

Jesus Told Us:
Parable of the Rich Fool
September 9, 2018
Luke 12:13-21

The Parable of the Rich Fool

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.'¹⁴ But he said to him, 'Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?'¹⁵ And he said to them, 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.'¹⁶ Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly.'¹⁷ And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?'¹⁸ Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.'¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'²⁰ **But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you.** And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"²¹ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

Jesus Told Us! (How many ways can Jesus Tell us?)

Jesus often spoke in Parables.
PARABLES...

A good parable ... you either get or you don't!
(When I hear a parable ... and get it ... I wish I did not! The message is often inviting / telling / demanding a new way of life!) Since when did we followers of Jesus start to think that there is no more work for us to do about our faith / life / ways of living / our salvation?)

Often when Jesus speaks ... we hear a piercing word ... a challenging word...
A word that can transform our lives!

Let's take a closer look at what Jesus was about with this parable of the Rich Fool.

13 Someone in the crowd said to JESUS, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.'¹⁴ But JESUS said to him, (WITH A CHUCKLE!) 'Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?'¹⁵ And JESUS said to them, '**Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.**'¹⁶ Then JESUS told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced

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"He lives for himself, talks to himself, plans for himself, congratulates himself" (Fred Craddock), appearing only to live in the orbit of his own universe. "He thought to himself, "What should I do?" He said to himself, "I will do this: I will....I will...And I will say to my soul." He's in his own individual world, his own liturgy of abundance and no one else is in attendance. He is an audience of one.

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Luke 12:13-21, Elisabeth Johnson, Preaching This Week, *WorkingPreacher.org*, 2013.

- "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, and because he believes that he can secure his life with his abundant possessions."

"The Land of Rich Men," Russell Rathbun, *The Hardest Question*, 2010.

- "Can I be honest about my desire for material abundance and the security it promises?"

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there is fear of scarcity, that there is not enough or will not be enough. Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann writes that “we have a love affair with ‘more’ and we will never have enough” if we adhere to the myth of scarcity.

1 Corinthians 15:

50 What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.** 51 Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die,* but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:*

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

55 ‘Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?’

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

20 But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you.

Catherine Caimano:

In all of this I think that Jesus is telling us that our life with God is not just another realm where we have to wonder if we are getting it right; instead, he is saying that most of our anxieties are unfounded because the only real world in which we actually live is the kingdom of God.

And what makes us Christians different from everybody else is not that we don't have savings accounts; it's that the true saving in our lives is the salvation of a God who died for the love of us. And so our life consists of something more than what we can store up on earth. And our true life is still being revealed to us, every day. I am going to ask us to ask ourselves every day, “Is this who God wants me to be?” -- not because we are afraid that God might be disappointed in us, but because of our joyful belief in all the good things that God has in store for us.

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BECAUSE Within my heart lies a melody!

Scholars agree that Bridgers experienced an immense loss in his life. While he was preaching a revival at Middlesboro, Kentucky, Bridgers left his wife and three small sons with her parents in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. At the conclusion of the revival, March 26, 1911, he received a call that his wife, Sarah, and all three sons, ages five, three, and seven months, had lost their lives in a fire.

The date of the tragic fire -- March 26, 1911 -- is crucial because numerous writers have attempted to link the composition of the gospel song with this event. However, as hymnologist William Reynolds, writer of this column for ten years, has demonstrated, the song was penned the previous year in 1910.

While indeed hymns are sometimes forged in the fires of tragedy, this appears not to have been case here. Bridgers remarried in 1914 and continued his long ministry until his retirement in Gainesville, Georgia, in 1945.

So here we have it ... a hymn not forged from the tragic ... but the words and melodies of faith prior to tragedy that keeps the author alive. What do we claim before we must claim faith ... What is the “BEFORE” and what is the “AFTER” of our faith?

There's Within My Heart a Melody

The United Methodist Hymnal Number 380

Text: Luther B. Bridgers

Music: Luther B. Bridgers

1. There's within my heart a melody
Jesus whispers sweet and low:
Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still,
in all of life's ebb and flow.
Refrain:
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
sweetest name I know,
fills my every longing,
keeps me singing as I go.

2. All my life was wrecked by sin and strife,
discord filled my heart with pain;
Jesus swept across the broken strings,
stirred the slumbering chords again.
(Refrain)

3. Though sometimes he leads through waters deep,
trials fall across the way,
though sometimes the path seems rough and steep,
see his footprints all the way.
(Refrain)

4. Feasting on the riches of his grace,
resting neath his sheltering wing,
always looking on his smiling face,
that is why I shout and sing.
(Refrain)

5. Soon he's coming back to welcome me
far beyond the starry sky;
I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown;
I shall reign with him on high.
(Refrain)