***Dearly beloved Saints in Christ Jesus,***

***Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God our Father, and from Our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.***

Jesus speaks with sharp clarity in Luke 12:21: ***“So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”***

This comes at the end of a parable, a story Jesus tells not to entertain, but to reveal the truth about the human heart, the danger of wealth, and the reality of eternity.

Jesus describes a man who, by all appearances, is successful. His land produces abundantly. He has more than he needs. He’s not stressed or panicked, he’s proud, satisfied, and secure in what he thinks he’s earned. He says to himself: ***“What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?”***

***“I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.” “And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’”***

The man is preaching to himself. He is the subject of every sentence. His treasure is not just in his barns—it’s in his heart, and it has become his god. He trusts in what he owns, not in the One who owns it all. He speaks many words, but none to God. No prayer. No thanks. No repentance. No trust.

And then, the turning point—God speaks. Only once, but that’s all it takes: ***“Fool! This night your soul is required of you.”***

All his plans end in the grave. His barns won’t save him. His soul cannot rest on full silos. His riches are worthless in eternity. And so Jesus ends with the punchline: ***“So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”***

It’s easy to hear this parable and think of other people. The wealthy elite. The hoarders. The selfish. But Jesus is talking to *us*. This is a mirror, not a window. We may not own grain bins or build barns, but our culture is built around accumulation. More money, more stuff, more security, more ease. Think about how much of our time is spent thinking about what we have—or what we want. We store up in retirement accounts, insurance policies, home upgrades, online shopping carts. And we tell ourselves things just like the man in the parable:

● “I deserve this.”

● “I’ve worked hard.”

● “I’ve earned this life.”

● “If I just had a little more, I’d be at peace.”

● “This is my time to relax, to enjoy.”

And like the rich fool, we are often our own preachers. We tell ourselves these comforting messages, but God never entered the conversation. We claim His blessings as our own achievements. We love the gift and forget the Giver.

And so, Jesus speaks to us, just as He did to the crowd in Luke 12: ***“Be on your guard against all covetousness.”*** Why?’

Because covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). It’s not just greed; it’s putting anything in the place of God. It’s worshiping creation instead of the Creator. And that is spiritual death.

But here’s the good news: Jesus doesn’t stop with warning. He came not only to expose our idolatry, but to redeem us from it. Where the rich fool builds bigger barns, Jesus lays down His life. Where the man trusted in his wealth, Jesus shows us true wealth—*not in having, but in giving.* As St. Paul writes: ***“Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich”*** (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, gave up the glory of heaven and was born in poverty, lived without possessions, and died with nothing to His name—except the sin of the world on His shoulders. On the cross, He took our idolatry, our greed, our selfishness, our foolishness—and paid for it in full. ***“God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God”*** (2 Corinthians 5:21).

He gave everything, so you would lack nothing. He was emptied, so you could be filled. He died, so you could live.

And now, the same Jesus who died and rose again comes to give you *true riches*:

* The riches of forgiveness—spoken to you in absolution: *“I forgive you all your sins.”*
* The riches of Baptism—where you were adopted as God’s child and clothed in Christ.
* The riches of Holy Communion—the very body and blood of Jesus, given and shed for you.
* The riches of His Word—a treasure more precious than gold, that makes the simple wise.

These gifts are the true treasure. They do not rot. They do not rust. They cannot be stolen. They remain with you in life and in death.

Living as the Truly Rich

So, what does it mean to be **“rich toward God”**? It means to live by faith in Christ, to treasure His Word, to trust in His promises more than our possessions.

* It means we are not defined by what we have or lack—but by what we have received in Christ.
* It means living lives of gratitude, not grasping.
* It means seeing our work and possessions as gifts to be stewarded, not gods to be worshiped.
* It means praying as Jesus taught: ***“Give us this day our daily bread”*** and meaning it.

Knowing that all we have comes from God, and that He gives generously and graciously, even when we don’t deserve it.

As Luther teaches in the Catechism: **“Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body…”** But more than that, Christ gives you the bread that lasts forever, His own flesh for the life of the world.

And so, we live not in fear, but in freedom. Not building bigger barns, but resting in bigger promises. We can be content, even in little, because we are rich in Christ.

And when the night comes—when our lives are required of us—we don’t need to fear like the rich fool. Because we are not trusting in barns. We are trusting in Christ.

And the same Jesus who gave Himself for you has stored up an inheritance for you in heaven: “No eye has seen, no ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). You don’t have to imagine it. You only have to trust the One who promised it. For the treasure that awaits you is not grain or gold, but glory.

So, hear Jesus' words again—not just as warning, but as invitation: ***“Be rich toward God.”*** Be rich in Christ, who is your righteousness. Be rich in His Word, which gives life. Be rich in faith, which receives every gift as grace.

In this world, we may be considered poor. But in Christ, we are rich—eternally rich in the only words that matter: ***“You are Mine.” “You are forgiven.” “You will live.”***

**In the name of Jesus. Amen.**