

## **“Life is Good!”**

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There is a great deal of apathy toward God in our affluent culture. We live in an economically prosperous era. The wealth of our country has been a contributing factor in the apathy people have towards God. Blinded by wealth, many do not see any practical purpose for God in their lives. We use our disposable income for leisure and entertainment. Life is good!

Many are like the rich man in one of Jesus’ parables. The man worked hard and been prosperous. He was comfortable. He decided to retire and enjoy the fruits of his labor. Suddenly, God visited the rich man. God told him that his soul would be required of him that very night. Then, God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:20-21).

The rich man in Jesus’ parable is an accurate representation of how Americans think. We work hard in the hopes of the day we will be rich. On that day, we will get to take our ease and live for ourselves. Let’s take a closer look at the problems with this perspective.

**1. Our relationship to wealth.** Some have mistakenly thought that Jesus preached against wealth. He did not. Jesus preached about the proper relationship to wealth. He acknowledged the common danger that wealth poses. Mainly, riches can cause us to put our faith in them instead of putting our faith in God.

Wealth acquired through honest work or inheritance is to be used to serve God and help other people. Sadly, the rich man in Jesus’ parable gave no thought to this use of wealth. He had no regard for God. He had no regard for his soul. Therefore, God declared him a fool.

Paul described the proper relationship we are to have with wealth. He wrote, “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life” (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

**2. Wealth cannot provide the need of the soul.** Wealth is a tool. Money can be used to fix problems and ease certain burdens. However, money is worthless in providing for the needs of our souls. The comfort of wealth is deceptive. The comfort of our lives can blind us from seeing that our souls are endangered.

The Psalmist wrote of the distorted perspective of the wicked: “For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD” (Psa. 10:3). Greed is a symptom of an empty soul. Wealth cannot fill the soul. A big house cannot fill the soul. Exotic vacations cannot fill the soul. Most significantly, our souls need righteousness.

Righteousness can only be received through faith in what God did for us through Jesus: “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4). Unless and until the true need of the soul is acknowledged, wealth will continue to blind the affluent from seeing Jesus. Only Jesus can cleanse, protect, and save our souls.

**3. The lie of wealth will be exposed.** A lie is unsustainable. It cannot deliver on its promise. Life will expose our weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Wealth may be able to hide or compensate for these for a time. However, life will test us to our core. For example, Paul wrote, “Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:13-15).

If we have not been using the right building materials, our lives will be shattered. Does this mean we could lose our wealth? Possibly. People can their fortunes. But, there are other types of loss we can suffer. We could lose our health. By sickness and death, we could lose our family and friends. We could lose our jobs. We could suffer deep disappointment. Loss comes in many forms.

When we are tested, the lie upon which we have built our lives will be exposed. This is what happened to the rich man in Jesus’ parable. He realized that his wealth could not compensate for loss; especially, the loss of his soul. Loss proves we need something, someone greater than us and our possessions. We need something that cannot be taken from us. We need something substantial; something that can withstand the storms. Loss points us to Jesus.

**4. We must seek God while we have the opportunity.** There is a day coming when it will be too late to seek God. The rich man in Jesus’ parable had run out of time. The parable is cautionary. There is an old song that says, *“When this old world is doomed in sin, you’ll ask the Lord, ‘Please let me in.’ But it will be too late to make your call, to ask the Lord to protect your soul.”*

We must urgently use the time God grants us to repent of our sins (2 Pet. 3:9). We must seek first His kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33). We must live in the service of God by serving others (2 Cor. 15:14-15).

### Conclusion

We are a materially blessed country. Yet, with great blessing comes great responsibility. As Paul warned, many have allowed themselves to be overcome by the temptation of riches. And, Christians can suffer from the same problem. The church at Laodicea had become apathetic due to the deceptive comfort of wealth. They thought they were rich. In reality, they were miserable, poor, and blind. They were commanded to repent (Rev. 3:14-22). Let us commit to developing a Biblical relationship with wealth and put our faith in God.