

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

Many who hear today Jesus' story about the fool rich man may wonder:
Why is the rich farmer of the story called a fool?
The rich man looks like a wise and responsible person.
He has a thriving farming business.
His land has produced so abundantly that he does not have enough storage space in his barns.
So he plans to pull down his barns and build bigger ones to store all his grain and goods.
Then he will have ample savings set aside for the future and will be ready to enjoy his golden years.
Isn't this what we are encouraged to strive for?
Isn't it wise and responsible to save for the future?
The rich farmer would probably be a good financial advisor.
He seems to have things figured out.
He has worked hard and saved wisely.
Now he can sit back, relax, and enjoy the fruits of his labor, right?
Well, not exactly.

The rich farmer is a fool not because he is wealthy or because he saves for the future, but because he appears to live only for himself.
Because he believes that he can secure his life with his abundant possessions.
When the rich man talks in this parable, he talks only to himself about himself:
"What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?"
"I will do this: I will pull...
I will store...
I will say to my soul..."
The rich man's land has produced abundantly.
Yet, he expresses no sense of gratitude to God or to the workers who have helped him plant and harvest this bumper crop.
He has more grain and goods in storage than he could ever hope to use.
Yet, he seems to have no thought of sharing it with others.
No thought of what God might require of him.
The rich man does not include God in the equation.
The rich man is not taking into account that God is the one who gave him the increase.
The rich man is not considering that God is the one who has given him life.

But Christ is making today the point that it's all on loan in a sense;
The Greek verb used by Christ in the story to express *this night your soul is required of you* [ἀπαιτοῦσιν] contains language that is related to repaying a loan.
And like a loan which has come due, the rich man's life ends, showing how meaningless and foolish his plans were.
The rich man is mapping out his future with no thought of God in his life.
And so the rich man learns the hard way that his possessions offer him no real security.

That his possessions cannot save him.

Like the rich farmer, we too, are often tempted to think that having large amounts of money and possessions will make us secure.

Sooner or later, however, we learn that no amount of wealth or property can secure our lives.

No amount of wealth can protect us from a genetically inherited disease or from a tragic accident.

No amount of wealth can keep our relationships healthy and our families from falling apart.

In fact, wealth and property can easily drive a wedge between family members.

Most importantly, no amount of wealth can secure our lives with God.

In fact, Jesus repeatedly warns us that wealth can get in the way of our relationship with God.

“Take care!” Christ says.

“Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”

It is not that Christ doesn’t want us to save for retirement or future needs.

It is not that Christ doesn’t want us to “eat, drink, and be merry” and enjoy what God has given us.

During His earthly ministry Jesus spends time eating and drinking with people.

But Christ is also clear about where His true security lays: doing the will of His Father.

Of our Father who art in heaven.

It is all about priorities.

It is about who is truly God in our lives.

It is about how we invest our lives and the gifts that God has given us.

It is about how our lives are fundamentally aligned toward God and our neighbor.

The folly isn’t in the ownership of wealth, but in the failure to share it with others.

Especially when there are so many in our world whose needs aren’t met.

Our lives and possessions are not our own.

They belong to God.

We are merely stewards of them for the time God has given us on this earth.

Because in the end, we can’t take them with us.

All physical wealth is left behind upon death.

We rebel against this truth because we want to be in charge of our lives and our stuff.

Yet this truth is actually good news.

Because all that we are and all that we have belongs to God.

So our future is secure beyond all measure...

When we do God’s will...

When we do what He asks...

When we live according to His teachings...

Then we are truly rich.

We are rich in God!

And this is the wealth that no one can take away from us!

Today Jesus calls us to be rich in God!

Today Jesus calls us to live not only for ourselves, but for the others.

And today we accept this calling.

Thanking God for all the blessings that He continually bestows on us.

Looking to Christ for direction on how to use the material goods He has blessed us
with.

Learning how to be rich toward God.

Amen!