

## FOUR SIGNS OF A SENSIBLE STEWARD

TEXT: Luke:13-48

Introduction: In Luke Chapter 12, Jesus teaches us through four simple illustrations what a sensible [wise] steward is. Before we begin, let us go back and reflect on the past two messages I have shared with you why Lordship is necessary today?

We have looked at the words of Jesus and let Him tell us what this Lordship issue really is.

- 1] We have found in the last two weeks that the Lordship issue settles the position issue in my life. In other words, it settles the question of whose going to be number one in my life.
- 2] We have found also that the Lordship issue settles the permission issue of my life. In other words, who has a right to my life?
- 3] We have discovered that Lordship settles the profession issue on my life. In other words, it determines who will enter God's kingdom. He said that not every one who says Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom but those who do the will of My Father.
- 4] Finally, Lordship settles the position issue of my life. In other words, who owns the things in my life?

Jesus teaches us about Lordship and then beautifully in Luke Chapter 12 He begins to illustrate the principle of stewardship.

Stewardship is never a problem once you understand the Lordship issue. Stewardship is nothing more than I; a child of God taking and managing the things God has given me for His glory.

I will begin to manage the resources God has given me when I understand He owns them. So we have to settle who owns the things of our life. We have to understand who owns our life, our family, our possessions, our future, our goals, and our jobs.

The moment I understand Lordship and say, ‘Yes God, You’re the owner of everything.’ At that point, I will begin to manage it much more correctly and with much more responsibility.

In Luke chapter 12, so beautifully and so simply Jesus begins to teach us four different signs of what I call a sensible steward.

#### I. A Sensible Steward Will be Responsible.

A. The first thing Jesus teaches us is that a good steward will be responsible.

B. In verses 13, 14 and 15 our Lord talks about greed and a fellow comes up out of the crowd and talks about his family inheritance. But in verse 16, Jesus begins to give a parable.

Luke 12:16 And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop.

17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

18 "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." '

20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

21 "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

C. We know the story well. To begin teaching stewardship, our Lord begins to give us a picture. It's a bad picture, a bad example of stewardship about a man who was very irresponsible farmer.

In this story, Jesus says three things about this man's irresponsibility.

1. He was irresponsible to himself [12:13-21] for we find in verse 19, he thinks life consisted of just material things. He felt that he could somehow make a life of the things he had.

Rudyard Kipling, who addressed Mc Gill University in Montreal. In giving then an address concerning value of life said this: Basically, his thesis was that if a persons scale of values was based solely on material wealth, that person will have difficulty of all his or her life. And he made a statement in that commencement address that I want to give to you.

“Do not pay too much attention to fame, power and money. Someday you will meet a person who cares for none of these things and then you will know how poor you really are.

[Great statement.]

2. He was irresponsible to others.

He did not realize that God's blessings meant that he should be helping other people. Somehow he thought that God's blessings meant he should keep everything for himself. In other words, it is like God's blessed me and I'll just look at it and find out what I will do with God's blessings.

Look with me at verses 17 and 18 for a moment and just notice the selfishness of this individual.

Verse 17 – he begins reasoning to himself. What shall ‘I’ do since ‘I’ have no place to store ‘MY’ crops. And he said this is what ‘I’ will do. ‘I’ will tear down ‘MY’ barns and ‘I’ will build bigger barns. And ‘I’ will store ‘MY’ grain and ‘MY’ goods and ‘I’ will say to “MY’ soul.

Now there is a guy who does not have a worldview. Look! This is so incredible. What am I going to do?

He cannot see beyond the end of his nose. You see he is not only irresponsible to himself thinking his possessions are somehow going to meet his needs. He is irresponsible to others. He thinks the blessings God has given him are just for self. Not realizing that when God gives you a blessing beyond what it takes to adequately take care of your own family those blessings are just to be passed on.

We are to be a channel not a clog.

A river, not a reservoir.

He doesn’t realize that at all.

Could I rephrase it with the way he should have done it and said it.

[v.17] He began praying to God saying, what shall I do since I have no place to store Your crop. And this is what he said, “I will tear down God’s barns and build larger ones. And I will store up all of His grain and His goods and I will say to others.”

Do you see the difference?

When you read this story you want to ask the question. Why did he stop planting?

Jesus said in verse 16, “The ground of a certain man brought forth bountifully.”

The answer is he had enough for himself. He said why should I go on? I have enough goods for myself. I can retire. I can now take my ease.

Is that a reason to quit?

Let me ask you a serious question. We are all gifted differently. Some people are gifted to acquire wealth, make money. If you do, is it a reason to quit because you have enough for you? Realizing God has given you the gift to make it and realizing the blessings are for not only you but for countless others and could be put into God's work and multiplied to return a hundred, a thousand and sometimes a million fold.

A man in Chicago who owns Domino's Pizza wants to sell his business and go to South America to build churches for the Catholic Church. It is obvious that his business is making thousands upon millions of dollars. It would probably be good therapy for him to go and build churches. But for the moment he loses his source of productivity, he will limit God. What he should do is keep the business and hire hundreds even thousands of carpenters to go and build those churches. If he has the ability to raise money, then he ought not to give up the source and give all to the kingdom.

You see if giving is your gift, then it is just as wrong for you to quit exercising your gift as it is for someone who had the gift of evangelism. What you ought to do is cultivate your gift to its fullest and bless the kingdom and glorify God. I believe that God is looking for people who have settled the Lordship issue and have this gift. It is amazing what God can and would do through them.

3] He was irresponsible to God. He did not realize the uncertainty of life and certainty of judgment.

[vs 20-21] The certainty of accountability.

Luke 12:20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

21 "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

He kind of thought things were going to continue as they were. And God said, "you're a fool in verse 20."

There are a lot of people who are functional atheists. If you ask them, are you an atheist? They would answer no. 'No, I believe in God.' But their behavior, their lifestyle does not in any way reflect the fact that they really believe in God and Lordship.

Now it is interesting that Jesus wraps up this story in verse 21 by saying, "so is any man that lays up treasure for himself, [that is what the farmer did] and is not rich towards God.

This is an interesting phrase. "And is not rich towards God. You may ask, 'Pastor what does it mean? Let me illustrate.

A wealthy man died and went to heaven and an angel gave him a guided tour. This angel who was giving him a guided tour was showing him around and he way this beautiful mansion. And he said, 'This is beautiful whose place is this? The angel said, 'this is your gardener's place.' 'Oh! If the gardener gets this, I can hardly wait to see mine.' He was getting real excited and he went a little further and saw an even more magnificent mansion. 'Well, whose is this?' And the angel said, "Well, it's a missionaries who was

on the field for thirty years working for God and this is where he stay.’ Oh, this guy can hardly wait. He’s getting so excited. And all of a sudden they come up to an eight by eight shack and the guy says, ‘whose is this?’ The angel says, ‘This is yours now this is a shack. A little window nothing elaborate at all. There is a cloth where the door would be. And the guy says, ‘My gardener gets a mansion. The missionary gets a mansion. What happened to me?’ The angel responded, ‘Well to be honest we did the best we could with what you sent us.’ WOW!

To be rich towards God means to be pouring your f life into that which will last beyond your life. Eternal values where thieves will not rob it and steal it, where moth and rust will not come in and corrupt it.

That’s the issue. Responsibility. And Jesus says, ‘A steward is responsible. He takes the blessings I have given him. Takes care of their family and with what is left over passes it on to others. A steward understands that they are a river and not a reservoir.

## 2. Secondly, A Steward is Relaxed.

He tells us in verses 22 through 34.

Let me give you another illustration. Jesus wants to make sure we understand worry. You see, the rich farmer worried because he had so much he didn’t know what to do with it. He looks at His disciples and says, ‘For this reason do not be anxious for your life.’

Luke 12:22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.

He said worry is not a respecter of persons. The rich guy has so much he worries about what he is going to do with it, and the poor guy worries about where he is going to get it.

Basically what He is saying about worry is there are two types of people: The people who worry and the people who do not worry.

He says, 'Let Me tell you the difference. The difference is Lordship. You see here is how it works if you put God first and you put Him as owner of everything. And you not only say it with your lips, you really live it in your daily life. If you put God number one in your life, you don't have to worry because when something happens. God when He becomes the owner and the ruler of your life, He becomes responsible for your life. It's marvelous! When God is really number one in your life, you don't have to worry because when something happens. You can say, God you own everything. It is all Yours. You know I have already given it to you.'

Lordship does not mean you will not have a problem. Lordship means when you have a problem you can get on your knees and say, 'Lord, You've got a problem. It's Yours.'

You see, when you have acknowledged His Lordship, your problem becomes His problem, His crisis. It becomes a God issue. But when I say, 'It's my life. I'm going to run it. I'm going to hang on to this.' I tell you what. Every issue. Every tough problem you cannot go to God and say, 'God help me.' God will just say, 'Help yourself. It's your problem. You've never given it to me yet.'

God can only be responsible for what you give Him. I tell you. If you don't put God first in your giving, don't do to God with your finances, He doesn't want to hear about it. He doesn't want to hear from someone who robs Him.

Basically, He wants to say to you, ‘Give me everything you’ve got and I’ll take care of them. Or you can take of your own. It’s your choice. And Jesus says, ‘Let Me show you what I mean. Let Me show you that a good steward is relaxed. And He tells us three or four things.

A. Worry is destructive.

Look at verse 22. He talks about being anxious.

Luke 12:22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.

That word for anxious in the Greek means ‘to be torn apart.’ He says in verse 22 “Do not be torn apart.”

And in verse 29 when He says, “do not keep worrying” it really means, “to be held in suspense.”

Don’t hold your life in suspense wondering what’s going to happen to you in the future.

You see worry comes from the English word, or Anglo-Saxon word that literally means, “To strangle.”

Worry is destructive. It will literally strangle the life out of you or me.

Corrie Ten Boom gives one of the greatest quotes on worry you will ever hear. She says, ‘Worry will not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, it empties today of its strength.’

Isn’t that true! Worry is destructive. It will tear you apart.

Worry is not only destructive.

B. Worry is deceptive. It not only destroys us it deceives us.

In fact it deceives us in three areas:

1. It gives us a false view of life. [v.23]

Luke 12:23 Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.

In other words, worry convinces us that life is made up of what we eat and what we wear. And Jesus said that that is not true at all.

In fact, He said we get so concerned about our provisions that we forget about our purpose of life. And He said, 'Worry does that to us.' It gives us a false view of life. 2. It gives us a false view of God. [vs. 24,27,28]

When we begin to worry, we lose focus. What begins to happen is worrying is focusing on the wrong thing. When we begin to worry we begin to focus on the temporal things instead of the eternal. And it gives us a false view of God. Jesus does a beautiful job in vs. 24,27, and 28 arguing from what can be called the lesser to the greater.

Look what He says in these verses.

Luke 12:24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!

Luke 12:27 "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

Luke 12:28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

In other words, He says, 'Worry will give you a false view of God until you think He cannot take care of your needs.

He takes care of the lilies. He takes care of the grass. He takes care of the ravens but He cannot take care of me. How foolish!

2. It gives us a false view of it self. [vs.24-26]

Worry distorts itself. Many people think if they worry there is something valuable about it.

Have you ever met one of those people who think there is value in worry? It just seems the more they worry, the better it helps.

The Lord says, ‘You even have a false view of worry itself.

Let me show you what I mean.

Luke 12:25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

In other words, which of you being torn apart, strangled can add a cubit to his life span?

Luke 12:26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

Since you cannot do this very little thing, why are you worrying about other matters?

He is asking, ‘Which of you have worried about something and the worrying gave you the answer? It never happens. Worry is destructive. It is deceptive.

C. Thirdly, worry is distractive. [vs30-34]

It distracts us. It causes us to seek the wrong things.

Luke 12:30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.

31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

We know verse 31, “Seek first His kingdom.” We know that verse. And we know verse 34, “For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” These are kind of bookends for this passage. And so many forget verse 32.

Luke 12:32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

What a great passage. In other words, He asks, ‘What are you worrying about? I have chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

Some people think He has chose ‘sadly’ to give them the kingdom.

Some people don’t think He wants to give it to us at all. He says when you become a steward. I can give you the kingdom because you know whose it is.

Isn’t it true you can give privileges to some people because they know where the privileges come from and others you cannot give them because they will become possessive of them?

Here in this passage in your Bible underline in verse 32- “For it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

And draw a line down to verse 34 – “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also” and put beside it this quote. “God’s pleasures and our treasures must go together!”

### 3.A Sensible Steward Will Be Ready.

In verse 35 through 40, Jesus shifts the emphasis from being worried about the present to being watchful about the future.

When we live in the future tense it is difficult to be wrapped up in the present tense. Basically, what He is saying in this passage is that a sensible steward will understand eternal things and will not only be ready for Christ’s return, they will live for things of eternal value.

Look at what He says in verses 35-40  
 Luke 12:35 "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning,

Notice these verses, they speak of readiness.

Luke 12:36 like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.

37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.

38 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.

39 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

He is saying, be ready for the coming of Jesus Christ, but also keep your focus on eternal issues and in the process of life, seize the moment.

Do you know anyone who does what can be called 'Postponed Living?' Have you heard people say, someday? Somewhere? When I get there? When I retire? Postponed Living!

Do you know what he said? You may not know his name. He was a Quaker. He was born in France. His name is Steven Greelet and he died in the middle 1880's in New Jersey.

"For I will pass through this world but once. Any good I can do or any kindness I can show any human being, let me do it now and not defer it for I shall not pass this way again."

Folks. Regardless of what Shirley McLaine says about re-incarnation, we only get one shot. If I am going to do anything I

must do it now. I had better be ready to do it now because I will pass this way but once.

You and I have watched people postpone and hoard things and hold on to things and say, ‘Someday I’ll let this go. Someday I’ll do so and so. Only to realize like the fool and the farmer that Jesus says, “that stuff you’ve got in the barn you don’t get to keep it. It’s over.”

D.L. Moody said, ‘One day he was walking down the street and someone gave him five dollars. And he said, ‘Mr. Moody, you are such a blessing to me and I want you to have this.’ He said he had not walked a block when he found someone who had a need and reached in and passed that five dollars on to him. I felt so good. He said, ‘I had not walked another block when someone came up to me and gave him another five dollars.’ He said, ‘I thanked him and put that five dollars in my pocket and did not pass it on.’ And he said, I never had anyone else come up to me like that again.’

Don’t you get tired on walking through life with a tight fist, Suspicious eye, arms crossed and a calendar that says 2012 –2015 you get to do something with what you have.

Quote: “When you store, you get no more. The blessing stops the moment you begin to store, to hoard the blessings of God and not pass them on to others.”

4. In fact a sensible steward will be rewarded. [12:41-48]  
He will be rewarded with what he has done with the Master’s possessions.

Now start with me at verse 41. It amuses me because Peter is in it. Peter is always a crack-up. Get the picture.

Jesus has been talking about possessions and stewardship, Lordship and what you do with what you have. He’s been doing a pretty heavy message. Okay! Now look at verse 41.

Luke 12:41 Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

Peter is saying, 'Lord I don't mind You preaching this message to us but You need to include everyone else too. As long as we can all be miserable together it will be alright.'

Every time the Lord said something personal and hot and heavy, Peter is always turning around to find out if Jesus meant it for the other guy too.

It was a great message pastor. They really needed it. A story about the pastor who had a man who needed to hear a message about attitude. The pastor would pour his heart out and the man would respond at how much everyone else needed that message. Then one Sunday there was a storm and he was the only one who showed up and the pastor said, 'Hallelujah, now I've got him!' So he preached as hard and as fervently as he could. The man came up to him and said, 'Pastor, that was a great message. If only they had been here to hear it. They sure needed it.'

Don't be like Peter. Realize the message is for you. This is for Andrew Ball. This is right out of the Word.

Luke 12:42 The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?"

43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns.

44 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

In other words, once I find a man or woman that lets Me be the owner of everything and knows how to take care of what I have given them. Then I will give them everything I have. I can hardly wait to pour My blessings out on someone who does really

let Me be the owner and is a good manager and is responsible for what I have given. That's what He says.

Challenge: Be a Sensible Steward.

This is a summary of what Jesus said in Luke Twelve.

1. Weigh your responsibilities in light of your blessings. [vs.13-21]
2. Wait on God to meet your needs because you have put Him first. [vs.22-34]
3. Watch for the Lord's return because your values are based on eternity. [vs.35-40]
4. Work until the Lord returns because you are faithful to His commission.

That is what Jesus said in Luke twelve is a sensible [wise] steward.

“Only one life, it will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last.”

John Maxwell has a plaque on his wall in his office that to him sums up the whole issue of life. Let me read it to you.

“I counted dollars while God counted crosses, and I counted gains while He counted losses. I counted my worth of things gained in store and He sized me up for the scars I bore. I counted honors and sought degrees, and He counted the hours I spent on my knees. I never knew until one day by the grave how vain are the things in life we try to save. That is what Lordship is all about.”

Settle the Lordship issue this morning!!!