

I. Introduction

- A. The human heart is a beautiful and intricate design.
- B. That's because we were created in the image of God.
- C. As a human, you are sacred to God in ways that are true of no other life form.
- D. This means there are elements of God's character that have been implanted within us.
 - 1. God has mind, will, emotions. Humans have mind, will, emotions.
- E. God's qualities are unlimited and infinite. Ours are limited and finite.
 - 1. God gave you power, but only God is all-powerful
 - 2. God gave you knowledge, but only God is all-knowing.
 - 3. God gave you sovereignty, the right to rule in your dominion, but only God is all-sovereign.
- F. You are a sacred being, created in the image of God.
- G. Part of this image of God is a hunger for God himself. You were made for things greater than anything this world can give. Wise old King Solomon realized this when he said, God has "put eternity in our hearts" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).
 - 1. You were created with an instinctive longing for the infinite, the eternal, the transcendent, the realm beyond this realm. It's a craving. A homing instinct. Augustine said, "You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."
 - 2. Another part of being made in the image of God is the drive to make your mark on the world. To build, to create, to innovate. You were made for Ambition and to go beyond the ordinary.
 - a) That fire in your belly to achieve something great? That is from God. That is Holy Ambition.
 - 3. We can see this ambition play out on a global scale. Look at a figure like Elon Musk. He is building rockets to go to Mars. He is re-engineering transportation. It is a breathtaking display of human ingenuity and drive. His life purpose is to make life interplanetary.
- H. But if you look closely at the story of humanity—from emperors to the modern titans of industry—you see a dark side to the story of Ambition.
 - 1. No matter how vast the empire, it's never enough.
- I. That's because the human heart was not just designed to build on the horizontal realm of this space-time continuum. It was designed to connect to the vertical reality of heavenly realms.
- J. Your heart is wired to touch the miraculous, supernatural,, transcendent realities of heaven.
- K. This is not as complicated as it sounds.

II. Sir Christopher Wren

- A. There's a story about Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of **St. Paul's Cathedral in London**. He walked onto the construction site of that glorious cathedral. He asked three different bricklayers the same question: 'What are you doing?'
 - 1. The first bricklayer said, 'I'm laying bricks.'
 - 2. The second said, 'I'm building a wall.'
 - 3. But the third one looked up with a fire in his eyes and said, 'I am building a cathedral to Almighty God!'
- B. All three were doing the same work. But only one had connected his ambition to a realm above this realm. He did this by awareness. By intention. By choice. It's not as complicated as it sounds.
- C. He wasn't just building something for this world. He was building a bridge to the invisible transcendent realm of heaven.
- D. A famous mystic named Brother Lawrence wrote, "I flip my omelette in the pan for the love of God."
- E. And that brings us to the man Jesus talks about in Luke 12.
 - 1. *Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."* (Luke 12:16-21)
- F. Let's be clear about this man. He was not lazy. He was not without ambition. He was, by every worldly standard, a genius. He was a master of his craft, a visionary who saw a problem—too much harvest, not enough storage—and engineered a solution. He was the most successful person in his region.
- G. So why did God call him a fool?
- H. He was a fool because he failed to answer the two most important question a person can answer.
 - 1. **The first most important question is "Are you saved?"** Are you born again such that you have created that supernatural connection where you can say God is my father, Christ is my Savior, and the Spirit is my helper, and heaven is my home. Are you saved?
 - 2. **The second most important is "What cathedral are you building?"** Everybody's building something. Everybody's building a cathedral dedicated to the glory of somebody or something.
 - a) Christian... what cathedral are YOU building?
- I. Because here was a man who forgot what he was building for.
- J. He took a heart designed for an otherworldly cathedral to a transcendent God and tried to satisfy that heart with a cathedral to himself.
 - 1. And I have to believe that deep inside his soul was a spirit crying out, "Somebody help me, I'm trapped in a success factory!!"
 - 2. I'm trapped in an image factory. I'm trapped in a money factory. I'm trapped in a self-pity factory. I'm trapped in a vengeance factory.

- K. It was all about 'my crops, my goods, my barns.' His life stopped at the edge of his own skin. He had everything, but he was missing love. And was missing a connection to the transcendent eternal realm and the God of love who created him.
- L. He was building a cathedral to himself.
 - 1. We're going to see that in the end this becomes the most devastating mistake a person can make.
 - 2. I want to explain why.
- M. At Pathway Church, we have been very intentional to build a Cathedral to Almighty God. We do that through the proclamation of the Gospel of Grace, the preaching of the Word of God, and the power of the Spirit of God.
- N. We believe that the days are short. So we're going to double down by launching a new initiative. It's called The Harbor and The Horizon.
- O. And I'm going to preach three sermons on this series.
- P. My promise to you is this: We are going to connect your deepest ambition to transcendence. I'm inviting you to stop just laying bricks and to start building a cathedral to the one thing that matters, which is the one thing that will give you more joy, more love, more peace, and more wholeness than anything else you've ever tried.
- Q. So that whether you're flipping an omelette, flipping a house, changing your baby's diaper, tuning an engine, scrubbing a toilet, sharing the gospel, praying, serving, giving, teaching a classroom, or extracting a tooth... you are doing it because of the love of God poured out on you by the grace of Jesus Christ.

III. Exposition

- A. *"Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully." (Luke 12:16)*
 - 1. The first thing that jumps out is grace.
 - 2. Jesus words this with powerful precision. What yielded plentifully?
 - a) The ground.
 - 3. The doer, the producer, the giver in this story is... the ground. The humble dirt Jesus made, Jesus watered, and Jesus bathed in sunlight day after day.
 - 4. The ground yielded plentifully... literally "richly."
 - 5. It's a parable and the details matter.
 - a) The ground yielded richly.
 - b) Somewhere, somehow in the story of your success, your victory, your enrichment... somewhere there's is a ground of grace that you're standing on, and you haven't yet fully owned that fact.
 - c) There is a blessing from the hand of the supernatural creator God who loves you... and gave you this to build a cathedral to him... and you've yet to fully own that fact.
 - 6. So this is where he goes with it.
- B. *"So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.'" (Luke 12:18, NKJV)*
 - 1. History's greatest emperors—Genghis Khan, Cyrus the Great, Alexander, Napoleon—built vast empires, yet a voice in their hearts whispered, not enough.
 - 2. Before he died in exile, Napoleon investigated Jesus extensively. He wrote:
 - a) "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him."
 - 3. What is this? It is the reality that when you have everything and have done everything there is that this world can offer, it's still not enough. And if you are honest, the only way you can look is up.
 - 4. The rich man in the parable didn't do that. When the Voice inside him said it's not enough look at what he did. He pulled down his barn and built bigger ones. What will it take to make him happy?
 - 5. At the height of his power, King Nebuchadnezzar said:
 - a) *"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30)*
 - 6. And in that same chapter he loses his mind, strips himself naked, and is found in the lawn out of his mind, on the ground eating grass, and growing hair till he looks like a wild animal.
 - 7. Jesus said that the rich man wanted bigger barns to store all my crops and goods.
 - a) To store them.
 - b) What about selling them?
 - c) What about sharing them?
 - d) What about giving some of them away?
 - e) What about feeding the poor, helping society, loving your neighbor?
 - f) What about serving the gospel?
 - g) What about love?
 - h) All of this is absent on purpose.
 - 8. What makes this sadder is that as Jesus tells the story, the only reason this man has all this surplus is grace.
 - 9. Yet, he never realized it. Never admitted it. Never owned it. He never even said thank you.
 - 10. How sad.
 - 11. But it's so much sadder than that.
- C. *"And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" (Luke 12:19)*

1. Here is the giant tragedy of a graceless existence.
 - a) Who does he talk to about his plans? And I will say to... my soul.
 - b) Not to his wife. Not to his kids. Not to his friends. Not to his neighbors. And definitely not to God.
 - c) The only one his soul has that he can talk to is his soul. "I will say to my soul, Soul!"
2. Jesus paints this heartbreaking picture of a man surrounded by everything but painfully alone.
3. The River of Grace
 - a) In John's vision of Heaven in the book of Revelation, he describes a river of Grace flowing from God that looks like this:
 - (1) "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Revelation 22:1)
 - (2) There is a constant river of grace and love flowing from the throne of God. It's Source is the gospel. The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
 - (3) It is not something we earn or create or boast about.
 - (4) It is a gift to fallen, sinful, messed up people from the loving heart of God himself. The only qualification is to admit that you are unworthy of it.
 - (5) This is a river of blessing. It is a river of provision. It is a river of comfort. Of mental health. Emotional health. Abundance. Love. Joy. Every good gift in this life and the life to come.
 - (6) It is so beautiful and yet so indescribable that Saint Paul calls it, the unsearchable riches of Christ.
 - (a) This grace saves you, so you are forgiven, a child of God and joint heir with Jesus.
 - (b) This grace blesses you, so you are richly blessed, deeply favored, highly loved.
 - (c) This grace grows you, so you become sane, sober, whole, loving, generous, and good.
 - (d) This grace uses you, so you joyfully give your life for the mission of bringing everyone you can to the river so that they can find the satisfaction you found when you found Christ.
 - i) In other words, grace flows through you.
 - (1) Grace makes people sober.
 - (2) Grace makes people kind.
 - (3) Grace makes people loving.
 - (4) Grace makes people generous.
 - (5) Grace makes people happy.
 - (6) Grace makes people brave.
 - (7) Grace makes people gentle.
 - (8) Grace makes people tough.
 - ii) Grace comforts your past self so that part of you can calm down and be at peace.
 - (1) Grace empowers your present self so that part of you can be courageous, healthy, and full of faith.
 - (2) Grace ennobles your future self so that chapter of your story is so full of glory that when you walk in a room, people shut up and listen, and when you walk into heaven, the angels stand and cheer.
 - (e) Grace is your beginning, your ending and everything in between.
 - (7) And this grace comes as streams of mercy from the throne of God to you, and then through you.
 4. This is the river that flowed into the life of a rich man whose ground yielded richly.
 5. And all he could do with it is say, "This is awesome. I'm going to keep it all for myself."
 6. And what's tragic is that he didn't have anybody but himself. No friends, no spouse, no small group, no support group, no counselor, no God, even.
 7. What cathedral was he building?
 8. **When a person builds for themselves they are operating from a wounded status.** Despite their genius or their billions, their inner dynamic is the machinery of an orphan. They are building a bunker because they do not believe they have a Father who provides or protects or validates them.
 9. So they hold fiercely to everything.
 10. The devastation isn't just that he is clinging to treasures that are going to rot away, the devastation is that he is so lonely. And suffocating in the end.

D. "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'" (Luke 12:20, NKJV)

 1. There is no religious figure in history or world religion who speaks in parables like Jesus.
 2. That's because there has never been anybody smart enough to pull it off.
 3. There is a fireworks show in this verse, but we have to set the parking brake and think about it line by line.
 - a) **Line one: FOOL.**
 - (1) The Greek is "*a-phron*." This word means "no mind." Have you lost your mind?
 - (2) He is very smart, obviously, but...
 - (a) He is a fool because he is a two dimensional thinker in a four dimensional world.
 - (b) He is a fool because he received grace but never let it overflow and flow through.
 - (c) He is a fool because the fool has said in his heart, there is no God (Psalm 14:1)
 - (3) But above all else, he is a fool because of the next line:
 - b) **Line two: This night your soul will be required of you...**
 - (1) The Greek word is "*apaitousin*"...

- (2) In the ancient world, this word is a technical commercial term used in ancient everyday literature. You won't believe what it means when I tell you.
- (3) This is literally the word that bankers use when they call in a loan.
 - (a) This is more tragedy on multiple levels.
 - (b) The cluelessness of this man is epic. But it's also epidemic.
 - (c) What is it that Jesus is saying here? What precisely had been loaned to this man by God?
 - i) His soul.
 - ii) "You are not your own... For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NKJV)
 - (d) Everything good in your life is a loan from God. Everything beautiful. Everything pleasurable. Everything memorable.
 - (e) You are not your own. Jesus found you in slavery to sin, and to death, and to Satan, and to self.
 - (f) And he paid the ransom to set you free. The price was his precious blood (1 Peter 1:19).
 - (g) He didn't buy you to exchange one slavery for another. He bought you to give you the greatest dignity a created being could ever enjoy... the dignity of being a royal daughter or son of God most high.
 - (h) And yet we are to never forget that everything we are and everything we have is on loan for this lifetime. And one day the loan gets called in.
 - i) Footnote, and eventually, this is where the series is headed, in five months the loan on this Worship Center gets called in and we have the privilege to pay it off free and clear so the river of grace can flow more boldly and broadly than ever before from the people in this church until Jesus returns.

c) Line three: then whose will those things be which you have provided?"

- (1) Jesus asks this question specifically to haunt his listeners for the rest of their lives.
- (2) This man built a cathedral for an audience of one: himself. That's the epidemic of our culture today. That's the narcissism, the individualism, the egoism, the hedonism of today. That's the selfies, never was a more perfect term invented.
- (3) What cathedral are you building? How many is it for? When you dream of the people you can influence for the love of God... Do you really believe that God can use you? I'm here to tell you that he can.
- (4) At the end of your days when the audit is taken, whose will those things be which you have provided?
- (5) Do you think that grace flows to you so it can stop or to you so it can flow through you?

d) Line 4: So is anyone who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

- (1) In Greek grammar, there are two ways that Jesus could have structured the phrase rich toward God.
 - (a) One way is static. It means that you have a status or an identity with God. And that is true of every believer. If you're a Christian, your identity is rich in God.
 - (b) But the grammar that Jesus uses here is not static. It is in motion. It is a ship leaving the harbor. It is a ship moving toward the horizon. It is a present self pressing into a future self that is glorious and beautiful and free.
 - (c) It is a vector. It is a force in a direction. It is the trajectory of a life so full of the grace of God that love and goodness just overflow. It's got to go somewhere.

IV. What Cathedral are you building?

- A. The great cathedrals of Earth take hundreds of years to build, and they outlasted their makers.
- B. I dream of us together building something here, and I'm not talking about buildings or another building project, I'm talking about an edifice of grace and truth, I'm talking about a mission for the gospel, and I'm talking about an ark of love for the saving of souls because I believe a storm is coming.
 - 1. What will remain of what we do together?
 - 2. Whose will it be?
 - 3. How many can it welcome?
- C. What cathedral is your life building?
- D. As for me and my house, we are building a cathedral for Almighty God, that the river of his gospel and grace can flow through us for generations to come till Jesus returns.

V. Prayer

- A. Heavenly Father,
- B. I stand before You now and lift up my church family to Your throne of grace. Thank You for wiring their hearts with holy ambition and eternity's longing.
- C. Stir in them a vision to build cathedrals for Your glory, not barns for themselves. Let Your river of grace flood their lives, overflowing to touch the lost and lonely around them.
- D. Free them from traps from their past selves and the enemy's lies, and make them rich toward You—vibrant, generous, secure, and free.
- E. In the matchless name of Jesus,
- F. Amen.