

Few things stir family conflict like inheritance. When someone dies, grief is often complicated by questions of “Who gets what?” It’s an ancient problem. In Luke 12, a man calls out to Jesus: “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” But instead of solving the dispute, Jesus warns the crowd: “Be on guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”

To make his point, Jesus tells a parable about a wealthy landowner whose fields produce abundantly. Faced with overflowing harvests, the man tears down his barns to build bigger ones. He congratulates himself: “Soul, relax, eat, drink, be merry.” But that very night, his life is demanded of him. Everything he saved, everything he built—goes to someone else. Jesus concludes, “So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”

Notice what Jesus does not condemn. He doesn’t condemn wealth, hard work, or wise planning. He challenges the illusion that abundance equals security, that a full barn equals a full life. The man’s fault is not his success but his self-centeredness: his thoughts never mention God or others. His world has shrunk to the size of himself.

Psalm 107 paints a different picture. It begins, “O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!” Here, the hungry and thirsty cry out to God—and God leads them, fills them, and satisfies them. True wealth, Scripture says, is found not in what we store up but in God’s enduring love.

This parable presses us to ask hard questions: Are we hoarding possessions or practicing trust? Are we building bigger barns or deeper relationships? Are our hands full but our hearts empty?

Several years ago, I joked in a sermon: “You never see a U-Haul behind a hearse.” It’s true—we can’t take anything with us. Someday all we’ve stored up—our homes, our savings, even our prized possessions—will end up in someone else’s hands, or in a landfill. But what we give away—our love, our mercy, our service—echoes into eternity.

For us at Calvary, this is deeply personal and deeply communal. We’re not here to build barns; we’re here to build community. Through worship, prayer, and service, we pour out what we’ve been given for the sake of others and for the sake of the world God loves. That is what it means to be “rich toward God.”