

With Blessings Come Responsibility

Text : Luke 12: 35-48 (esp 47-48)

INTRODUCTION :

A. We live in the most prosperous country in the history of the world.

1. Solomon in all his glory could not equal America today.
2. Rome changed the world, but did not achieve our level of prosperity.
 - a. Rome became so prosperous it destroyed itself from within.
 - b. Rome so influenced the world that when they fell it plunged the world into the dark ages.
3. Today America's "poor" are considered wealthy in most of the world.
 - a. The American poverty level is five times the salary of many 3rd world doctors.
 - b. Those at the American poverty level pay more in taxes than 3rd world salaries.
 - c. Many American families make more every day than 3rd world people make a year.
 - d. Our auto workers make more in 1½ hours than 3rd world workers make a week.

B. Thus, we also live in one of the most spiritually perilous countries in the world.

1. Like Rome, our wealth enables us to indulge our every desire for pleasure.
 - a. Americans are notorious for a "party" lifestyle. (*Movies portray us as depraved.*)
 - b. We can afford expensive toys.
 - 1) Big screen TVs
 - 2) Electronics of all description
 - 3) Jet-skies , Boats
 - 4) RVs , Campers , etc.
 - 5) Cars , Trucks , Motorcycles
 - c. We can travel anywhere we choose.
 - 1) We have global reach.
 - 2) Many have multiple residences.
2. Rather than gratitude, most Americans have developed an attitude of entitlement.
 - a. Modern young people think they should start off at the level their parents achieved.
 - b. Those who don't work expect to be supported by those who do work.
 - c. When Americans get sick, we feel entitled to health care even if we have no money.
* *Even the rich in some countries can't buy the health care we give our poor.*
3. Though we have more than others, we continue demanding more and better.

C. In our folly, we are walking down a well-worn path. (cf .. Rom. 15:4)

1. Each time God blessed His people of old, they forsook Him.
2. God warned Israel, but they did it anyway.
 - a. **Read ... Deut. 8: 11-20**
 - b. God rescued them time and again, but each time they returned to their sin.
**II Pet. 2:22- It has happened to them according to the true proverb,
“A dog returns to its own vomit,” and,
“A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.”**

D. Jesus taught that His followers must not pursue financial prosperity.

1. **Matt. 19: 16-26** ... One viewed righteous by all was condemned by his possessions.
 - a. More than others, this rich young ruler strove to live righteously before God.
 - b. He could not turn loose of his earthly blessings to receive spiritual blessings.
2. Christians must be contented with that which God places within their hand.
 - a. **Luke 12:21** ... The man of God may not store up treasure on the earth.
 - b. **Matt. 6: 25-34** ... Christians are distinguished from unbelievers by trust in God.
3. Jesus taught that wealth makes it difficult for anyone to go to Heaven.
 - a. **Matt. 19:24- Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.**
 - b. **Therefore, prosperity is more often a burden than a blessing.**

TRANSITION :

Some Christian's heart for wealth was clearly demonstrated when I heard a wise and spiritual man pray that God would remove any blessing that interfered with their serving Him. Some brethren were upset by his prayer.

I. Blessings can be one of Satan's greatest temptations.**A. It is one of the temptations that Satan used against our Lord.**

1. *“Worship me and I will give you all that you can see.” (Matt. 4: 5-7)*
2. Jesus did not succumb, **but** also did not deny Satan's ability to give what he said.
 - a. Sometimes prosperity is not from God.
 - b. If you have to make a loan to get it, God did not give it.

B. Godly people are forbidden to seek after financial prosperity.

1. This has always been God attitude toward wealth. (*Not unique to Christianity*)
In the O.T. ... Prov 28:20 - A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished.

2. In the N.T. the desire for financial success is specifically forbidden to Christians.

Read ... I Tim. 6: 6-10

3. When success or pleasure is right in front of you, it's hard not to reach for it.
 - a. Adam and Eve had temptation right in front of them and they took it.
 - b. If Satan can keep our eyes on that which is close, we loose sight of Heaven.

ILL.- Do you remember how the "Little Rascals" got that old mule to pull. They dangled a carrot out in front of him just out of his reach. Satan manipulates us like that mule.

C. Living by faith in God (*Christ*) and earthly ambitions are mutually exclusive.

1. **Matt. 6: 19-24 ... No one can serve two masters.**
2. There can only be ONE CENTER of your life.
 - a. The center of a servant's life is his master **Jesus**
 - b. One can't be focused on Heaven and on earth at the same time.
3. Our educational system clearly demonstrates the problem.
 - a. We spend years and thousands of dollars to prepare our children for life on earth.
 - b. Life on earth is but a grain of sand on the beach of man's eternal span.

D. He who has faith in God will trust Him to provide and accept what He gives.

1. Trusting in God implies that we are contented where ever He places us in life.
2. Trusting in God means we have confidence that he will respond to our cries.
3. When the future is clear ... sight has replaced faith. (*Man seeks clarity.*)

II. With every blessing comes responsibility.**A. Jesus consistently taught this principle.**

1. **Matt. 25: 19-25 ... The parable of the talents.**
 - a. The Master entrusted His wealth to His servants and went away.
 - b. After a long absence he came back to require servants to account for their use of ...
 - c. This is clearly a parable about Jesus entrusting the gospel to those who serve Him.

2. **Luke 19: 11-27** ... Parable of the money usage. (minas)
 - a. Similar parable told to prepare His followers for His departure.
 - b. I'm leaving. You do my ministry until I return. **I will return .. you will account.**
3. **Luke 12** ... Steward is left in charge, **but** held accountable upon the Master's return.

B. This principle also applies to things without monetary value.

1. **Matt. 18: 21-35** ... parable of unforgiving steward (**As we receive, we give.**)
 - a. Those who receive forgiveness must also be willing to forgive others.
 - b. The Christian's salvation depends upon him being willing to extend grace.
2. **Matt. 18: 21-35** ... **Freely you received, freely give.** (*Referring to spiritual things.*)
 - * a. All who have been blessed by God in any way must be a blessing to others.
 - b. This is a command. One cannot live in rebellion to God and anticipate salvation.

C. The giving must be in proportion to the receiving.

1. Text : **Luke 12: 47-48** **And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.**

* **No one has been entrusted with more than the U.S.A. .. American Christians**

2. This principle is eternal and universal.
 - a. It applies to every person on the planet.
 - b. It applies to every Christian.

III. Modern American Christians have more to give account for than any in history.

A. We live in the most financially blessed nation in history.

1. We have the resources to send the gospel into every house in the world, this town.
2. We will give an accounting for every person in this town who has not received the gospel message.

B. We are in the most technologically advanced country in all the world.

1. We have ways to get the gospel out that our forefathers couldn't have imagined.
 - a. We have the printing press. (*The ancients had to write every word by hand.*)

- b. We have varied broadcast media : Radio , TV , Internet , Satellite , etc.
- c. Phone, cell phone, tweet, facebook, etc.
- 2. We will give an accounting to God for our use of the media on His behalf.

C. We live in the freest country in the history of the world.

- 1. We are totally free to proclaim the gospel with no fear of repercussion.
- 2. We will give an accounting to God for how we have used that freedom.

D. We have had more access to the gospel than any one in the history of the world.

- 1. The gospel is everywhere we look.
 - a. Bibles are abundant and very cheap. (*Anyone can get a N.T. free.*)
 - b. If you are handicapped, we have the bible on tape, on line and on the air.
- 2. There are congregations of the Lord's people within driving range of most Americans.
 - a. There are directories available to guide you to their buildings.
 - b. In most places there is someone who will come pick you up if you can't get there.
- 3. Christians today can hear a sermon every Sunday.
 - a. Sermons are available every day of the week. (*I listen to at least one daily.*)
 - b. You can get sermons on tape, on line, on the air, in print and more.

CONCLUSION :

A. The question before us is : “*How are we using these blessings ?*”

B. Each one of us will individually stand before God to give accounting.

- 1. What is the goal of our life ?
 - a. Do we live to advance the cause of God ?
 - b. **OR** are our goals focused on earthly things ? **ON SELF !?!?**
 - c. Are our eyes focused on God or on this earth ?
- 2. How are we using the blessings which God has entrusted to us ?
 - a. Money
 - b. Technology
 - c. Freedom (*We show true gratitude by using His blessings to serve Him.*)
 - d. The gospel

Text : Luke 12: 48b From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

INVITATION :

Lesson Text : Luke 12: 33-48

33 “Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. **34** “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

35 “Be dressed in readiness, and *keep* your lamps lit. **36** “Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open *the door* to him when he comes and knocks. **37** “Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself *to serve*, and have them recline *at the table*, and will come up and wait on them. **38** “Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds *them* so, blessed are those *slaves*.

39 “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. **40** “You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.”

41 Peter said, “Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone *else* as well?” **42** And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? **43** “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. **44** “Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. **45** “But if that slave says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, *both* men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; **46** the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him* and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. **47** “And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, **48** but the one who did not know *it*, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.