

Cross Fellowship Church
Overland Park, KS
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Luke 12:13-34
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If you are a new here or here visiting, we welcome you. Thank you so much for coming. We have been making our way through the gospel of Luke and there have been a number of us that have been taking turns rotating through the preaching process, and it couldn't be more evident that Jesus is leading this church as he continues to use his word to shape and guide us and to teach us. Also, it has been a privilege and a pleasure. I've been so encouraged to hear the different voices that continue this theme of being with Jesus as he's making his way to Jerusalem.

Today we have a difficult passage, an interesting passage as we begin to take a look at it. I want to go back, though, and just catch us up, for those of you that may not have had an opportunity to be here for the other passages. Just so that you can kind of get a framework for where this particular story and how it fits in with what was read this morning. As Jesus continues to make his way to Jerusalem, Jesus has this ongoing open conversation with his disciples that are following him and others that are pressing in and coming in to hear the words of Jesus. You've got this interesting scenario of Jesus teaching his disciples, but then he's teaching it in a way that are others, many others listening.

Two weeks ago, we learned that Jesus was invited to a dinner party, as Eric taught. He was the guest of honor, but he was kind of a killjoy. He began to expose hypocrisy, teaching that being a hypocrite is sin against God. Jesus continued to speak of hypocrisy with his disciples. If you remember, Jesus had exposed for us that hypocrites tend to look righteous and religious on the outside and neglect the heart and character of God. Hypocrites will publicly put on a good show for others to see, but in private, they live a very different life. Hypocrites live secret, dirty lives, doing the very thing in private that God hates. Hypocrites can believe that what is done in secret will always remain a secret. Hypocrites can believe that the private life can easily just go to the grave and that's the end of it.

Jesus taught his disciples that nothing could be further from the truth. All hypocrisy will be exposed and revealed. We learned that as Jared preached that last week. While Jesus is in the middle of teaching his disciples to be on guard against hypocrisy, he has an interruption from someone else listening in the crowd. Jesus, again, does not get sidetracked or caught off guard, but he uses this opportunity to continue teaching those around him.

Let's look at Verse 13, and we pick up the story there. **“Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’”** Here we have two brothers that are not seeing eye to eye on their inheritance. The one brother here speaking up is feeling confident that Jesus will take up his defense and give a ruling in his favor. The family's

dispute is over an inheritance, some money that usually one receives after there's been a death, or one could receive an early inheritance or one could just be given an early inheritance. We're not told the reasoning for the dispute. There's no indication here who's right or who's wrong. But Luke uses and places this interruption here to teach that there is an inheritance yet to come for everyone. We are immediately drawn into this story, because at the heart of humanity, we all want what is fair. We hear this man's story and immediately our hearts are drawn into one side or the other. "Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me" means either he should divide the inheritance with him or we don't know if this man deserves the inheritance. But what we feel in this opening verse is that the man seems to want Jesus to automatically decide against the other brother.

This question does not entirely come out of left field. Rabbis were often consulted this way. The man addressing Jesus as teacher may have had a certain respect for him and may believe that he would give a favorable judgment. Jesus chooses, however, not to give a judgment on the matter. He doesn't ask the man anything about the dispute between the brothers. Jesus takes the man's request in a totally different direction. The man came to Jesus. He brought up a real life scenario, and Jesus asked the man to confess who does he believe Jesus is?

Let's read Verse 14. **"But he said to him, 'Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?'"** In other words, Jesus is saying if you are truly recognizing me in a position to judge and you believe my judgment will be just, perfectly aligning with God's law, will you still want me to be judge over you? How tragic it is today that we have so many people coming to Jesus, using him for personal gain, not really wanting his fair judgments of God's law over them. Unfortunately, there are many people believing today in a prosperity gospel. Coming to Jesus so that you can have everything you want now is coming to the wrong Jesus. It's not the Jesus of the Bible.

We should note that Jesus' refusal to answer is not a denial of his right or ability, nor is it a lack of concern for social or ethical matters. The context of what's to come teaches that Jesus has a greater concern for this man's eternal position before God. Jesus redirects this man's personal family dispute, which is secondary to the primary dispute involving an inheritance between people and God. That's what's going on here.

Let's read Verse 15. **"And he said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'"** Here Jesus takes the opportunity to give a warning against covetousness, the desire to have more or to never feel satisfied. In this context, though, I want you to know Jesus sees a particular type of greed here. Notice the phrase, "all covetousness." Why is that in there? Also, the phrase, "the abundance of his possessions." What's going on? Jesus is teaching that greed or covetousness is not only experienced perhaps by those who don't have, and they see others that have and they want what they have, but in this case, they already have and they're

not satisfied. They want more. Jesus foresees people using him for personal gain and potentially still not being satisfied. He warns against all covetousness where the reason for the warning is who you are before God is not defined by what you possess. It's defined by whom you know.

Greed, like hypocrisy, as we saw last week, is sin against God and people will stand in judgment before God for their greediness. Jesus teaches that the purpose and value of one's life goes far beyond earthly possessions. From God's perspective, earthly possessions will not accompany you to your judgment. At the same time, all forms of covetousness cannot be separated from who you are. In other words, greed, the internal desire to have more, will stand with people in the judgment and will be seen by God as who you actually are claiming to be. People are held accountable for greed, not possessions. Hence, the words "take care and be on guard" serve as the warning.

Listen to the words in 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 5 through 7. **".... imagining that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world."** Jesus goes on illustrating with a true to life story for a person whose life is filled with pursuing possessions for himself.

Let's read Verses 16 through 21 as we dive now into the parable. **"And he told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.''" But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."**

Stories are a natural, normal part of communication. This story centers on one man who Jesus does not give a name to and yet this man stands as a representative for others. What we know about this man is he is already rich and the land that he possesses yielded an abundance. That's very key to note: he was rich and he got more. He would have been the envy of some or possibly seen as especially blessed by others. His harvest was exceptional, leaving him in a favorable situation. This parable begins here with a completely neutral position before this man's position with God. He has not manipulated anything to receive this plentiful harvest, but he comes face to face with a perfectly natural dilemma. Jesus' story can easily draw one in when this man's additional wealth has simply fallen into his lap. It is understood that he came by his wealth honestly, simply God's good provision has blessed him.

Version 17, though, presents the dilemma. What shall I do? The inward reasoning and action steps are seen through to verse 19. Jesus begins to give a hint into this man's problem as we gain insight into this man's reasoning. As the story progresses, the problem is

seen in his life by zero treasuring of God. This is picked up on by his words, if you'll look at the words: What shall I do? I have. I will. My barns. My grain. And finally, foolishly believing he is the owner of his own soul. The man resolved by his own reasoning, how to solve his problem. This man has thought all the way through to his retirement by way of expansion and protection of his great success without any direction of what God might have for him. Verse 19 ends with God's critique of believing the widely sought after dream of finally arrived. Relax. Eat. Drink. Be merry. This man's future perspective is entirely self-centered and self-indulgent. Herein lies this problem. This man, representing many, has morally failed in giving acknowledgment to God over his financial success. Covetousness has blinded him to his eternal state before God.

Let's read Verse 20 again. **“But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’”** Jesus teaches this man's life has not been lived with the reality of God's final sovereign authority over his eternal soul. From God's perspective, this man was a fool and will now give an account that his abundant riches cannot buy his way out of. The summons from God calls for death. Death cannot be cheated, tricked, or ignored. Jesus' point in his question of whose will his possessions belong to means that his wealth has consumed his life and is no longer his greatest concern.

God owns everything already. When people have to come before God, it's ultimately all God's anyway. Suddenly, this man has come into a greater dilemma. Thrust before the presence of God, consumed with what to do with his possessions, he failed in knowing what to do with his sins. Reminder, the man in the beginning asked Jesus, could you give a judgment in favor of this inheritance? Jesus is speaking of the reality of another inheritance that is to come for those who continue to pursue greed and selfish possessions. Jesus is speaking of an inheritance of eternal torment in hell for those who live their life in pursuit of treasures for themselves. This is a reality. When God calls someone a fool, they're in deep, deep trouble. The proverbial fool is written all over the Proverbs.

Let's read Verse 21. **“So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”** How about you? Honestly. We talk about Jesus being our greatest treasure. Jesus is giving this man a beautiful parable that possessions can dominate a person's life. How about you? Would you truly say that you treasure God above all self? Is that genuinely evidently seen in all of our reasoning? I want you to understand something in this passage. This man only thought this. He didn't actually even get the chance to do it. He was reasoning within himself, according to Christ, and God called him before him, even in the way this man was reasoning. Planning out your life without the presence of God and without God being the treasure of your life is foolish. God is teaching this man that this man simply wants him to divide the inheritance with him.

Today we actually have a lot of people really fighting hard over inheritances, over money. People will foolishly find themselves in the presence of God. Hebrews 9 says it is

appointed for a man once to die, then judgment. There is no way for people to avoid it. You cannot drown it out with possessions. You cannot escape it. You cannot get around being in front of God. It doesn't matter what people say. We don't buy that. We don't listen to that. The truth of God's Word teaches that every person will stand in the presence of God. Hebrews 9 says it is appointed, there is judgment. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to figure that out. We're going to die and we're going to be in the presence of God. The question is what will you have given to reason before God that you can get into his eternal kingdom? If you've been following this passage, what you've seen is Jesus has been condemning this person, telling this person, you cannot be my disciple if this. You cannot this. You cannot that. What Jesus has been doing is closing the gate down for entrance into eternity.

Ultimately, what we will see is it will find itself only in the one man Jesus Christ that is put forward. That's it. That's our only hope that we have is from Christ Jesus. That's why at church we sing about Christ. We treasure Christ. We love Christ. And Lord willing, this church will never deviate from turning our eyes off of the only one that matters for all of us. That is Jesus Christ.

I want to be clear about what I am not saying. The parable in no way condemns planning or wealth. Please understand that. We praise God for those he graciously blesses and pours out with finances. There are many here in this church that have been the recipients of God's blessing in others' lives. As we praise God for those, as well as for those who are very wise in planning with the future. That's not the point. The parable is spoken against the person who takes wealth and totally directs it towards themselves and is selfishly motivated in it all they do, devoid of treasuring God. Verse 21 is how Jesus applies what he just taught. **“So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”** God generously gives to some people on earth, but his judgment awaits for anyone who does not find God himself as their greatest treasure. Truly, what do you talk about most?

As I kept looking at this next portion of Scripture, it seemed very odd. What you have is the word “therefore.” This is why we didn't stop the passage in the parable. The Word therefore connects what Jesus is saying before into this next section of how he's talking to his disciples. I want you to get ahold of this. This man asked this question that came directly out of left field for Jesus, but it doesn't catch him off guard. He used this as an opportunity to move ought of hypocrisy and move into covetousness.

Can I tell you lovingly that Christians can be in danger of also doing the same thing of coveting possessions? Let me tell you what I mean. This next section is directly up against the fool who was coveting and living his life devoid of treasuring God. Now, let me explain something to you. This man was already rich. This man already had everything. This man didn't need this additional wealth that fell into his lap. Please hear this out. This is exactly how some Christians can be. You are already rich in God, you are already wealthy beyond your wildest dreams and sometimes as Christians we can live as if we still don't have it. We still need more.

There are other things outside of God that can fulfill our dreams, fulfill our fantasies, fulfill things inside of our life that are just a flat lie. They're not true. God teaches us to not be like this fool as a Christian.

Look at the words of the next verse, wherever we're at. "And he said to his disciples, 'Therefore'" — therefore what? Therefore, because that's not you at all. In Christ you have everything if you are a Christian. There is a massive difference between the parable and what Jesus comes into and his disciples. This is for Christians only. Those whom God has done a divine work in the heart, brought them through repentance, brought them through the blood of Jesus, pinned their faith to Christ and now they stand complete in Jesus Christ. This, when we move into this next one and you see the care that God has for you, the knowledge that he has of you, the control he has over you, when you see this, if you are not a Christian, these are not for you.

"And he said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.'" In light of reminding people of the dangers of greed, that people aren't actually the owners of their own souls, Jesus now turns his attention to his disciples pastorally. Dear Christian, I hope that you will feel the heart of God that he loves you as he pastorally turns to his disciples and tells them, don't let anxiety rule over your life. I know that I need to tread carefully here, because I know there are people in this church that are genuinely converted Christians that struggle with anxiety. This passage is laid here, I believe, because Jesus knows that his disciples will struggle with anxiety. That's a real thing.

He gives two examples that can cause anxiety. It comes down to the basic necessities of life, food, and clothing. Ultimately, what Jesus is speaking of is an anxiety over food and clothing as a way of self-preservation. You can feel by the way Jesus is speaking here that first of all, God's will for his children is not to be anxious for what the body is. It's clearly indicated to us that Jesus would anticipate his followers struggling with anxiety. His exhortation sets up God's counsel for anxiety and guarding against competition in the life of a believer.

In verse 23, Jesus gives a reason for his call not to worry by reminding them of the important truth. **"For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing."** I would say that what Jesus is saying is that in the heart and life of his disciples, nothing should compete or be in competition with him. Nothing. If you're here and you find yourself focused on the things of this world and this earth, I hope that you'll feel that God has no intention for these things to compete with the value and the love and the affection of him and his love. They don't hold the same value. Good biblical counseling on anxiety begins, first of all, with moving the focus off of the temporal and moving it, turning the attention onto the eternal.

In Verse 23, with just a few words, Jesus teaches that one's life and body hold a far higher value than what one eats or puts on. 1 Samuel chapter 16, verse 7 says **"man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."** Jesus' counsel to his followers

on anxiety is laid up on a fool who has only focused on his best life now perhaps in preparing for his worst life later. Anxiety over the lessor reveals a deficiency and the value of trusting God. In Verse 24, Jesus uses an example of God's love and care for birds that have no ability to produce or set aside their food that keeps them alive. The birds are completely dependent upon God and God graciously feeds them. What a beautiful promise. Let's read verse 24 together.

“Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!” From God's perspective Jesus tells the disciples that they are of greater value than the birds being fed, and so are you. Jesus uses the carefree example of the birds as an example of God's ability to feed them. We are no longer enslaved to anxiety over how we will eat. Dear Christian, have you truly ever really considered the care that God has for you?

Verses 25 and 26 show our second reasoning that Jesus gives to be free from anxiety. Jesus teaches that anxiety can come from a false illusion that you are actually in charge of your life. Specifically here, how long you will live as the parable of the fool, it was cut short while he was in thought of how he'd plan his life out. Let's read Verses 25 and 26. **“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?”** Jesus combats anxiety with the sovereign power of God. And of course, the answer to his question found in verse 25 is that one can. He states that clearly in Verse 26. Jesus declares that adding to one's span of life is a small thing for God. He counsels his children, if you couldn't honestly do as small a thing as that, to extend your life by one hour, why do you worry about something even smaller in the rest of life about basic needs?

I want to clarify at this time, again, that Jesus is not teaching against our responsibility to work. That would be contrary. It is responsibility, coupled with trust. Ultimately, it's trusting. The point I believe Jesus is making, that anxiety is not to rule or govern our lives who are in the omnipotent hand of God. We are called to trust God in the beauty of his sovereign control. How long we will or will not live is in his hands. Have you ever considered God's view of how beautiful you are, dear Christian? I know that this might grate against some. You don't want to be any focus on yourself. Let me make sure that I'm clear. When a person is clothed in Jesus because God finds Jesus beautiful, you who are clothed in Christ are absolutely astonishing to God. I believe that people's anxiety comes from how they feel. And can I lovingly tell that you Jesus is telling his disciples, as well as us, if you are clothed in Christ, you need to hear this. You are beautiful just the way you are to God.

Let's read Verses 27 and 28. **“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!”** Eric touched on this a few messages back. He talked about the beautiful way that God sees you.

Everything that God does, he does well. The heart of this statement is Jesus counseling his children with the creativity of God's sheer beauty that he finds in you. The comparative beauty that is seen here is the picturing of a beautiful grassy field adorned with the astonishing lilies of beauty and color that are absolutely breathtaking. First Jesus states that this breathtaking scene with these lilies didn't labor to grow themselves. That's the toil. Nor were they involved in how they made themselves. They didn't spin themselves. They didn't make themselves. You were not selected because of your own beauty. God did not look at you and how you are dressed and decide, oh, my goodness. You've got to be in my field.

God is perfect within himself and is in need of nothing to bring him beauty. You cannot add to God's beauty in and of yourself. But what Jesus is saying here is that God has chosen to showcase his glory and beauty by his new creation in you, that is Christ Jesus, just as God was intentional in creating these flowers to adorn the grassy field, he is just as intentional about creating the beauty of himself in you when you trust him. Solomon, with all of his resources, couldn't come close to duplicating God's creativity in you. Jesus' points in these words, for his disciples as well as for us, regardless of what anyone thinks of you, if you are a child of his, imagine the most beautiful, breathtaking scene in your mind that you can imagine and you are to know that you are far more beautiful to God than you can imagine. Even your best imagination will be temporal. What's alive today will be thrown in the oven tomorrow. That is temporary.

You can replace anxiety with the understanding that you are more beautiful to God than you can ever imagine. As a true Christian, God has clothed you in himself. When a person is taught by God himself how they are valued and beautiful to him, food and drink and worry and how will I survive and let me covet this and everything that you can imagine begin to fade away, replaced by faith and trust in this endless love and care for you. We can trust we can best glorify God the way he wants us to by trusting that he will clothe and feed us the way he wants to. Food and clothing are from him.

Let's look at 29 through 31 as we continue making our way through here. **“And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.”** As Christians, we have been called out of the world. The world stoops down and grapples after these things, never satisfied. We already know and trust that God's memory will never slip in knowing what our needs are. In Verse 31, God gives his children replacement counsel. Instead of anxiety, we are to seek his kingdom. In this context, food and clothing will be provided to you by God's knowledge. That is not the way the world operates today. They do not believe that. They do not see that. They do not believe putting God first, seeking God first to the world is foolish.

If you're here and you're struggling with anxiety, I would ask you truly, are you seeking him first? Are you seeking his kingdom? You might think that sounds foolish. You might

think, I can't do that. Do you understand the situation, the real life situation that is in front of me right now? God has already told you here he knows all things. He knows everything. He absolutely does. In other words, have an eternal mindset of the love, value, and the beauty that God has for those who are in Christ and trust his provision for you. Your Father knows and is fully aware of the necessities of life. Trust that God will supply your needs according to his will.

Let's look at Verse 32. **“Fear not, little flock,”**—I love when Jesus gets to this point. This is an amazing promise—**“For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”** This verse should be an amazing understanding of how God reassures his people of his promise. His people give them trust in this temporal life and he is pleased to reward them with the eternal kingdom in the life to come. Part of the character that describes God is his continual giving to his followers that which they do not deserve. You know what, dear Christian? God will never take away the kingdom from you. That's guaranteed hope for you to continue to live. Look at God's words that describe us. We are fearful and small. It's amazing; God knows already our state before him. In the grand scheme of the world, God's genuine people are by far lessor in value and beauty, and yet we will see later in Luke, we are also smaller in numbers, and yet we are to be the most visible scene in God's provision, treasuring God himself. God knows our fragile state, but Jesus' exhortation to continue giving to God our allegiance of trust with our life and bodies comes with a compromise, a reminder from him that he plans to give you the eternal kingdom of God.

This gives us a picture of heaven on earth, in Verse 33. Let's read it. **“Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.”** As Christians, we are to spend heaven's money freely. God calls his children to hold loosely our possessions and be willing, moved by the Spirit, to have a heart that gives to those in need. Trusting God for our needs tends to loosen the grip that we have on life or possessions. Anxiety will soon slip away as trust increases. A Christian's generosity is a measure of faith. The more you treasure God, the lesser the grip gets. **You can believe what you yen other winly treasure about Jesus will never wear out. They will always be pleasing to God, and it is eternally secure.**

Jesus finishes with verse 34: **“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”** What you value most in life is truly who you are. By God's grand design, people cannot separate what they value most from who they are. Dear Christian, I hope you find total pleasure in Christ that leads to a general practice of helping others, which is totally opposite of the world. If you are here and struggling with anxiety, would you please remember the care that God has for you, the control that God has over you, the beauty that God sees in you, the knowledge that God has about you and the promise God has in store for you. If you are wondering, what makes the difference between the fool who is pursuing his riches and treasures of this earth and the disciple that can truly follow Jesus, what make the difference is salvation. Being rescued by

God, can I lovingly tell you every single person has failed God's law by coveting things that we should not have? Even worse, we have already not treasured God the way God deserves to be treasured. We have all failed at that. Can I lovingly tell you if you're here and you're wondering which side of the kingdom I'm on? Can I tell you that Jesus is the only person who was perfectly able to fulfill God's law of treasuring God himself alone perfectly.

Jesus then is making his way to Jerusalem. He is making his way to be crucified on a cross where he will make payment for sins that he did not commit. What makes the difference between a person being one that is pursuing and chasing treasures and the one that can truly trust God for all things of how they will be? His salvation. Jesus Christ stood before God. He paid the penalty. He accepted and received the wrath of God as God poured it out on his Son, for sins that he did not commit. Jesus died, and then three days later, was resurrected by the power of God, demonstrating his victory over sin for humanity. The way that a person comes into a saving relationship with God is that God looks upon humanity. He sees out across all of humanity that all have sinned, all have failed, all are broken, all have committed sins against God's covenant, his laws, his commands, his statutes, his heart, everything, and God then says, I need one that I can punish to be a sacrifice in my place. So he sent his only son. His Son lived a perfect life for 33 years. Jesus stood before God, received the wrath, died, and was resurrected.

The request, the requirement that is placed before mankind is repent from who you are and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. That is the only hope for a person to gain access into God, into this eternity, to gain access, to have this eternal kingdom. Otherwise, what will be told to you is, "you fool. Your soul is required of you." Dear person, I hope that this has not spoken to you. I hope that these will not be the words that you will hear when you stand before God. If you're here and you're a Christian, receive these words as encouragement that Jesus Christ has done everything for you and that you are called by this passage to treasure Jesus Christ. Think about your life. Above everything. I hope that that women truly be your hope and your promise that you're standing on.

This will be a time that we transition now into our Lord's table. This Lord's table is a reminder of what Jesus has done for us. This will be our time for Christians only to come forward and to receive the bread and the juice as we partake corporately of the Lord's table together. So if you're here and you're waffling, you don't know if you're a Christian, my heart and hope and prayer for you is that you will truly evaluate your life and know that when you stand before God, what you do—not your possessions, not your greed, not anything—what you do actually matters. You will stand before God with greed and covetousness, and that sin has been dealt with Jesus on the cross, and I hope you have repent and in turn you've been forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ for the sins of covetousness and not treasuring God.