade Russia and defeat the Czar. Someone said in his presence, “Man proposes, but God disposes.” On hearing this remark, Napoleon replied, “I propose, and I dispose.” He deliberately left God out of the reckoning, and it proved fatal. For God dealt with Napoleon through one of His smallest and most fragile creations — the snowflake. His Corsican army was not prepared for the snows of Russia, and he was defeated. “Russia shall be mine,” his proud heart had said, but God was there.

The man who goes into business and leaves out God makes a miserable failure.

If he fails to take the God of heaven as a partner and a counselor, he is doomed for failure, for in God’s book there are to be found the safest of all rules and principles of economy and industry.

He left his fellow men out of his life.

This foolish man who forgot God also forgot his neighbor.

He did not say to his wife, “We have more grain, corn, fruit, and vegetables that we can ever use. We ought to take some of it to our neighbors who have no crops.”

He simply said, “*What shall I do with my goods?*”

Jesus taught that the “*first and great commandment*” is:

Matt. 22:37-39, *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”*

But this foolish man violated both of these great commandments.

True story of brotherly love:

Madame Chiang Kai-shek told of the story of a hero of the Chinese rice fields during an earthquake. From his hilltop farm he felt the quake and saw in the distance the ocean swiftly withdrawn from the old shore line. He knew that the ocean would leap back in a tidal wave. In the valleys below, he saw his neighbors working low fields that would be destroyed by the rapid rush of water. He knew that their only safety was to be on the hilltop where he stood, and that they had to get there quickly. It was useless to call them, for they could not hear in that distance. He quickly ran to his nearby barns of rice which were dry as tinder. With a torch he set fire to his own barns. His neighbors saw the smoke and rushed up the hill to help him. Then from their safe perch on the hill they looked in the direction of the ocean as he pointed. They saw the waters cover over the fields they had just left. In a flash they knew their salvation and what it cost the man who warned them. The monument they erected to his memory is still standing, bearing the motto, "He gave us all he had, and gave it gladly."

The foolish man of whom Jesus spoke thought the human soul could be satisfied with material things.

Luke 12:19, "*And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*"

There is something about the soul of man that cannot be satisfied with the things that are material and perishable.

Matt. 4:4, "*But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"

The greatest happiness of earth is not always among those that are clad in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day. Many a man living in a humble little shack sleeps in a gentle peace, while others living in their luxury and wealth are experiencing a problem in their sleep.

Money cannot bring complete happiness and fulfil all our desires.

- Eccl. 5:10, "*He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.*"
- Eccl. 4:6, "*Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.*"

He thought that he had a perpetual lease on life.

Luke 12:19, *“And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.”*

We don’t know what awaits us on the morrow.

- Prov. 27:1, *“Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”*
- James 4:14, *“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”*

There isn’t a healthy person in this world who expects to be in his grave within the next 6 months. Perhaps you don’t expect to be in your grave within the next 6 years.

Yet, it is possible that the casket is already made into which the body of some one of us may soon be laid.

So, God said to this man, *“Thou fool.”* Yet, he was not one ready for an insane asylum; he did not need someone to constantly guard him from society. Still, God declared him to be a fool.

God further said to him, *“This night thy soul shall be required of thee.”*

This man talked about tomorrow; but God talked about NOW.

God also said to him, *“Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”*

The house in which you now live will one day be occupied by others, saving the second coming of Christ. The stocks and bonds and the money in your bank, which you now claim as your own, will be possessed by another after you leave this world, for they will be left behind.

1 Tim. 6:6-10, *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*

Finally, God says to us:

Luke 12:21, *“So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

“So is he” — He whom? Anybody — You, me, all those who trust in the things of the world and are “not rich toward God.”

- Matt. 6:19-20, *“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”*
- 1 Tim. 6:17-19, *“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”*

Conclusion.

Eccl. 12:13-14, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”*

If you are making the same mistakes this man made:

- Presuming that you have a lease on life.
- Presuming that there is plenty of time to accept Christ; plenty of time to prepare for eternity.

I warn you to profit by the sad experience of this man.

