



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Winter 2017-2018 Midweek/Sermon Starter

Unit 1: Everything Belongs to Him
Sermon Series Title: Can God Trust You?
Sermon 1: Holy Hoarders
Bible Passage: Luke 12:15-21

Introduction

The cable television network, 'A&E' premiered a new show August 17, 2009 entitled "Hoarders". This show follows the lives of several people who suffer from a disorder known as compulsive hoarding. Studies show that over 6% of USA population or 19 million Americans are affected by compulsive hoarding. Hoarders have more than enough material possessions but consume more daily because they can't seem to part ways with that which they already possess. Hoarders usually are unable to function in life as normal citizens—literally trapped in their possessions.

We are kingdom citizens and God has entrusted much into our hands, but we cannot become holy hoarders—those trapped in our own selfishness and greed.

Background/Context

Jesus understood the potential dangers of disciples living with greed. Therefore, He offered a warning in Luke 12:15, "watch out and be on guard against all greed, because one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions." In Luke 12, Jesus punctuates this argument with a parable that exposes the consequences of 'unholy hoarding.'

**A. We Must Recognize Our Provider
(Luke 12:16-17)**

For a moment, consider all the things you possess: careers, cars, credit/bank cards, clothes, cash, cribs (homes), etc. We take pride in our resources. Many of us worked hard to acquire our assets. Consequently, we tend to hoard our resources because we feel that we—alone—deserve to enjoy them.

However, Jesus used an agricultural parable of a prosperous farmer to remind us that we all depend on God to provide all our needs. In this parable, the abundance of this farmer's harvest was not merely predicated on the farmer's hard work and productivity; the farmer's prosperity had everything to do with God's mighty provisions. Farmers are fully dependent on God for seed, soil, and the proper amount of sunshine and rain. Without God, the farmer's resources would have been scarce.

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Like the farmer in this parable, we all depend on God for provisions. James was correct in that “every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights” (Jas. 1:17). Indeed, God is the source of all our supply. Yes, everything we have, everything we are, and everything we will ever become comes from God. “For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Never forget that God is our provider.

Application Point: When do you find yourself gloating about your own success? Never forget that God is ultimately in control and we are fully dependent on Him. We must always remember that it is God who “supplies all your needs according to His riches in glory” (Phil. 4:19).

B. We Must Recognize Our Purpose (Luke 12:18-19)

The farmer in this parable recognized that he was extremely prosperous. In fact, this farmer had so much supply that he decided that he would build bigger barns to store all his supply. At first glance, many would find no fault in this decision. Apparently, this man worked hard and deserved to enjoy success.

The audience that Jesus addressed was not much different from our communities. Jesus addressed hard workers who felt that they deserved to enjoy the fruits of their labor. If we are honest, many of us work hard so that we can enjoy the harvest from our sacrifices. We sacrifice sleep, time, energy, and patience all in the pursuit of increasing our assets. We work hard hoping that one day we will be able to bask in the benefits of our hard work.

Indeed, hard work does pay off and we should be able to enjoy nice things. And yes, Scripture confirms that God does honor and reward faithful stewardship. However, there is more to life than pursuing possessions; believers should find purpose in passionately finding ways to help other people.

Like many of us, the farmer in this parable measured purposeful living by the amount of assets he acquired. Conversely, purposeful living is found in purposeful giving. Our chief purpose is to be a blessing to other people. Jesus confirmed this with these words; “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Application Point: How often do you look for ways to bless people? Greedy people hoard their possessions because they place value on their possessions instead of placing value on helping people. However, godly people find purpose in finding ways to help other people.

C. We Must Remember Nothing is Permanent (Luke 12:20-21)

Can you imagine working and saving your money for years only for God to one day tell you that you were going to die without ever enjoying any of it? Well, that is exactly what happened in this parable. Jesus concluded this parable with a very daunting conclusion. According to the narrative, God called the farmer a fool, told him that he was going to die that night and asked

him, “and the things you have prepared—whose will they be?” (Luke 12:20) God wanted the farmer to know that he was going to die without enjoying his selfish gain.

Have you ever seen a funeral hearse pulling a UHAUL truck during a funeral procession? No? Neither have I. The truth is that we cannot take our possessions with us when we die. The Hebrew writer warned us, “it is appointed for people to die once” (Heb. 9:27). Through this parable, Jesus wanted us to realize that no possession on earth is permanent. In fact, we are not permanent; we will die. We have no clue when God will call us home.

Now is the time to use our God-given resources to help others. We can spend an entire lifetime acquiring assets and die tomorrow without helping anyone. What does this say about misplaced values? Let us be encouraged to use our time, talents, and treasures to positively help impact people’s lives while we yet live.

Application Point: Has your living impacted people or chased possessions? The reality is that we do not know when we will die, and we cannot take anything with us when we die. Make the decision to use what you possess to bless others.