

**Luke 12:16-21**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

In today's Gospel reading we heard the unfortunate story of a man who spent his whole life amassing earthly wealth but caring very little for his soul.

The Lord calls such a man a fool because he chose earthly treasure over heavenly riches. He chose to spend his time, energy, and effort to acquire the perishable, corruptible, and passing things of this world, instead of the imperishable, incorruptible and eternal things of God.

Now it is quite remarkable that the Lord calls this man a fool because the only other time that the word fool appears in the Gospels is when the Lord warns that he who calls his neighbor a fool is in danger of hellfire.

Yet here the Lord calls this man a fool, and truly foolish he was, for who besides a fool would work for that which passes away rather than for that which he can keep forever; who but a fool would work for that which is good rather than for that which is better?

Yet as obvious as this is, many of us often play the part of the fool.

We choose anything and everything else besides life with God:

- Instead of prayer we choose to watch television or to occupy our minds and hearts with some other entertainment;
- Instead of reading the Scriptures or some other spiritual book we read the newspapers, magazines, or novels;
- Instead of going to Church during the week, or on Saturday nights (which by the way should be a prerequisite to all those who approach the Chalice) we choose to be somewhere else, anywhere else – whether by commitment or choice;
- Instead of helping those in need or giving to the Church we put our money in the bank, invest it in stocks, or spend it on ourselves.

Instead of this we choose that. In all facets of our life, to greater or lesser degrees, instead of God we choose anything and everything else.

And why is this? The answer is just as the Gospel says, because we want the treasures of the earth more than we want to grow rich in God.

Notice that the Lord does not call the man in the parable an atheist or an unbeliever for it's not that he didn't care for God, it's just that he didn't want to grow rich in Him. And neither are we atheists or unbelievers, for we too care for God. And we believe in God and we know that His ways are true, yet we have our ways and we are accustomed to them, and they make us happy and in a sense rich – rich on the good things of life.

Yet these earthly riches fade away, and they keep us from investing in heavenly stock.

Brothers and Sisters, the lesson of today's Gospel is a lesson on retirement.

Christ says that those who spend their lives preparing more for the earthly retirement than heavenly retirement are fools.

The man in today's parable never even made it to his earthly retirement, and neither will some of us. And those who have made it to their earthly retirement can attest that their time is spent not so much with eating, drinking, and making merry, as with aches and pains, doctor's visits, anxiety over loved ones, and everything which comes with old age.

For the Christian, true retirement is eternal retirement with God in the Kingdom of Heaven, where sickness, sorrow, and sighing are no more. It's a retirement that will not only last forever but will be filled with only good things, for "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

But how many of us prepare for eternal retirement by putting in just enough to keep our heavenly bank account open. We attend the Sunday Divine Liturgy, and perhaps sometimes say our prayers during the week and read a little of the Bible every so often. We treat their neighbor pretty good, well most of the time, that is unless we get angry or envious. We keep a minimal fast, not pushing ourselves so we don't make life too difficult, but fasting enough so as not to totally disregard the Lenten seasons. And in all things relating to the Christian life, we the find the minimal standard – what we need to do, what is required of us.

The only problem with this is that what is required of us is our whole life – this is the minimal standard. And if we think that it's not when we pass on to the next life we'll find out for sure because we'll see that our heavenly bank accounts have been closed – closed because we never deposited our life in the hands of God.

Each day of our lives we have a choice, to live according to the ways of the world, which we have become so accustomed to, going about the business of everyday life, acquiring the passing treasures of this age, or to live according to the ways of God, laying up for ourselves treasure in heaven.

With each day that passes we draw closer and closer to that time when our souls will be required of us. If we do not wish to be found fools on that day, then we must do something about it, and we must do something about it now, because like the man in the parable, our day of reckoning is coming sooner than we expect.

On that day there can be no excuses and neither will there be any surprises. What we have invested with God will be there for us. What we have invested elsewhere will have passed away and will be nowhere to be found.

Let us not be fools, let us invest the single and only thing we have which is of eternal value, our own soul, in our never-ending retirement with God.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.