

August 1, 2010
Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23; Psalm 49:1-12; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke
12:13-21

The man in the parable is called a fool. He may or may not believe in God, but he seems to be a “practical atheist” – living life like there is no God to whom you are held accountable. As it says in Psalm 14:1, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” The man is called a fool for 3 reasons:

- 1) He thought more of the body than of the soul. In Christ’s day, wealth was measured by land – to have much land, etc. was important and the man knew this was true. In vs. 19 he talks about taking care of his soul. As one commentary states: you can’t feed the soul with wheat and meat. Too many times, we, like the man in the parable, try to feed our souls with material things thinking we will find peace. We say, “If I have ____ (fill in the blank) then I will be happy/know peace.” The more things we get, the more we actually may continue to hunger. But material things do not meet the spiritual hunger of the heart. In the Colossians reading, we are told what fills the hunger of our hearts – being revealed in Christ – he is all and in all.

- 2) The man called the rich fool thought more of himself than of others. As Luther Seminary Professor David Lose notes, he had “fallen prey to worshipping the most popular of gods – the unholy Trinity of me, myself and I.” For, he uses those pronouns a lot within the parable story. He had a bumper crop. He was surrounded by those in need and didn’t have storage. It seems that this would set the stage for a great story of giving out of his abundance to those in need, but to him, it meant

building bigger barns to store his grain and his things. It is said that “greediness is one of the greatest robbers of humankind.”

- 3) He thought more of the present time than eternity. He was thinking of the present and the close future, but not the ultimate future – his spiritual future. He never saw beyond this world. His plans were only made for this present world.

It reminds me of a story of a conversation between a young and ambitious man and an older man who knew about life. The young man said, “I will learn my trade.” “And then?” said the older man. “I will set up in business.” “And then?” “I will make a fortune.” “And then?” “I suppose that I shall grow old and retire and live on my money.” “And then?” “Well, I suppose that someday I will die.” “And then?” came the last stabbing question. It is good to realize that you can’t take what you have with you.

We may know why the man in the parable is called the rich fool. We may know that what we have or desire to have – money and things – are not what truly brings us happiness and that we can’t take it with us. However, it can be difficult to take what we know and move it into action because we live within the realm and culture of things. And, to be honest, even the Word became flesh – became something/someone – the invisible revealed through that which is made. Things are tools for living. Things are what we can use to help others who are our neighbors in need. Things, in themselves, are not what’s wrong, but how we focus upon them and how we use/misuse them. It’s hard to be in a culture of things, but not of our things. The man in the parable lost his life in his livelihood. We too, at times can lose our very lives within our livelihoods when that rules our heart and the decisions that we make. How much greater than

that is Jesus who lost his earthly life so that we, too may live eternally with him, free of all the things that weigh us down.

How many good “things” have brought true peace? The man in the parable can’t feed his soul on wheat and meat and we, too, cannot feed our souls on what we own or desire to own.

So, it is with release and hope, for isn’t it truly a release to know that what we own and what we owe does not have to rule our hearts? The hope is that God is our future, not the stuff in our barns or houses (*RevGalblog*).

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”

(Apologies: The idea of the three reasons the man is called a fool in the parable is from one of the commentaries that I read – I honestly can’t remember which one and didn’t write it down in my notes.)