

***The wise businessman.*** (Luk 12:13-21)

\* Friends, imagine yourself as a person who resides at the shore of a beautiful lake that covered ten square miles in the hill country. Because this area is gorgeous, it comes as no surprise to everybody that among ordinary people there is a lot of wealth. As luck would have it, you made an acquaintance with a few wealthy people. You've learned that one of them inherited his father's villa; the acres of land around; his father's stocks, funds; just everything his father earned some years ago. That lucky heir lived alone in a simply built house maintained under the protection of a green wall and two ferocious dogs. You've known the man as a workaholic. Each morning you saw him driving a half mile to his office. There he worked eight hours during the five business days. The interior of his office included a wide screen monitor on the wall, computers and some other advanced electronics that nobody has touched or seen. In other words, his office may seem to you as a mini - New York Stock Exchange. All day long the man made a fortune selling and buying shares of stock. Once he hired you for 7 dollars per hour to cut the old oaks and cedars. For a few months you've sweated blood cutting and burning the wood under the sun. By chance, you've heard the news that yesterday the man you were working for lost several millions on speculation. After hearing his bad fortune, we withdraw ourselves from making comment except in the biblical context that was said by a Preacher, *Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?* (Ecc 1:2-3).

\* Thinking over the Sunday lesson from (Luk 12:13-21) and what was said by the Preacher, we've found a question of the day. Here is the question: *What is the profit of being a lucky businessman?* It seems, just to be a lucky is still not enough, but a wise person will prosper! Observing the situation around the stock market, we've learned that some people hoard their cash but with wrong purposes, meanwhile others invest their funds but mistakenly. Considering this reality as misfortune, we ask the Preacher for advice, *what should we do in order to hoard or invest with all-wise purposes?* The answer comes from the written Word and from the Spirit. It says, no matter who we are, Christians or not, we are foolish if we act as the character depicted in *The Parable of the Rich Landowner*, (Luk 12:16-21). Now we might want to hear this parable again. Ah, here is the paraphrase:

\* There was a lucky businessman in the land who harvested much more fruits than was expected; all his storehouses could not stock everything. Then, instead of making the smart investment, he decided to remove the old storehouses and to build greater. In the new ones, he wished to gather all fruits and goods for himself. It should be enough for many years. However, the real project was quite different from what he designed.

Unexpectedly the man died at night. In conclusion Jesus said the reason of that happening.

*So that is what comes to the man who gets wealth for himself, and has not wealth in the eyes of God, (v.21).*

\* Now in order to be sure that God acted justly and fairly toward that landowner, we need to ask ourselves. Can we objectively certify this man as a real owner? Certainly, the man was not a factual owner! The strong belief about God as the prime owner traces back into unknown antiquity. Some people in the Scripture, as Job for example, discerned God as the giver and as the owner of everything. The overwhelmed loss found its reason in Job's remark, *Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return, he says. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD,* that was Job's conclusion. (Job 1:21). The same assertion was made by Saint Paul in his preaching to the residents of Athens. He said, *God, who made the world and all things therein, ... gives to all life and breath and all things,* (Act 17:24-25). According to M. Luther's belief, God is the giver of everything; he gives us *clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle and all other goods,* (SC). Do we also share the belief of those three great men? Yes, we do.

\* At this moment, let's go back to the main point of this debate. As you remembered, it is about the advantage of being a lucky businessman. When thinking about the acts of the landowner from the parable, it is hard to characterize him as wise even if he was very fortunate. Now let's say, *why?* No doubt the man recognized God as the source of his fortune because, unlike contemporary generations, the ancient world was completely theistic. People believed in God or many gods as the source of their prosperity or misfortune. The landowner knew that the plentiful harvest was nothing less than God's love extended to him. Next, being of high standard, the ancient people offered a certain percent of their income (Deut 14:22) in recognition of the supreme deity and as an expression of their love to that deity. The generous donations of the countrymen served as the main source covering the religious needs of those nations. And finally, the landowner certainly knew the custom practiced among the rich. As usual, the rich citizens sponsored the social programs and gave alms to the poor. To prove this point let's hear what God says, *For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I (the Lord) command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land,* (Deu 15:11).

\* However, the two genuine principals of the wise investment, the tithes and alms, were neglected by the landowner in full, even though he knew those principals. In fact, the businessman didn't share the plentiful fruits with anyone, even though he knew that he was not a true owner but steward only! Significantly, where greediness finds a place to live, either in the stomach or in the heart, there is foolishness as well, and it probably occupies the mind.

The dialog between man and these two roommates was heard by chance because even walls have ears.

*You have plenty of goods stored up for many years, says the foolishness; relax, eat, drink, celebrate!*  
says the greediness, (v.19).

\* Friends, we'd better stay as far away from these experts as Hezekiah stood, - the wise steward in the Lord's house. Hezekiah acted according to the will of his God, not according to his flesh. He remembered God's love to him says (2Ch 30:9); he invested his money in the religious needs of his nation says (2Ch 31:3); and he prospered says (2Ch 31:21). Other example of wise investors we learned from Job, St. Paul and the reformer M. Luther. From my life experiences I've learned too. They taught me that the two genuine principals of wise investment continue to work among us, or I would not have the two Masters, for example. God in Christ Jesus found people who generously supported my education; in response, I try my best, or it would have not worked for me.

\* Turning back to the question, *What is the profit of being a lucky businessman?* is still not answered completely. Let's ask the Lord for help. Here we pray, Almighty Father, throughout all our life we've experienced your kindness as the giver, we heartedly thank you for all that we received. Dear Father, You continue to benefit us with anticipation in advance; yet, it is the great reward to be a giver as you are. O Lord, grant us a generous heart and save us from foolishness and greediness. For the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

\* Now it is clear, to be the lucky businessmen means to be rewarded with the great opportunity to benefit the needs of others. So then, if we have such an opportunity, *let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith,* (Gal 6:10).

\* Dear Friends, according to the Word of truth, we are not owners but stewards. All what we have, it's a blessing from God. He gives with anticipation for us to give, not merely money or any other goods but the genuine love that can be seen through our generous giving to the needy on our way, especially to the members of the household of faith. Also, our thanksgivings, blessings, and praises are also appreciated. Therefore, we bless the Lord in Christ Jesus from all our heart giving him our thanks and adoration for great opportunity to be his stewards, and who knows, we may be the lucky businessmen as well.

Beloved the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the God Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us.

+ Amen +

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