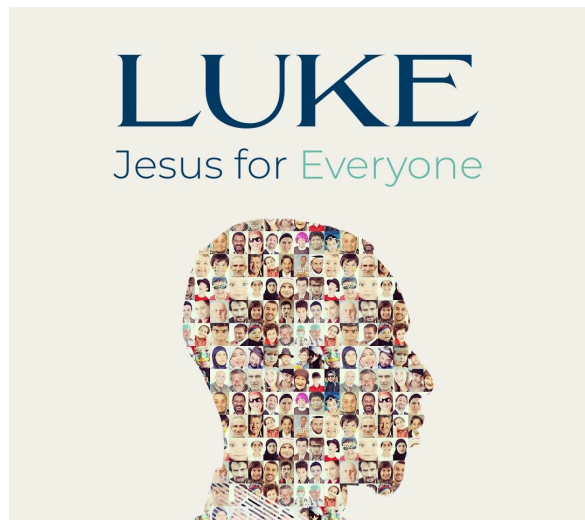


LUKE: ABUNDANCE FOR EVERYONE

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Luke 12:13-21

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.' ¹⁴But he said to him, 'Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?' ¹⁵And he said to them, 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.' ¹⁶Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?"' ¹⁸Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be

merry." ²⁰But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" ²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. Jesus speaks and teaches about wealth and the spiritual challenges of riches in Luke's gospel more than in any other gospel. Even so, there are positive examples of wealthy people in Luke's gospel, too: such as the home-owning disciple Martha, other women and patrons who supported his ministry, and Zaccheus and other tax collectors. Zaccheus, upon his change of heart, chooses to use his wealth to make amends to anyone he has defrauded and also minister to those in need. In contrast, notice how the rich man in this parable speaks about his wealth with telling pronouns— "Me, my, I."

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What (or better yet, *who*) is the rich man *not* considering?

3. How do you practice generosity (ie, “richness toward God”)? Do you give away your possessions, your resources, your time, your energy? What have you learned from being generous with any or all of these things?
4. What is your habit or practice of generosity when it comes to church offerings?
 - a. Do you have goals for your financial giving, like some who “tithe” by giving away 10%? If so, what or who has shaped or motivated your goals?
 - b. What difference do you think planning to give and setting goals make for your financial and spiritual life?
5. Have you, like the rich man in the parable, made plans for your future estate? If so, how have you included spiritual, social, or other causes?
6. Just as Jesus was supported by those with means, Jesus also ate, drank, and was merry with people around tables. Even so, he did this in a way that contrasts with the rich

man in this parable. Who was the rich man “leaving out” in his eating, drinking, and merriment?

7. Jesus asks a closing question meant to unsettle us and open us: does the rich man truly or eternally “own” his abundance? Who *is* the true “owner” of the rich man’s abundance? What does this mean for “stewarding” the resources we’ve worked for, inherited, and might pass on?
8. Underneath the rich man’s self-interested hoarding might be fear.
 - a. What might the rich man fear? What might we fear in this economy, in this modern age, or in this season of life that might hinder our generosity?
 - b. Jesus follows up this parable with a teaching on trusting God and seeking God’s rule of love (Luke 12: 22-34). Jesus goes on to make the connection explicit, “do not be afraid” (Luke 12:35). How is trust in God’s love the antidote to fear? How does trust in God’s love unleash our generosity?