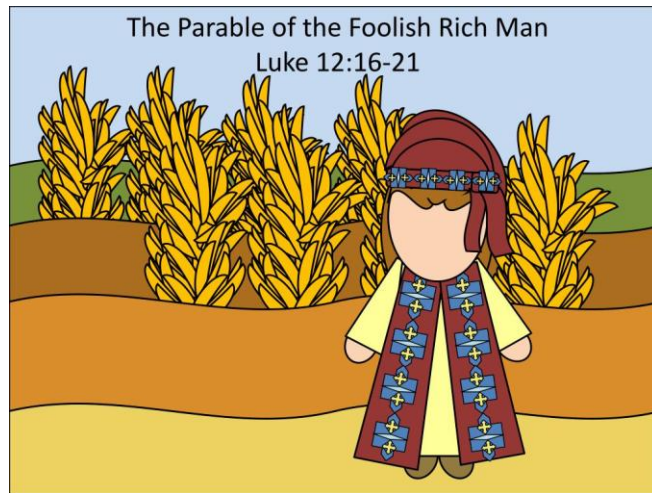


**SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 2025**  
**EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**LUKE 12:13-21 | “RICH TOWARD GOD”**



**ST. JOHN**  
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**Ushers –**

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

\*Please stand if comfortably able  
and respond with words in **bold** print

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:**

**THE BELL IS RUNG:**

**PRELUDE: “Divine Comfort” Robert J. Hughes**

**PENNIES FOR MISSION:**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP: (Inspired by Psalm 107)**

One: Hallelujah! Give thanks! Give thanks to God!

**Many: For the Holy One redeemed us and sustained us through the time of trouble.**

One: Give thanks to the Holy One, for God is good!

**Many: For the Compassionate One heard our cry and sustained us through the time of trouble.**

One: Give thanks to the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

**Many: Hallelujah! Give thanks! Give thanks to God!**

**\*INVOCATION:**

Amazing God, we honor and celebrate your presence among us. We rejoice in your goodness and delight in your wonderful works. We lament the suffering of the world and take courage that you are with us. We ask that you make your presence known to us. Speak, O God, for we attune our attention for your guidance. Receive our praise as we glorify your name! Amen.

**\*OPENING HYMN: 6**

**“Sing Praise to God, Our Highest Good”**

**\*UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

Holy God, too often we seem determined to turn away from you. You, however, continually call us to repentance—to turn—back to you and your way. We pray for fortitude to remain on the path set by Jesus and embody the ministry of Christ in the world. Deliver us from the insignificant concerns that distract us and empower us to do the work you have called us to do. Most of all, grant us grace to be the people you have made us to be.

**\*WORDS OF GRACE:**

Beloved, you have received an inheritance of riches in God. These treasures of hope, strength, encouragement, peace, grace, joy, rest, and love are yours to claim. They are yours to live. Receive them freely and abundantly.

**\*GLORIA:**

Glory to the Creator,  
and the Christ and the Spirit so near.  
As it was from the start so it shall be forever,  
One God always here. (repeat twice)  
(end) One God always here. One God always here.

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS: Old Testament Hosea 11:1-11**

**From the Message**

**Israel Played at Religion with Toy Gods**

11<sup>1-9</sup> “When Israel was only a child, I loved him.

I called out, ‘My son!’—called him out of Egypt.  
But when others called him,

he ran off and left me.

He worshiped the popular sex gods,

he played at religion with toy gods.

Still, I stuck with him. I led Ephraim.

I rescued him from human bondage,

But he never acknowledged my help,

never admitted that I was the one pulling his wagon,

That I lifted him, like a baby, to my cheek,

that I bent down to feed him.

Now he wants to go *back* to Egypt or go over to Assyria—

anything but return to me!

That’s why his cities are unsafe—the murder rate skyrockets

and every plan to improve things falls to pieces.

My people are hell-bent on leaving me.

They pray to god Baal for help.

He doesn’t lift a finger to help them.

But how can I give up on you, Ephraim?

How can I turn you loose, Israel?

How can I leave you to be ruined like Admah,

devastated like luckless Zeboim?

I can’t bear to even think such thoughts.

My insides churn in protest.

And so I’m not going to act on my anger.

I’m not going to destroy Ephraim.

And why? Because I am God and not a human.

I’m The Holy One and I’m here—in your very midst.

<sup>10-12</sup> “The people will end up following God.

I will roar like a lion—

Oh, how I'll roar!

My frightened children will come running from the west.  
Like frightened birds they'll come from Egypt,  
from Assyria like scared doves.

I'll move them back into their homes."

God's Word!

Soul-Destroying Lies

Ephraim tells lies right and left.

Not a word of Israel can be trusted.

Judah, meanwhile, is no better,  
addicted to cheap gods.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 107:1-9, 43 Page 693**

**EPISTLE: Colossians 3:1-11 The Words of Paul**

**From the Common English Bible**

**Your life hidden in Christ**

3 Therefore, if you were raised with Christ, look for the things that are above where Christ is sitting at God's right side. <sup>2</sup> Think about the things above and not things on earth. <sup>3</sup> You died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

<sup>5</sup> So put to death the parts of your life that belong to the earth, such as sexual immorality, moral corruption, lust, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). <sup>6</sup> The wrath of God is coming upon disobedient people because of these things. <sup>7</sup> You used to live this way, when you were alive to these things. <sup>8</sup> But now set aside these things, such as anger,

rage, malice, slander, and obscene language. <sup>9</sup> Don't lie to each other. Take off the old human nature with its practices <sup>10</sup> and put on the new nature, which is renewed in knowledge by conforming to the image of the one who created it. <sup>11</sup> In this image there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all things and in all people.

**\*GOSPEL: Luke 12:13-21 From the CEB**

**Warning against greed**

<sup>13</sup> Someone from the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

<sup>14</sup> Jesus said to him, "Man, who appointed me as judge or referee between you and your brother?"

<sup>15</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Watch out! Guard yourself against all kinds of greed. After all, one's life isn't determined by one's possessions, even when someone is very wealthy." <sup>16</sup> Then he told them a parable: "A certain rich man's land produced a bountiful crop. <sup>17</sup> He said to himself, What will I do? I have no place to store my harvest! <sup>18</sup> Then he thought, Here's what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. That's where I'll store all my grain and goods. <sup>19</sup> I'll say to myself, You have stored up plenty of goods, enough for several years. Take it easy! Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself. <sup>20</sup> But God said to him, 'Fool, tonight you will die. Now who will get the things you have prepared for yourself?' <sup>21</sup> This is the way it will be for those

who hoard things for themselves and aren't rich toward God."

**MESSAGE: "Rich Before 'Stuff' or Rich Toward God"**

The Parable of the rich fool is found only in the Gospel of Luke, but it occurs elsewhere in Near Eastern lore and also in the Gospel of Thomas in a simpler form. In characteristically Lucan fashion, the interpretation of this parable is at the beginning, not the end.

The parable comes as the beginning of a section on the attitude of disciples toward possessions; here the subject is covetousness, followed by teachings on anxiety. The section comes abruptly as a change of subject. The shift, which amounts to an interruption, is provided by a question from someone in the crowd. The brief exchange between the person with the request and Jesus and Jesus' warning about covetousness constitute a pronouncement story.

*(To be honest, I never heard the term "pronouncement story" before. I had to look it up. A pronouncement story briefly sketches a setting for a dramatic saying. The basic story is a self-contained unit designed for easy memory & oral repetition. Details are generally limited to a sketchy description of elements that set the stage for a remark that might otherwise be perplexing. In many cases a pronouncement by or about Jesus represents the original climax of the story. In stringing such stories together to form connected written narratives the authors of the gospels have provided their own transitions. Interesting!)*

So this parable that follows is not intimately joined to the pronouncement story and could be told effectively in a great number of settings. However, verses 13-15 do influence how one hears the parable. Verses 13 – 15 are "Someone from the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' Jesus said to him, 'Man, who appointed me as judge or referee between you and your brother?'" So, following these words, the parable fits nicely into Jesus' sermon.

The parable of the rich fool is a story pointing out the folly of covetousness, the failure to see the distinction between what one has and what one is. **WHAT ONE HAS AND WHAT ONE IS.** You might remember that covetousness was a violation of the law of Moses and the teaching of prophets and seems to have been a widespread problem in the early church. And that problem continues today.

The problem exists in many forms, sometimes as the desire to possess what belongs to another, and at other times the desire to accumulate when one already has enough to meet one's needs. Some people, however, seem unable to know what is enough until they reach the point of too much, and often, too late. By the way, the solution is not to build bigger barns. This inordinate craving to hoard as a guarantee against insecurity is not only an act of disregard for those in need but puts goods in the place of God. Luke calls it not being "rich toward God"; Paul calls it worshiping and serving "the creature rather than the

Creator,”; and both Colossians and Ephesians label covetousness “idolatry.”

So, what do you think? Is buying yet another pair of black slacks, just in case, necessary? Do we need a newer car when the one we have works just fine? Do we need a freezer stuffed with food just in case company comes to your door and you have to cook a feast? Just as a reminder, there is always take out from a near by restaurant almost every day. Even on Christmas. The Chinese restaurants are still open.

I heard a military wife once say that she liked it when the family was transferred every three years or so. She said that prevented her family in having too much extra stuff?

It’s not easy. I went through it recently, as you know. Down-sizing is hard. I went from a house of 3 bedrooms, three and a half bathrooms, finished basement, five televisions, and a double car garage so full of stuff, my one car wouldn’t fit. It was fine when 3 or 4 people lived there. But how many bathrooms does one person need.

It’s time to take inventory; of our stuff and of our relationship with God. It’s time to be rich toward God. Amen.

**SPECIAL MUSIC: “You Are My All in All”**

**Flute (Stacie)/Piano (Sharon) duet**

**PASTORAL PRAYER:**

We are yours, Dear Jesus, and we are so grateful that as God’s Beloved Son, you have brought the love of God closer to us. And we will never forget the sacrifices you made for us. We remember your words and your compassion as you cared for the least of these. We are called to remember the marginalized and those that others forget. We remember to feed them, cloth them, and give them safe shelter. We remember all those on our prayer list; all those who are in pain, feel lonely, and our grieving. We remember how we can comfort them with our words and our presence.

We remember all those dealing with the extreme heat. We remember those affected by our unsettled earth; floods, fire, earth-quakes and unsettled weather. And we are grateful for the table of grace that you are sharing with us. What a privilege what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms of Jesus. In your sacred name we pray. Amen

**OUR LORD’S PRAYER:**

**PRAYER RESPONSE: 769**

**Hear our prayer, O God, Hear our prayer, O God.**

**Incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.**

**INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:**

Having received the gifts of God, let us seek the kingdom and return a portion of our abundance to the ministry of this faith community so that our collective offering will bless God and God’s people.

**OFFERTORY: "Morning Has Broken" Gilbert M. Martin**

**\*DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise God, all creatures here below;**

**Praise God above you heavenly host;**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

**\*COMMUNION HYMN: 343 "Jesus Took the Bread"**

**HOLY COMMUNION:**

One: Luke, the evangelist, wrote of Christ that the crowds followed him and he welcomed them, spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured. But some grumbled and said of Jesus: "This one welcomes sinners and eats with them." But Jesus said: "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me . . . and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest".

**ALL: In company with saints and sinners in every time and beyond time, we come to this, God's welcome table, to meet the Risen Christ who invites us here.**

One: God be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts

**ALL: We lift them to God.**

One: Let us praise God together.

**ALL: Let s give God thanks and praise.**

One: Blessed are you, Eternal God. We thank you for calling forth the creation, forming us in your image and

calling us to be a blessing. We remember Abram and Sarai welcomed the angels under the Oaks of Mamre with a feast, Esau welcomed Jacob with forgiveness, and Joseph welcomed the brothers who sold him into slavery, saying, "Be not distressed, for God sent me before you to preserve life."

Blessed are you and blessed is Jesus, the incarnation of your love. We remember that he preached your mercy, healed the afflicted, and welcomed the least and the last, giving them seats of honor at the table.

On the shore of the Sea of Galilee he fed the hungry crowds; on the way through Jericho he broke bread with Zacchaeus the tax collector and sinner; and in an upper room, he gave us this meal as the sign of his abiding presence. In company with saints and sinners in every time and beyond time, we praise you with joy.

**THE SANCTUS: 790**

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty,**

**The whole universe speaks of your glory, O God most High.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God!**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

One: We remember all the meals of Jesus and recall the last meal he shared in Jerusalem, when he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and shared it, saying: "This is my body, broken for you, Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, we remember that Jesus took the cup, saying: "This is the cup of the new covenant. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me."

We remember that Jesus said, "I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Yet on the evening of the third day he met the disciples on the Emmaus Road, joined them at table, and shared with them the bread. As we break this bread and share this cup, we witness your kingdom in our midst, celebrate the presence of the Risen Christ and anticipate the welcome feast to come.

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

### **Invocation of the Holy Spirit**

One: Eternal God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, that Christ may be present as we share this meal, that our eyes may be opened and that we may recognize him in our midst.

### **Breaking the Bread and Sharing the Cup**

One: Blessed are you, God of all creation, you are the bread of life.

One: Blessed are you, God of all creation, you are the cup of blessing.

### **SHARING THE ELEMENTS**

**\*Let us pray in UNISON. Eternal God, we thank you for your presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. By the power of your Holy Spirit, unite us with all whom Christ welcomes, that we may be the servant**

**church of the servant Christ, in whose name we pray.  
Amen.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN: 460 "Be Not Dismayed"**

### **\*BENEDICTION:**

May God's kingdom come. May God's will be done.  
Through us. In us. In our communities  
As we go on earth.

**BENEDICTION RESPONSE: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"**

**THE BELL IS RUNG:**

**POSTLUDE: "Postlude in C" George Blake**