This next text comes from the gospel of Luke. In this section of Luke, Jesus is teaching about several important topics. As he is teaching, someone in the crowd is going to tell Jesus what he needs to do.

It’s probably not a good idea to tell Jesus what he must do. Especially when it comes to telling Jesus to do something that will benefit themselves financially. Jesus doesn’t tend to respond real well to that.

**Read Luke 12:13-21**

A comedian once said, "You know what they say, where there's a will, there's a family fighting over it."

Kerri Zane recently wrote an article for Forbes magazine in which she describes how a friend of hers become embroiled in an ugly inheritance battle with his siblings. The decades long-simmering battle took front and center when the patriarch of the family died leaving a sizable estate, a wife with memory loss and three acrimonious adult children.

While still alive the dad, without consulting a physician, diagnosed his wife with Alzheimer's. He chose to leave his estate and authority over his wife's care in the hands of his other two children. These two, now executors of the estate, sprang into action.

Within 14 days of their father’s death they nefariously moved their mother into a senior care facility, put a lock box on the family home and called a real estate agent to represent the sale of this multi-million-dollar property.  The other adult child was left with the responsibility to prove his mother’s mental capacity and honor her lifestyle wishes.

After a pricey legal and mental competency battle his mom is finally back in her home and able to independently mandate how her money is spent. The three adult children are not speaking to each other.

Sadly, this family is not alone in the growing inheritance battlefield.  [It is estimated that $30 trillion will be inherited in the next 30 years](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.forbes.com%2Fsites%2Fkerrizane%2F2016%2F11%2F14%2Fthe-shocking-reason-why-siblings-squabble-over-inheritance-and-how-to-prevent-it%2F&text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20%2430%20trillion%20will%20be%20inherited%20in%20the%20next%2030%20years). The result is a significant percentage of children and grandchildren fighting for what they believe is their fair share of inheritance while either one or both aging parents are still alive.

Michael Fuhr, a financial manager believes that this trend is happening as adult children are not sufficiently saving for their own retirement.  They get caught short. And it's further complicated by adult children who feel entitled to their parent’s money. They have lived their lives under the assumption that their inheritance will fund their retirement plans.

There is another financial and inheritance expert who has shared an opinion on this subject. That expert is Jesus. In the text we read today, Jesus is teaching when a man in the crowd says to Jesus, “tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.”

But Jesus doesn’t fall into the trap of settling this family inheritance dispute. Instead, Jesus says this. Jesus says to beware of greed. Jesus says that one’s life does not depend on the abundance of one’s possessions. And then Jesus tells a story. A story of a man who does what he is supposed to do in preparing for retirement.

The man in the story makes sound retirement plans where he saves up his money and plans to retire comfortably. He plans so well, in fact, that he can’t store all of his possessions. So, he says to himself, notice that he only speaks to himself, he says, “I will simply build bigger barns.”

But in this parable, this man is called a fool. Why is he called a fool? He is called a fool because he lives only for himself. He believes that he can secure his future with his wealth.

But we all know that no amount of money can protect us from disease. No amount of money can protect us from tragedy.

No amount of money can protect us from broken relationships. In fact, wealth and prosperity can drive families apart. Wealth can also get in the way of our relationship with God.

This is, ultimately, a story about priorities. Who is truly God in our lives? How do we use the gifts and resources that are provided? Are we focused on ourselves and our desires or are we focused toward God and our neighbor?

A wise pastor once said, “I have heard lots of people express regrets as they neared their death. But never have I ever heard someone express regret at giving too much away. I have never heard someone say I wish that I had kept more for myself.

Our lives and our possessions are not our own. Our lives belong to God. We are merely stewards of the life that we are given by God.

So, as you think about what to do with the possessions that you have, I invite you to think about ways to do good with what you have. Invest in ways that serve others. As you think about what you want to do with what is left after you are gone, ponder ways that your inheritance and possessions can benefit the lives of others.

Today we will share in the sacrament of Holy Communion. At the table we are reminded that Jesus came into the world with no possessions and Jesus left the world with no possessions. But I think we would all agree that his earthly life made a difference.

What is the difference that you feel that your inheritance and your possessions can make for others? How can God use what you think is yours to serve God by serving others?

Remember the words of Jesus. So it is with those who store us treasures for themselves, but are not rich toward God. AMEN.

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