**Luke 12 (13-21)**

**The parable of the Rich Fool**

On April 13, 1928 the “San Francisco Chronicle” of San Francisco, California published an article titled “Thinking Is Hardest Work, Therefore Few Engage in It” by Henry Ford.

But could you ask yourself this Q "Do you think you are a successful person?"

Not do you think you will be or have you been in the past, but right now would you consider yourself successful? Some would say, with all modesty, I think I am. Some may have been knocked down so many times that their confidence is at rock bottom.

Here's the real Q. What would constitute success as far as you are concerned? As you were thinking about it, what constituted success for you?

And there comes before us today in the Bible, a man who from every point of view would have been considered a success, successful. But yet here's the issue, God's judgement on him was that he was a dismal failure.

Luke 12 v20 But God said to him "You fool" The word fool in the Greek means literally without thought. Now, here's the issue. It isn't that this man didn't think. He thought and he thought. He just didn't think about the right things. The really important things in life.

So like us he had his day dreams. He had his nightmares. So he was planning for one and avoiding the other, but he didn't think about the right things.

Let's look at this passage and think together about the things that constitute success and failure in the passage.

In this ch12 Jesus has been speaking about eternity. Jesus said in v5 for example:-

"But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him".

v2 "There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known".

There was a crowd of many thousand that had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another. Jesus began to speak first to his disciples V1 and then v15 Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me".

Two brothers falling out over the will, whose going to get grannies sideboard and clock?. This man appears to be absorbed with possessions and can't be doing with Jesus' teaching, and so Jesus having been so rudely interrupted says v15 "Watch out!" and the word watch out is like a random bus about to hit you, jump out of the way.

Watch Out! Be on your guard against all kinds of creed: "A person's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions".

Then Jesus tells this parable to the man who has a writ in his pocket to serve against his own brother. Stop and think and say OK what's important.

v16 And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops!

v18 Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods".

He gets a better harvest than he expected one year. There's no panic, no waste. He gets out his calculator. He works it out. It's worth building a huge grain storage mountain. So having worked and planned and thought, it's fantastic, because he arrives at v19:-

And I'll say to myself. "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy: eat, drink and be merry.".

This man retires at 47. The Sunday Times does an article on him "The man who knows when to stop". But all this makes it so brutal, the retirement party has come and gone. He looks at his success. His big house, successful business, good things laid up for many years. He says to himself "You done it!". Years and years of leisure and the suddenly he has a terrible pain in his chest and he is dead before they can get him to intensive care.

Verse 20 But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"

At a funeral a Grandmother said to the vicar who was taking the service of her granddaughter. "Do you know what failure is?"

Failure is being successful at the things that don't matter

What do you think? Might this parable have made the brother re think about the writ in his pocket and go to court.

We are want to be successful in life, so what does this passage tell us about the two fatal mistakes that this rich fool makes in terms of success? What did he muck up according to God his creator?

**Firstly** he lived as a functional atheist. He lived as if God wasn't there. We don't know much about this man. All we know is that he wasn't rich towards God (v21).

He lived us if God wasn't there. It is very striking as we read this passage that all the arrows are pointing in.

v17 &18 He is self centred "What shall I do" "This is what I'll do V19 "I'll say to myself".

It is not a sin to make money - but be generous with it. This man thought that he was self sufficient, no need for God. Own family members, He was utterly self centred. All about me. This man focused inwards.

V19 plenty of good things, leisure, take life easy, eat, drink and be merry; and God the giver of it all. God's on the back burner. Look what I have achieved. I don't need God and God says what a fool you are.

Why? Because God our maker has revealed himself in creation (nature) in The Bible and in his Son. Jesus, God incarnate - came into this world so that we can be forgiven and have a relationship with him. The Bible says God has spoken. What do we make of Jesus; because success in life is dependent on what we do with him.

This rich fool lived this life as if there was no God and that's madness. So many slap God in the face and say that I will take the gifts you give me, our very breath, fun, family, friends, food, falling in love, fitness and I will ignore the giver.

Deuteronomy Ch8 v 17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me", But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

All the ability we have been given is a gift. So what are we doing in relationship to the one who has given you these gifts.

**Secondly.** This rich fool lived as though there was no judgement. He thought that he had so much time, v19 so much grain for many years. But he was fresh out of time. He was plunged into eternity. he had a framework for living which didn't include his dying.

The giver of life asks us. What have you done with my Son, Jesus Christ. What have you done with the life I have given you? This man made preparations for a long time ahead. he was plunged into eternity. Death is not the end, and we all know that life goes faster and faster so this is an important passage to reflect on this morning.

How I treat you, how you treat me and others matters to God. I make no excuse of reminding us of a judgement to come. It proves God is good, of course God is good. He cares passionately about this world he created. He cares passionately about you. He send his son to die in our place s that we can be forgiven. You can meet him afresh this morning as he walks of the pages of the Bible by his Spirit. We can be in a relationship with him.

I think God hates to call any us fools. He so loved the world, so loved you, that he gave his only son, so we should not perish but have everlasting life. There is a Judgement. We have been warned today by a man who lived as if there was no God and no judgement.

I close with the words of that Granny at the funeral " Failure is being successful at the things that don't matter.

Amen