

The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
Luke 12:16-21

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (KJV)

The length of earthly life is uncertain for each individual. The Psalmist says life is normally 70-80 years in length. (Ps.89/90:10) Every breathe, each heartbeat and thought are dependent upon the Lord God.

God's Holy Church proclaims the Gospel for believers to be mindful of the dependency on God for life. Believers are expected to live in ways that reflect God as the giver of life.

When believers are mindful of God as the giver of life, responsible believers show God gratitude, attention and glory. Responsible believers keep the focus on God and put earthly life and earthly goods into perspective.

The rich man in the present Gospel gave no thought to God. He focused on the abundance of his material goods. His desire was to keep his large amount of goods and maintain a life of ease.

The rich man wanted to party and have a good time with his life. No mention was made of him giving thanks to God for the abundance of his fruits. No thought is recorded of his interest in sharing his wealth with the less fortunate.

The Gospel has does not record the rich man as donating any portion of his wealth for glory and thanksgiving to God. The rich man's interest in the well-being of his soul appears non-existent.

Unexpectedly, the man's life was going to end. The wealth he accumulated would be of no benefit to him. He had not shown richness towards God. He had not shared his wealth with any neighbors that were needy.

The Lord Jesus Christ said: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Mt. 6:20)

The present Gospel is a vivid lesson for attentive believers to be mindful of the soul and the fragility of life. Being rich toward God involves giving thanks, glory and honor to God.

Richness toward God includes showing concern and compassion for the needy met during the course of daily life. Jesus said:" Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Mt.25:40)

During the course of earthly life, every person will meet and come to know of others who might be sick, strangers, needing of food or clothing or having been imprisoned.

The way a person responds to the sick, the suffering, the needy and imprisoned will affect how the person will be judged when Christ returns. (Mt.25:31-46)
Today a person may be comfortable in his or her wealth.

Today may be the last day of earthly life, and richness toward God may never have been shown. The way life is lived creates the record for the final judgment.

Ignoring gratitude toward God, taking it easy and failing to share with the less fortunate does not bode well for the final judgment. Abundance given to each person is to be used responsibly in God-pleasing ways.

We know from St. James's Epistle: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17)

Grateful recipients of wealth will acknowledge and give thanks to God. Those appreciative of God's goodness, will reflect the appreciation in sharing the abundance with the needy with whom Christ is identified. (Mt. 25:31-46)

Every person has a certain abundance of wealth received from God. The time of daily life is part of the abundance given each person. Responsible recipients of God's wealth take time to thank God in the Church and in daily life.

Many people have an abundance of time and have the opportunity to attend the Divine services of the Church. Attending the Divine services of the Church is a way to thank God and benefit others.

The Church has weekday services that can benefit greatly from improved attendance. Every person has the ability to pray more for themselves and others. Praying benefits not only the persons prayed for but also the person praying.

Giving thanks, glory and honor to God by attending the Divine services is a way to be rich toward God. Praying for and helping the sick, the suffering, the needy, the stranger and the imprisoned are ways to be rich toward God.

Responsible recipients of God's wealth give time and effort to the Church and live according to God's commandments. Responsible believers welcome and strive to hear the word of God and keep it. (Lk. 11:28)

The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy monk-martyr Stephen the New. Holy Martyr Christo. November 28/December 11, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic