

WILL YOU DIE TONIGHT?

LUKE 12:30 • TV-048A

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By

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Luke 12:23

“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”

I’m reading to you from God’s Word, the book of **Luke chapter 12:20**.

My subject today is a question: **“WILL YOU DIE TONIGHT?”**

And I’m reading from **Luke 12:20** in which the Lord Jesus in a parable concerning the rich man had this to say; God said unto him, *“Thou fool; this night thy soul shall be required of thee and then who shall these things be which thou hast provided?”*

Now, I’ve been preaching the Gospel for a little over 30 years, and in the providence of God many people have heard me preach and died within 24 hours. They’ve heard me preach the Gospel and then within 24 hours they were standing in the presence of almighty God.

I remember preaching a message in Grand Rapids, Michigan back several years ago one Sunday night. I’d preached that morning and also conducted an afternoon service and preached an evening message.

And one of the deacons of the church asked me to go home with him and have a cup of coffee and some cake. He had his mother with him and his wife and his children. And we went by his mother’s house to let her off before we went on over to have coffee and cake.

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And he invited her to go with us. He said, "Mother; come along with us and let's fellowship with the preacher a little while and have some coffee and cake." She said, "No, I've enjoyed the messages so much today; I believe I'll just go in the house and read the text again and meditate on the things God has showed me."

Well, the next morning this man called his mother and she didn't answer the phone and he sent his wife over to see about her. And his wife found her lying on the floor where she'd turned on the light and dropped her Bible and fell over dead. She'd walked in the house and turned on the light and went to be with God.

I was preaching down in Owensboro, Kentucky in a revival meeting several years ago and a man came to hear me one Wednesday night. After the service was over I was standing back by the door shaking hands and this gentleman came through the door. I'd never seen him before.

He lived there in Owensboro and worked in the General Electric plant. We shook hands and he said, "I enjoyed that message very much." I said, "Well, come back and visit with us another night. I'd be glad for you to come back to the services the rest of the week. I'll be here through Friday night."

The next day he went down to the basement of the plant to see about a boiler that had too much pressure and as he bent over the boiler to check on it, it blew up and killed him.

And I could go on giving you illustration after illustration of people who have sat and listened to the message as you're listening to the message right now. And within 24 hours they have gone out to meet God, to stand in the awesome presence of a holy God.

I ask you this question right now, is this the last message you'll ever hear? Is this the last sermon that you'll ever listen to? Is this the last warning that God will ever give you? Is this the last invitation that you'll ever hear? Will you stand tonight in the awesome presence of a holy God?

Well, let me answer the question for you. Let me give an honest answer. This is what all of us think and let me answer as I would answer and as you would answer, will I die tonight? No, I do not believe I will and I don't think you believe you will.

I think all of us would have to say this if we told the truth; I have no plans to die tonight. I'm still a young man. Oh, I know that many of God's greatest servants have died as young men. David Brainerd died when he was 29, a great missionary to the Indians. God called him when he was only 29 years of age. He took him out of this world.

And Robert McShane that great Scottish preacher died when he was only 30 years of age. Some of God's greatest men have been called away at a very early age. And there are thousands in the cemetery now much younger than I or you, but we have no plans to die tonight.

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And we'd say this, "I'm in good health. I'm in excellent health." Well; I had a brother, only one brother who was in excellent health. He was a Colonel in the army, a rugged individual. He spent almost 30 years in the army. At 48 years of age his heart stopped and he went to meet God.

Somebody else says, "Well, I have no plans to die tonight, I have a work to do. I have people who depend upon me. I have people who are looking to me."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon pastored one of the greatest churches in the world. And he had an orphanage for hundreds of children. Hundreds of children went through that orphanage. They were dependent upon this great man.

He had a pastor's College which trained a thousand men for the ministry. He had missionaries on the field who were looking to him for their monthly salaries. Yet, when he was only 58 years of age at the height of his ministry, in the middle of the greatest work ever performed in England in the name of Jesus Christ, God called him home.

I have no plans to die tonight; my family needs me, my friends need me, and my work needs me. I have no plans to die tonight. I believe I have a few more years. Yes, I plan. "I know I'll die someday preacher but not tonight."

Why this is foolish talk. And this is what our Lord revealed in this parable in **Luke chapter 12**. You take your Bible and let's read just above what I quoted a moment ago, **Luke chapter 12**. Let's begin by looking back up a few verses and listen to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now listen carefully; *"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself saying: I'll throw down my barns and I'll build greater barns. And I will store all my goods, And I will say to my soul, soul; take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry."* And that's when God said; *"Thy fool; this night, this night, shalt thy soul be required of thee. And then who shall those things be which you have provided?"*

Now, doesn't this apply to you and to me when we talk about having many years, when we talk about having good health, when we talk about having security, when we talk about the world needing us and our families needing us and our friends needing us when we contemplate or consider even tomorrow?

The apostle James says; *"We say we're going into the city and do this and we're going to go into the city and do that, you ought to say, the Lord willing I'll go into the city and buy and sell and get gain. Boast not thyself of tomorrow. Thou knowest not what a day shall bring forth."*

And when we give no consideration to the fact that we may die tonight; this may be the last message I'll ever preach. Now I don't really believe that, and you don't either but it may be. And this may be the last sermon you'll ever hear.

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Now you don't believe that. If you believed that you would be glued to that TV set. You'd have your Bible open and you'd follow with intense concentration every word I say. You'd look there at me as I preach, and you'd say; "Preacher, tell the truth; tell me what God says. Tell me what I need to know. Tell me how to be saved. Now this is my last sermon; preacher be true to my soul. Don't take your time singing and take your time entertaining and take your time bragging on your ministry; tell me about God."

Now, if you really believed that you'd be mighty serious, wouldn't you? Well, it may be, it may be. Christ said that; He said, "*Tonight (today) thy soul shall be required of thee.*"

Now, there are five statements that I want to look at in this Scripture. I want to take this Scripture and look at five statements and I want you to remember them. I want God the Holy Ghost to apply it to my heart and to yours, five statements:

First of all: the first thing the Lord said, (to the man who had great wealth and much goods) "*Thy fool, this night shalt thy soul be required of thee.*"

We put, you do and I do, too much stock in material things, entirely too much stock. We spend too much of our time concerned about what we'll eat, what we'll drink, and what we'll wear. Our Lord said, "*This is what the heathen seeks, what shall we eat, what shall we drink, and what shall we put on?*"

He said in **verse 15:** "*Take heed and beware of covetousness. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses.*" Things he possesses like clothes, food, houses, land, wealth, automobiles, and all of these things.

That's not life. Life is not even how long you live. Toplady lived only 38 years. He was the man who wrote, "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me;" he only lived 38 years. Charles Wesley lived 81 years. They were contemporaries; they lived at the same time. Toplady lived 38 years and Wesley lived 81 years, but now they are both dead. My son lived 21 years. My brother lived 48 years. My dad lived 82 years, but they are all three dead.

What difference does it make if a man lives 20 years or 40 years or 80 years; he's gone. James says; "*What is your life? It's only a vapor. It appeareth for a little while.*" What little while, 20 years, 80 years? It's a little while when it's gone. It doesn't matter how long it is; it's a little while.

So, your life doesn't consist in how long you live. And your life does not consist in what you have. "*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?*"

Belshazzar had a kingdom. The thief had a cross. Which is better? Which would you rather be now? "Well, when he was living, I'd rather be Belshazzar, preacher." I know but he's dead.

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Belshazzar had a kingdom and the thief had a cross. Which would you rather be? The rich man had plenty; Lazarus had nothing. Which is better now? They're both dead.

Your life does not consist in how much education you get either. The Bible says; *"We're ever learning, never coming to a knowledge of the truth."*

Oh, I know there are a lot of worldly men who have died with great learning and great understanding of material things and many degrees who would like to have been able to say with Paul, *"I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded that He's able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."*

When the time of your departure comes and this is what Paul was talking about, the time of my departure is at hand; what had you rather be able to say, "Well; I understood all the mysteries of the world and I knew nothing of the kingdom of God or I understood the mysteries of the kingdom of God and did not know much about the world?"

Your life does not consist in how well you're known. A lot of people would give anything in the world to be famous. They'll give up their reputation, they'll give up their character, and they'll give up their family.

They'll give up anything to be famous, to have somebody walk up to them on the street and ask them for their autograph. Oh, that's the greatest thing that could possibly happen according to some.

But let me tell you something, what a tragedy to be known by everyone on the earth and then hear Him say at that great day, *"I never knew you, I never knew you."* Had you rather be an unknown here known in glory or had you rather be known here by everyone and unknown in glory?

A man's life does not consist in how long he lives. A turtle lives 400 years, but he's still a turtle. It does not consist in what he has. It does not consist in how much he knows. It does not consist in how well he's known.

And life does not consist in how high we climb. The Scripture says; *"He that exalteth himself shall be abased. And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

My friend; when the old Titanic left these shores (that great vessel that was not supposed to be able to be sunk) on board that vessel were rich and poor, old and young, learned and ignorant, famous and unknown.

On board that ship were all classes of people. But when the notice of the sinking of the Titanic was posted on the bulletin board back in New York City there were just two classes of people listed, saved and lost, that's all, saved and lost.

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And that's the way it is when this life is over. The grave is an awful leveler. The grave makes all men equal. In the grave the rich man is dead. In the grave the poor man is dead, and both are broke.

In the grave the learned man is dead, and the ignorant man is dead. In the grave the famous man goes back to the dust from whence he came but no more rapidly than the fellow who was unknown who had nothing.

What is your life, what is your life? It does not consist in the things that you have. That's what Christ is saying. It consists in who you know; that's it. Our Lord Jesus said; "*Now Father; (He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane) now Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify thee. Thou hast given me power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me. And this is life; this is it that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*"

That's life. You ask me what is life? What does life really consist of in knowing God and knowing Christ the Son? Listen to what our Lord said in **John 11:25**: "*I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, thou he were dead, yet shall he live. Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*"

Second: Here's the second statement that I want to consider from this verse of Scripture. The rich man says, "I have many goods, I have many years."

You know, we are so quick to condemn this man. Every one of us, you do and I do; we are so quick to condemn this man and yet our attitudes are no different. We're guilty of the same thing. We have many years.

You bought a home not long ago and you set it up on a 20-year repayment deal, didn't you? How do you know you are going to live 20 years? Some of you men have set up retirement plans that are supposed to come to you when you are 65 and you're just now 35. Will you be around at 65?

We're just like this man. But our years are not in our hands. Our years are in the hands of God. Now you get your Bible and turn to **Job 14:5**. You read that whole chapter of **Job** but look at **verse 5**; now listen to this; "*Man's days are determined. The number of his months are with God. God has appointed his bounds; he cannot pass.*" God says, "*I am the Lord; I kill, I make alive.*" He has the keys of hell and death.

Life is in the hands of God who gives life and God who takes life. Most of us live and we plan as if we had many years left. You do and I do and I'm guilty of this same thing. We live and plan as if we had many years, many years on this earth.

Are we not guilty of assuming something? Just like this man; here he was lying on his bed at night and he was thinking about all of these goods that he had collected and all this wheat and corn and oats that he'd stored up, you know.

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And he said now; “I think I’ll just tear down these barns over here and go build me some bigger barns because I’ve got all these goods and nowhere to put them. And I’ve got a whole lot of years ahead of me. My life has just started.”

But now watch the next statement; it comes thundering from the skies: “*Thy fool, thy fool.*” Now my friend; the man says; “*I have many years.*” God said; “*Thou fool;* (you’re a foolish man).”

The Bible describes several sorts of fools. Have you ever looked at this?

God says in **Psalms 14:1**; “*The fool has said in his heart no God for me.*” The man who claims to be an Atheist and Agnostic is a fool, ” that’s what God said.

In **Proverbs 10:18**; “*The man who slanders another is a fool.*”

In **Proverbs 15:5**; “*The man who despises instruction and rebuke, who will not listen to advice and counsel is a fool.*”

In **Proverbs 14:9**; “*Fools make a mock of sin.*”

In **Matthew 7:26**; “*Fools build their houses on the sand.*”

In **Ecclesiastes 5:1**; “*Fools are rash with their mouths in the presence of God.*”

In **Luke 11:39**; “*Fools cleanse the outside of the body and neglect the inside.*”

But the greatest fool of all is the man who lives only for today, who lives only for the material world, who lives only for the luxuries and comforts of this life and neglects his eternal soul and neglects his relationship with a holy God and neglects his interest in the saving grace of God, “*thy fool, thy fool.*”

Why is the man a fool? God says; “*Because thy soul shall be required of thee this night. Thy soul shall be required.*” This word is interesting here; the word, “*Required.*”

Now the believer’s soul is never required of him. Do you know why? He’s already committed it to Christ. He’s already given it to Christ. The apostle Paul said; “*I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded He’s able to keep that which I have already committed to Him.*”

And whether I live tonight or whether I don’t live; Christ has my soul, it’s been committed. The Lord Jesus said, “*Father; unto thy hands I commit my spirit.*”

Stephen, as they were stoning him said; “*Lord Jesus receive my spirit.*” It’s already been committed. Receive it. God didn’t require it; He’d already received it. It had already been given into His hands.

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But the unbeliever has kept his soul. He has kept his soul. He has held onto it. He has kept his soul and his soul has lived for sin, for selfish purposes, and for the things of this world. And know God says; “Turn it loose, turn it loose. I require your soul right now. You’ve got to leave all this behind that you’ve lived for and that you’ve acquired and that you’ve given yourself to. You’ve got to give it up. You’ve got to turn it loose; turn loose now and go to meet God. God required your soul to get away from it.”

That’s what our Lord is talking about when He said; “*He that loseth his life;*” your life is your soul, he that gives it up, he who surrenders it, he who submits to Christ, and says, “I submit my soul to Christ; I submit all that I am and all that I have to Christ. I give it up. Lord, it’s yours. Now, if you want to let me live here 20 more years, fine. If you want to take me tonight, that’s fine too because I’m yours.”

But the unsaved man: “*He that saveth his life,* (keeps his life, holds on to his life, if he refuses to let it go, refuses to submit to God) *will lose it.*” One day God will say, “*Turn it loose.*” God will say, “*Turn it loose; I require your soul right now, right now.*”

And it’s too late to cry for mercy. And it’s too late to seek peace. And it’s too late to cry for God’s grace. And it’s too late to try to make matters right between you and a holy God; it’s all over. “I require your soul; I’ll take it away from you and now it’s mine.” The Lord said so!

Third: And then the last statement. Now the rich man says; “*I’ve got many years and I’ve got much goods.*” And God said; “*You’re a fool, you’re a fool. I’m going to require your soul of you tonight. Give it up; turn it loose, let’s go.*” The Master is come and He’s calling for you.

And so is he a fool, “*That lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.*” Now that means me, that means you, and that means anybody that’s listening to my voice or anybody who reads these words, “*That man who layeth up treasure for himself.*”

No matter how he gets it, whether he gets it honestly or dishonestly, whether he gets it in the world of materialism or the world of religion, no matter how he lays up for himself treasures on this earth; “*That man is a fool who is not rich toward God.*”

Now what is this, “*Rich toward God?*” What does it mean? Well; it’s not this idea of sending up your tithes and offerings to build you a mansion. That’s not “*Rich toward God.*” That’s not what we’re talking about. That’s not what it’s all about.

Here it is; here is the riches of God. Now I want you to watch this and take your Bible and turn first of all to **Ephesians 2:4**: What is it to be rich toward God?

First of all: It’s to partake of, it is to enter into, and it is to enjoy the riches of His mercy! That’s right; that’s what He says here; “*But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us with Christ.*” He’s rich in mercy.

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And I'll tell you; when I partake of His mercy, when I fall down at His feet as a guilty sinner, and as I plead like the Publican in the temple; "*Lord, be merciful to me,*" as I plead like the woman with the sick daughter; "*Lord, have mercy on me.*"

As I plead with the thief on the cross; "*Lord; remember me.*" When I receive that mercy I'm rich toward God, I'm rich.

And then here's another riches. And as I say it's not sending up things to build you a mansion in heaven; that's not riches toward God. Riches toward God is to be rich in His mercy.

Secondly: It's to partake of the riches of His grace! **Ephesians 2:7**; "*That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace,*" not the riches of my works and the riches of my sermons and the riches of my righteousness. That's all "*filthy rags*" in God's sight.

That's nothing to show off. God's going to show in glory, in me, "*The riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*" Let me give you a little definition; grace and mercy, rich in grace and rich in mercy. Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve, and mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve. I'm rich. I'm rich in His mercy and I'm rich in His grace.

But now read on. In **Ephesians 3:16**; it's not only to partake of the riches of His mercy and the riches of His grace; it's to partake of the riches of His glory. "*That He would grant unto you the riches of His glory; (watch it now, what is that) that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*" I'll tell you, the man in whose heart the Lord Jesus lives, Christ in His grace, Christ in His mercy, and Christ in His power, and Christ in His love; that man in whose heart Christ lives is the world's richest man.

He's the richest man in the universe. He has the "*Unspeakable gift.*" He has the "*Pearl of great price.*" He has the riches of glory. He has Christ in His heart. That's glory; "*Christ in you, that's the hope of glory.*"

It's not my name on a church roll, not out trying to keep the law or do the best I can, but Christ living in my heart. That's rich toward God. That's all the riches you can have. When you have Christ, you have all that God has, the riches of His glory.

And then one more and I close; what is it to be rich toward God? It's to partake of His mercy in Christ, His precious blood, His grace for the guilty, the riches of His glory and then the riches of assurance.

Colossians 2:2; "*The riches of full assurance.*" To be able to say; "*The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I'll fear no evil for thou art with me.*"

To be able to say that is to have the riches of full assurance, "*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*"

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Will you die tonight? If you're in Christ it doesn't matter, does it? But if you're not in Christ it matters a great deal!