

## Scarcity

What do we need and want that we don't have enough of?

How do we tend to feel & behave when we don't have enough?

A Christian approach to scarcity **should be dramatically different** from all other approaches to life!

We seek the **transforming work** of the Spirit today

- not merely more information
- not merely a new insight
- not merely a new or reinforced behavior
- rather: becoming more like Jesus

1



## Treasure in Heaven

*Luke 12:13-34*

[bib.ly/Lu12.NIV](https://bib.ly/Lu12.NIV)  
[tiny.cc/cmchandouts](https://tiny.cc/cmchandouts)

2

*Luke 12***Stop fearing people or authorities**

- Fear = whatever has a huge influence in our lives
  - In our emotions, our thought life, our words & actions
- Fear of people leads to hypocrisy
  - We tend hide our true selves from others, including...
    - our faith in Jesus
    - our doubts and our struggles
    - even our joys

**Instead: Fear God!**

- Let God have the greatest influence in our lives
- Because God alone has power over the whole of our being

3

*Luke 12:13-15*

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.”**

4

*Luke 12:13-34***13-15: Pursuing more money and possessions ruins life**

- It was normal to have inheritance disputes
- It was also normal to expect a religious teacher to help
- But Jesus **refused** to step into the debate
- Why?
  - Greed = wanting more money and more stuff
  - Greed is **contrary** to abundant living
- The lie (more money & stuff is better) still lives today!
- We can expect Jesus to respond the same way today

16-21: to prayers motivated by wanting more money and stuff

22-28: • He doesn't answer greedy prayers (wanting more for me)

29-34: • Even if the law or 'justice' is on my side

5

**A very long drive to MSU from Grand Rapids...**

- I realized that I was **trusting in money, and in this contract from MSU,** to help me grow in ministry while also caring for my family
- Yet Jesus says: "life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."
- So how does that work out?

6

*Luke 12:16-21*

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.**”

7

*Luke 12:13-34*

13-15: Pursuing more possessions ruins life

**16-21:** This man of exceptional wealth actually had nothing

- Perhaps half of people in Jesus’ day were subsistence farmers
- This man had exactly what the man in the crowd wanted
  - More than the man could ever dream of having!
- Yet he was not “rich toward God” **so he had nothing**
- Jeff Bezos (Amazon): net worth = \$208,000,000,000
  - How much will he leave behind when he dies?
  - **All of it!**
- The obvious answer to the man’s question (“What shall I do about having too much stuff?”) was to **give it away!**

22-28:

29-34:

- Yet apparently that didn’t occur to him

8

*Luke 12:22-28*

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not **worry** about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.

**Consider the ravens:** They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet **God feeds them.** And how much more valuable you are than birds!

Who of you by **worrying** can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you **worry** about the rest?

9

*Luke 12:22-28*

“**Consider how the wild flowers grow.** They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how **God clothes the grass of the field,** which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

10

*Luke 12:13-34*

13-15: Pursuing more possessions ruins life

16-21: The man of exceptional wealth actually had nothing

**22-28: “Fearing” money or possessions is senseless & bad!**

- Fear = controlled by, guided by, worry about, be proud of, ...
  - or planning, hard work, skilled investment, careful spending, ...
- Because...
  1. Focusing on food and clothing makes life an empty shell
  2. God takes care of unclean ravens, so why do we worry?
  3. Can worry make your life “taller”? Of course not!
    - Actually, worry “shortens” life, and makes it worse
  4. God makes flowers beautiful and He makes grass grow
    - Better than the greatest humans!

29-34: **God loves all His children so much more than unclean birds and wild flowers and grasses!!!**

11

*Luke 12:29-34*

“And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But **seek his kingdom**, and these things will be given to you as well.

“Do not be afraid, little flock, **for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor.** Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a **treasure in heaven** that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

12

**Luke 12:13-34**

13-15: Pursuing more possessions ruins life

16-21: The man of exceptional wealth actually had nothing

22-28: “Fearing” money or possessions is senseless & ungodly!

**29-34: Put your treasure in God, and He will incredibly bless!**

13

**What makes these things all alike?**



**They are all worthless!  
They were replaced by the Euro**

14

*Luke 12:13-34*

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**29-34: Put your treasure in God, and He will incredibly bless!**

- There was a window of time when you could exchange the retired currency for Euros
- What will a pile of money and possessions be worth once we die? **Nothing!!**
  - **Jesus: Exchange it now for the currency of heaven!**
- **God has been pleased to give you the Kingdom**
  - **We are owners of the new Kingdom!**
  - **Why do we cling to the retiring currency of a dying kingdom??**

15

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- Antidote for worrying about money and possessions
  - Trust the loving care of God
  - Seek His Kingdom
  - Give to the poor in order to get treasures in heaven
- Your heart follows your treasure
  - So transfer your treasure to heaven by giving it away for the Kingdom of God and for the poor
  - So that your heart and life will flourish
  - Otherwise, your heart and life shrivel in decay on earth

16



*Luke 12*

**Stop fearing people or authorities**

**Instead: Fear God!**

**Stop fearing money and possessions**

**Instead: Trust God**

**by seeking His Kingdom**

**and by giving to the poor**

17

Jesus taught...

**When we give generously for God's purposes  
>> seeking His Kingdom and giving to the poor <<  
He generously cares for us in this life  
and gives us priceless treasures in the new heaven & earth**

18

### Application

#### Trust in the goodness of God

- After I got back to campus
- Looking back on the long drive home from Grand Rapids

19

### Application

#### "Seek God's Kingdom"

- Follow God's commands
  - Love God and love people (even our enemies)
  - Pursue justice, mercy, and humility
  - Make disciples of all nations
  - Grow the Kingdom community = the Church
- Be rich toward God means...
  - to use our stuff or give our stuff for these things

When we find ourselves wanting more stuff, or needing our stuff, ask ourselves: "Why not be rich toward God instead?"

20

## Application

**“Seek God’s Kingdom”**  
**“Sell your possessions”**

21

**“Put to death...greed, which is idolatry.”** *Colossians 3:5*

- Greed = fearing money and possessions
  - Believing that they hold the power of a better life
  - It treats them as though they are God (idolatry)
- Money is not evil
- Believing that “more money makes a better life” **is evil**
- Money and possessions promise relief from worry, and they promise a better life
- Yet...
  - As people’s money grows, their obsession with money grows too
  - “The more things you have, the more you have to have, and the more time it takes, to take care of the things you have!”
  - **In general, money takes what it promises to give**

22

### Application

**“Seek God’s Kingdom”**

**“Sell your possessions”**

- **Creates the opportunity to give**
  - “Stuff” can become Kingdom resources
  - Possessions have opportunity cost: they demand our attention and other resources
- **Also “sell our responsibilities and obligations”**
  - Sometimes **we give up our time** (to work, to get better deals, or...) in order **to get more money that doesn’t help us**
  - When we give away responsibilities and obligations, **we are paid with time** that we can give to the Kingdom and those in need

23

### Application

**“Seek God’s Kingdom”**

**“Sell your possessions”**

**“Give”**

- **To those in need**
- **For God’s Kingdom**
- **Cautions**
  - Giving **poorly** hurts people
    - So don’t give poorly, and don’t stop giving
    - Rather, **give well**
  - **Boundaries are still wise and godly**
    - “All” is neither stated nor implied in the command to sell

24

**“The way to store wealth in heaven is to give it away on earth.”**

- To those who can't pay us back
- To those who are vulnerable and in need
- In a way that...
  - builds genuine relationships for the recipient
  - honors and empowers the recipient
  - builds the values of God and the Kingdom of God
  - helps the recipient know the glory of God
- Jesus said: You **cannot** serve God and money at the same time

25

**“Life is so fragile and uncertain that you can never have enough money to be sure it will all be okay.”**

- So...
  - ~~Gather and save as much as we can~~
- Or...
  - ~~Enjoy our time and money, because tomorrow we may die~~
- Or...
  - Trust God by using our time and money to do what He values
  - Because His time and money and goodness can never run out!

26

**“Generosity flows from confidence  
in the generosity of God”**

**Which reality in life shapes our living the most?**

- **Natural consequences**

**Law**

- Foolish living gets bad results
- Wise living gets good results

- **The generous goodness of God who cares for you**

**Grace**

- Especially for those who seek His Kingdom first
- “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it”

27

**Application**

**“Seek God’s Kingdom”**

**“Sell your possessions”**

**“Give”**

28

*Ideas for how to give money and time*

**Thanks to our External Ministry Team!**

- Developing relationships with organizations and people
- Giving on behalf of the church throughout the year
- Guiding our people as we have opportunity to give directly

29

**Some ideas for how to give money**

Global  
Regional  
Local

- **Christian Services of Lansing**  
– <https://christianserviceslansing.com>
- **City Rescue Mission of Lansing**  
– <https://www.bearescuer.org>
- **Cornerstone Church in Detroit**  
– <http://cornerchurch313.org/give>
- **Naypyidaw Christian Church, Myanmar**  
– We are looking for a good way to get money to them
- **Africa Revolution and partners**  
– <http://africarevolution.org>

CHRISTIAN  
*services*



30

## Ideas for how to **give time**

- **Medilodge worship services**
  - Contact Jean Eddy, [jeddy57@gmail.com](mailto:jeddy57@gmail.com)
- **Love Clothing Center**
  - <http://www.judsonmemorial.org/about/lcc.html>
  - **August 14**
  - Contact John Tilden, [tildenjir@gmail.com](mailto:tildenjir@gmail.com)
- **Cornerstone Church in Detroit**
  - Moving and community service, **August 7** (tentative)
  - Contact Allan Greig, [allan@africarevolution.org](mailto:allan@africarevolution.org)

31

**When we give generously for God's purposes  
>> seeking His Kingdom and giving to the poor <<  
He generously cares for us in this life  
and gives us priceless treasures in the new heaven & earth**

**We follow a God who paid everything to rescue us  
for the new heaven and the new earth**

**Yet sometimes we act like He might not be able to,  
or He might not be willing to,  
care for us until then**

32