

**Sunday, August 03, 2025**  
The Eighth Sunday After Pentecost

**Festal Eucharist**  
11:00 am

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A Sermon by  
The Rev. Prisca Lee-Pae  
on  
Luke 12:13–21; Colossians 3:1–11  
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## **What Are You Saying to Your Soul?**

In today's Gospel, a man from the crowd suddenly cries out to Jesus: "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me!"

It's not hard to sympathize with him. Maybe his brother has taken more than his share. Maybe he feels powerless. He wants what's fair. Honestly, who among us wouldn't feel the same?

But Jesus doesn't answer him the way we might expect. He responds, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

It sounds harsh. But Jesus isn't being dismissive. He's redirecting the man's question. Because what the man is asking for — fairness, justice, even financial security — is not bad in itself. But Jesus sees deeper. He sees the heart behind the request, and so he offers a warning to everyone around him: "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

Greed isn't just about money. It's about the illusion that more — more money, more control, more approval — will finally satisfy our restless hearts.

That illusion leads us straight into the parable Jesus tells: A rich man's land yields abundantly. He tears down his barns to build bigger ones, storing up everything for himself so that he can say to his soul: "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

But that very night, his life is demanded of him. And all those treasures? Left behind.

Jesus ends with this warning: "So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

This is not someone else's story. It's ours. It names the temptations we face—greed, anxiety, self-sufficiency.

And this parable is not just about wealth — it's about the way we often treat our souls.

The man speaks to his soul and says:

"Relax. Eat. Drink. Be merry."

As if his soul were an animal to be fed.

As if his soul could be comforted by grain in barns.

And I wonder — what are we saying to our own souls these days?

Are we telling ourselves: “If I just get this one promotion, or buy this house, or reach this next goal... then I’ll be at peace”?

Are we treating our souls as sacred, or as something to be managed with success and comfort?

Paul’s words in Colossians deepen the message even more: “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth... For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

And again: “Put to death... greed, which is idolatry.”

Greed is idolatry not just because it misplaces our trust — but because it misplaces our identity. It confuses who we are and whose we are. We begin to think we are what we own.

Or worse, that our security, our dignity, and our future rest in our ability to possess, produce, or protect what we have.

But our lives are not hidden in bank accounts.

Our peace does not live in retirement plans.

Our worth does not rest on how well we’re respected, or how much we achieve.

Our lives are hidden — safe — with Christ in God.

There’s a short story by Tolstoy titled *“How Much Land Does a Man Need?”*

A farmer named Pahom believes he’d be happy if only he had more land. One day, he’s told that he can have as much land as he can walk around in a day — but he must return to the starting point before sunset. Greedy for more, he walks farther and farther. And in his effort to claim it all, he collapses and dies. All the land he needed, in the end, was just enough to bury him.

That’s the bitter truth of today’s Gospel.

If we believe “just a little more” will finally satisfy us, then we are never truly free.

That’s the cycle of greed — and it’s killing our planet, fracturing our communities, and exhausting our spirits.

But there is another way.

What if we began asking better questions of ourselves — and of God?

Instead of asking, “Lord, help me win,” what if we asked, “Lord, help me love”?

Instead of praying, “Lord, give me what I deserve,” what if we prayed, “Lord, show me what I already have in You”?

Instead of treating Jesus like a judge or divider in our earthly disputes, what if we treated him like the Savior of our souls?

And what if we began saying different words to our souls?

What if we said: “Soul, you are precious. You are made in God’s image. You are loved beyond measure. You are not a possession to be secured or a problem to be fixed. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit, destined for eternal life. So live generously. Love boldly. And trust in God.”

Paul reminds us that we are being renewed according to the image of our Creator.

That means every day is a chance to be reshaped — not by the demands of this world, but by the grace of Christ. So I leave you with these questions:

What are you striving to accumulate?

What are you asking of God?

What message are you speaking to your soul?

And when the day comes — whether soon or far off — when your life is required of you, how do you want to greet that moment?

Jesus does not want us to repeat the rich man’s story.  
He’s looking for a different ending.

He’s looking at you. He’s looking at this community. He’s looking at this country.

May we live this day — and every day — not in anxious grasping, but in holy gratitude.

May we store up treasures that cannot be taken away: mercy, kindness, justice, prayer, and the love of God.

And may our lives — hidden with Christ — shine as signs of the kingdom, free from greed, rich toward God.

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