

PRAYER

Dear Lord, open our hearts and our minds to the richness of your generosity.

ACTIVITY/ICE BREAKER

What are some of the things that are holding us back in our discipleship journey?

VIDEO

Watch video 4: The rich fool

READ

Luke 12:13-21 (NIV) Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’” Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

REFLECTIONS

In Luke 12 Jesus told a story about a rich man, who was twice blessed by God. He had been given loads of money, and he had been given bumper crops. Those listening to the story would have been green with envy. This man was clearly one of God's chosen. And yet Jesus wrongfoots everyone by telling them this man was a fool! He wouldn't share what he had been given. His attitude had overtaken him and separated him from others. We are told he spoke to himself – he didn't go to anyone in his community for guidance and wisdom. Perhaps he had bought so much land that he had no one nearby to go to for advice! His money had built walls between him and others.

In another part of Luke we are told about another rich man. A tax collector Zacchaeus. He's famous for having climbed a tree, but what's more astonishing is that when Jesus blessed him with a new start, Zacchaeus then blessed the whole town with a new start! He gave the people refunds. Luke also highlights the precious and vital generosity of those on the margins. The poor widow in Luke 21 (widows had very little in Jesus' day) who placed her small gift in the temple treasury, gave way more than those who had so much they would barely notice their donation. Luke also describes the shepherds who came to see the newborn Jesus. They didn't have the gold or incense of the wise men, but they had time and they could give that. Another incredible example of generosity we see in Luke 15, where the father welcomes the son who had left the house.

In Jesus's day generosity was recognised as worship. Giving was not just part of a meeting, but a way of life. When we bless God with our generosity to others, we are often blessed ourselves! If you have ever had a sense of wellbeing after helping someone, I believe that is the presence of God within us saying, 'Well done.'

QUESTIONS

1. In which way does the story of Luke 12 speak to you today?
2. Ciru mentioned in the video that giving is for everybody. What are some of the ways in which people have chosen to give to your church?
3. Dave mentioned in his reflection that giving is 'a way of life', what are your thoughts?
4. Take a moment to review your giving of time, talents and treasures and ask God to inform any new decisions you may take here.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, please reveal to us when there are things in our lives that are holding us back in our call to follow you and your ways.