

Sermon- Our Saviors Lutheran Church- August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Text - Luke 12:13-21

### What's the Good Life?

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. We have an interesting Gospel in front of us today. It's from the Gospel of Luke. The whole middle part of Luke's Gospel is devoted to Jesus traveling to Jerusalem, and we know what happened there. Jesus is taking his time, walking with his disciples, and occasionally some brave folks cry out with a question, or a demand. Like this one today - "Jesus, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me!"

Many of us can relate. We are in the lawyer's office and the mood is contentious. The issue of the division of assets of dear old Mom is not going very well. Looks like the courts have to decide. Many of us have been there.

Jesus at first glance is dismissive. "Who set me up to be a judge?" In other words, I don't have time for this nonsense. But, Jesus, seeing a teaching moment decides to share a parable. The parable is most often called the parable of The Rich Fool. And certainly the summary of the parable could be that The Good Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.

Again we can relate. We have that desire for The Good Life. Let's put the parable in context for today. Let's call her The Rich Woman. It's been a record year - her sales commission is higher than ever before. With her new wealth, this rich woman's savings accounts are going to bump her into a higher tax rate. So she needs to hire some sneaky accountants to find all the tax loopholes. She is preparing for the good life down the road. She is dreaming of the long vacations, the new Tesla, meals with great wine. Unfortunately, it's all in her head. But she is planning for the good life.

Again, we can relate. If only we won the lottery then we would have the good life. Or the concept of Greed - in 1987 a movie was released called Wall Street. The Michael Douglas character declares, "there is a new law of evolution...and that is that Greed is Good." We all should strive for the good life. Or the television preacher who declared one day, "there is enough money in the world for every man, woman, and child to have 17 million dollars...and I want my 17 million." The Good Life.

Kind of interesting when we look at the parable again and see what is really happening. The rich man in the parable fails to see the miracle of the community that surrounds him, the crowd. He does not even look up from the harvest to see the people around him. He does not even talk to them, only to himself. "Self, what should I do? Well self, I could tear down what I have and build up bigger barns. And then self, I can plan for the Good Life." It's all about him, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. He has missed the community around him.

And certainly he has missed the Yiddish expression Mann tracht und Gutt lacht. Man plans and God laughs.

What the guy was missing is that the good life is now in community with our brothers and sisters. We don't live on an island. As always, Jesus reminds us that the Good Life is now. He reminds us that our work of preparing for the future is only positive if we enjoy our work and have strong relationships to put the fruits of that work into action - not years down the road, but today.

Jesus is suggesting that incessantly working to amass knowledge, power or wealth weakens relationships - with others and with God. Jesus wants us to realize that the good life is not some future that requires a big 401 K. The good life is here, with us now. Look around you, and the people near to you in the pews. This community is what strengthens the good life.

We received the good life when we were plunged into the waters of baptism, saved from the power of death.

We taste the good life in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, when we are joined to God and our fellow believers through the forgiving power of this sacrament.

We share the good life with our friends over coffee and stories.

We work within the good life when our labors are meaningful and fulfilling.

We see it in the love shared between spouses.

We marvel at it when we see a child explore the world, or when we watch a child or grandchild make a bucket.

We feel it when we give to the least of these my brothers and sisters.

We speak it when we forgive those who have harmed us, and when we apologize to those we have harmed.

So, plan all you want. But in reality, the good life is now.

The Rich Fool didn't get it.

The point is, Can We?

Amen - Let it be so.