

How God Measures Wealth

18th Week of Ordinary Time – July 31, 2016- Luke: 12: 13-21

There seems to be a clear misconception, in some realms of Christianity, that if one is financially wealthy then one has won favor with God through obedience to God's law and will. This is known as the "gospel of prosperity". Nothing could be farther from the truth. God does not measure wealth in human terms or with financial reward. This is the point that Jesus makes in this week's gospel from St. Luke.

Jesus tells us a parable about a man that is so wealthy that he has to build bigger barns to store all of his harvest. **"There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I say to myself, Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!"** This seems like a good problem to have since a rich bounty produces a rich source of income and a life of privilege. What is wrong with this picture?

It boils down to the last part of this teaching. Jesus tells us, **"But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you, and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' Thus will it be for all who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God."**

The question then for us today is: What matters to God? How does God measure wealth? Might we consider ways that we can be "rich"?

Are we rich in generosity? Do we seek to be rich in wisdom, holiness and sacrificial service to others? Do we hope for a life that is measured by goodness, kindness and care of those who are marginalized and lost?

How does God measure wealth? It seems Jesus is saying that our eternal life in heaven is the most important wealth we can hope to acquire. Therefore, wealth is not measured by how much is in our bank account but by how big of an account we give to God by what we did with all that he gave us in this life.

Blessings!


Sue Schettler