

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 3

The Rich Fool

Objects to have:

Six cookies  
Four pieces of candy  
Pictures of small barns, big barns, and bigger barns  
Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Hold in your hands the six cookies.) Susie opened the back door to the kitchen and let it slam. Her face was red, and it had a big frown on it. “Mother! Benny has six cookies, and he won't let me have any. Make Benny give me three cookies!”

Mother turned away from the stove where she was stirring some soup that she was making, and she quietly said, “Susie, you need to sit down in this chair.” Susie “plopped” herself down in the chair, still with a big frown on her face. Mother said, “Susie, if you had come into the kitchen quietly and asked me if you may have some cookies, I would gladly have given you some for yourself. You are wanting some cookies that belong to someone else. Wanting something that belongs to someone else is called coveting. I gave Benny six cookies because they are small. I was waiting for you to come into the house so that I could give you six cookies, also.”

Susie hung her head. She felt so ashamed of herself. In the first place, she had been very rude and unkind to Benny. Then, she had acted not at all loving toward Mother. Deep down inside she knew that Mother would want to do nice things for her, too, and not just for Benny. Susie said, “I'm sorry, Mother.”

Mother said, “You are forgiven, Susie. Now, you may go upstairs and wash your face and hands. When you come back downstairs, there will be some cookies on a plate for you, too.” Susie jumped up from her chair and ran to Mother and hugged her, before dashing upstairs to wash her face and hands, looking forward to having some of Mother's good cookies. (Put down your cookies.)

(Pick up the candy that you have.) Grandma always had candy sitting around in candy dishes in the house. Matthew and Heather were visiting Grandma. Grandma said, “Matthew, Heather, would you like to have some candy? You may go help yourself to two pieces of candy each.”

The children raced to the candy dish. Matthew got there first. He stuck his elbows out as Heather came up close to him, and pushed her out of the way. Grandma saw what happened. She said, “Matthew, come away from the candy dish. Sit down on the couch.” Matthew turned with a very surprised expression on his face. “Matthew, wanting it first and wanting what you want before anyone else has a chance to share is not pleasing to Jesus.” Matthew obediently sat on the couch. Grandma instructed him to stay there until Heather had chosen her candy. Then Grandma allowed Matthew to go choose his. (Set down your candy.)

Now, we would say that these children were acting babyish and covetous. But, do you know what? Grown-up people act that way too, sometimes. Listen to our Bible story, and see what Jesus said about that.

Telling the story:

There were many, many people in the place where Jesus was. They were probably all outside on a hillside, on a warm, sunshiny day. There were so many people that it was impossible to count them. The Bible says that it was an innumerable multitude. There were so many people that they were pushing each other and stepping on each

other and squashing each other. All those people had gone out there for one reason—and that was to see Jesus and to listen to Him. Some people came because they loved Him, and they wanted to hear what He had to say about

how they should live. They would then obey Jesus and do what He told them to do. Some of the people in that great big crowd had come because they wanted to criticize Jesus and to argue with Jesus.

One man asked a question, and Jesus answered it. Another man asked a question, and Jesus answered that question. Another man in the audience called out to Jesus, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." This man was saying, "Jesus, my brother got some money and some land from our father. I didn't get any. My brother is not giving me any of the money or the land that he got; he's not sharing with me. He's keeping it all to himself." What do you think this man's face looked like while he was saying these things to Jesus and while he was demanding that Jesus do something about it? Right. I think he had an awful scowl on his face; I think he was frowning and pouting and that he looked awful.

Jesus said to the man, "Be careful; you are in danger. You are in danger of doing a very bad thing. Look out! You are wanting something that someone else has. That's being covetous." Jesus said in a very firm voice, "Beware! Beware of wanting something that someone else has. Sir," Jesus said, "you are not having a good life just because you have a lot of things. There is much more to life than owning a lot of land or having a lot of money."

Jesus told this man and everybody in the crowd a story. The story that he told them is called a parable. A parable is a story that teaches a lesson. Jesus said, "I want to tell you about a certain rich man. This rich man was a farmer. The land that the farmer owned was good land. Every time he sowed seed in his fields, all the seeds grew, and the fields were filled with the crops that grew from the seeds."

"He had lots and lots of corn and lots and lots of wheat and lots and lots of many other crops."

Jesus continued His story: "That rich man was thrilled with all the crops that he had. That rich man decided that he could get richer still, so he said, The barns that I have now are not big enough (hold up the picture of the smallest barn), so I will build bigger barns. That way I will have more crops on hand.

"So," Jesus said, "this rich man built bigger barns." (Hold up the picture of the bigger barn.) The rich man filled those barns, and this was not enough for him. He wanted more crops in barns, but he didn't have enough space for all the crops that his good land was growing. "So," Jesus said, "the man tore down those barns and built even bigger barns." (Hold up the picture of the biggest barn.) The man grew more crops and added those to the ones he already had and filled those barns, too. Then the rich man decided that he did not have to work any more. He decided that he had enough to keep him rich all the rest of his life. He could use for himself all the crops that he had put into the barns. He could use all those crops for his own animals, too. He had wanted more and more and got what he wanted. Then he wouldn't have to work any more and could just play for the rest of his life.

Then Jesus told the crowd that the rich man was a fool. The rich man thought he could plan his own life and that he could always have what he wanted. The rich man had not one time asked for God to lead his life and for God to tell him how to live his life. The rich man decided for himself what he should do, and he decided for himself what he wanted. The rich man decided for himself that he would get exactly what he wanted, but the rich man died that very night when he decided that he had what he wanted and that he could live the rest of his life the way he wanted to live it. Then Jesus said, "Now, who will own all those things that are in all those barns?" That rich man cannot own them any more—he has died. The rich man had not trusted God. The rich man had never helped other people. The rich man thought that he could just do everything by himself and for himself and that he would work very hard to have things all for himself. How sad!

Jesus told all those people who were listening to Him how they should act. Jesus said, "The most important thing for you to do is to trust God. Your Heavenly Father wants to give you things. You think He can't give you what you need? Think about the big birds that are called ravens. Those ravens don't plow the ground and plant the seed or put crops into storehouses, but still they have enough to eat. God takes care of them. You are better than ravens. God will take care of you." Jesus asked, "Have you looked at the lilies that grow in the field? See how

beautiful they are. Not even the richest of kings have clothing as beautiful as these lilies. God made the lilies; He made them so beautiful, but God loves you much more than He loves lilies. If He can make lilies beautiful, He can see to it that you have enough to wear."

Now, Jesus does not want people to be lazy. People should work, but people first of all should trust Jesus as their Saviour. Then they should trust God to take care of them. They tell other people that Jesus loves them and that their Heavenly Father will take care of them, too.

Jesus talked about Heaven to those people. He said to them, “Think about the treasure that could be in Heaven for you. You are laying up treasure in Heaven when you tell other people about Jesus. You are laying up treasure in Heaven when you share your food with other people. You are laying up treasure in Heaven when you don't want what other people have, but when you give to other people.”

That was such a good story that Jesus told all those people! He helped them to understand something very important that should help them the rest of their lives. His story would help them to look forward to being in Heaven whenever they would die.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Luke 12:31—”But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.”