

# A RICH FOOL MISSES THE TRUE RICHES

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### A Small Group Discussion on Economic Justice

By Jim Jordal

- CONTENT: READ ALOUD THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES: LUKE 12:15-21: And He [Jesus] said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Then he spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry" ' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

PSALM 49:10-12, 16-20: For he sees wise men die; likewise the fool and the senseless person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, their dwelling place to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man, though in honor, does not remain&hellip;. Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dies he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him. Though while he lives he blesses himself (for men will praise you when you do well or yourself), he shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. A man who is in honor, yet does not understand, is like the beasts that perish.

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#### - QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- In Jesus' parable, what was the rich man's mistake? Explain your answer.
- Was the rich man a real capitalist or a greedy, miserly hoarder? Explain.
- Some proponents of what we might call extreme capitalism claim that greed is good. In what situations, if any, might greed be considered a virtue beneficial to all? In what ways is greed bad? Why?
- Is capitalism really built on greed? If not, what is it based upon?
- Looking at the parable, how can you tell that the rich man's fault was really of a spiritual nature?
- The last verse of the parable tells us to be "rich toward God." What does this mean, and how can we do it?

- What does the psalmist say in the second reading concerning the pride and arrogance of the rich?
- Why does the psalmist say we should not envy or fear the rich?
- What does this lesson say to us and to our church today?

#### C. PRINCIPLES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Depending solely upon riches rather than upon God is a form of idolatry and faithlessness.
- It is a foolish waste of effort to envy or fear the rich.
- The only thing that really matters in the long run is faith in and obedience to God.
- Capitalism is not inherently evil, but excessive emphasis on saving, investing, and profit making open it to many serious abuses.
- Being rich toward God essentially means understanding that everything belongs to God, and thus acting with generosity toward both God and man.

#### D. REFERENCES:

Matt. 19:16-26; Matt. 6:19-21; Matt. 6:24-34; Acts 2:42-47; James 2:1-9; James 5:1-6.