In our Gospel reading for today we meet Jesus amidst a large crowd of people, at the beginning of the chapter we are told that a crowd of many thousands had appeared and the place was so crowded people were trampling each other. Jesus has developed a following so vast it is like a sea of people wherever he goes. Ever since he showed up on the scene in chapter four of Lukes Gospel and arrived in Nazareth and went into the synagogue and went a grabbed a scroll from the prophet Isaiah and read that

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
    because he has anointed me
        to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
    and recovery of sight to the blind,
        to let the oppressed go free,
**19**to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

He has been living out that mission. It often surprises Christians when they discover just how much the Bible talks about money. In fact, there are more than 2300 verses on money, wealth and possessions. Jesus spoke about money roughly 15% of his preaching and 11 out of 39 parables. It was his most talked about topic. It’s more than Jesus talked about love, and more than He talked about heaven and hell combined.

For instance, the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl compare the kingdom of heaven to riches. And the parable of the talents tells the story of a master who entrusts his servants with money to make a point about being productive. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, He draws attention to a great eternal reversal where those who are most comfortable on earth find themselves bringing up the rear. And then today in our Gospel the man who stores up his treasures on earth.

So why does Jesus seem to care so much about our finances, put simply it is because he wants to set us free from one of the most captivating things in this world, money, wealth, and possessions. To spell it out,

I believe that one of the reasons for this is that we humans need a lot of direction and clarity on what to do with all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. Everywhere we look we are able to see the blessings of God.

1. When we look at the clothes on our backs, that’s Gods blessings
2. The air conditioner in the sanctuary, that’s Gods blessings for some
3. A roof over our heads, that’s Gods blessings
4. Money from a job or retirement, that’s Gods blessings
5. The air that we breathe, that’s Gods blessings
6. The time ticking by, that’s Gods blessings
7. The sun providing light, that’s Gods blessings

There is no shortage of blessings that God has given us and so Jesus knows that with so much at our disposal we need to be careful. We need to be careful about how we use Gods blessings because we can easily forget that the source of all this is God, not ourselves, not our jobs. The more and more we are successful the greater than chances of us succumbing to the belief that God is not necessary for me to succeed and thrive in this world. With success comes the struggle with our own ego that can often to easily get inflated and cause us to lose perspective about our necessity for God.

We see this played out with the man who is constantly talking about how he himself is going to do everything, what should I do, I will do this, I will pull down the barns, I will store my grains, I will say to my soul, I, I, I. his ego took over.

The second reason that I believe God talks to us so much about finances and blessings is because we can easily fall into the trap of falling in love with possessions and money. This has been especially true throughout the history of the world. The people that seemed to be of most importance in the society were mostly those with titles and those with titles had the most wealth. They had the biggest homes, a lot of the food, people that they were in charge of, the fanciest linens, clothing, and transportation.

The third reason that I believe Jesus talks so much about money is because how we use our money can speak to the condition of our hearts. When our hearts are right and saturated with Christ, the words we speak will be more Christlike, our actions will be more Christlike, the areas in which we spend our time will be more Christlike, and the places we spend our money will be more Christlike.

What I mean by this is not that all our money will go to the church or every organization we can find. What I mean is that we will give to the church, we will give to organizations, we will invest in experiences with our families and friends, we will spend money on things that last long, and be rich toward God.

I say saturated with Christ because it is not good enough to just come to church on Sunday, that is the minimal requirement, we are saturated with Christ when we read the scriptures, we are saturated with Christ when we meet with other Christians and talk about God. We are saturated with Christ when we are in prayer. We are saturated with Christ when he is on our minds throughout the day and on our minds when we make decisions. Being saturated with Christ is incorporating Him into our whole lives.

One of the troubling characteristics of fallen humanity is our tendency to compartmentalize what we believe from what we do. Christ addresses this divorce between what we profess and what we do when He says, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Matthew 15:8).

At the heart of Christianity lies the premise that God created everything and it ultimately belongs to God. Human beings exist as stewards (or managers) of God's resources—this includes our money.

For many of us, the struggle to align ourselves with God's will is played out in the realm of our finances. It's where the real battle happens for so many. As Martin Luther said, "There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, the conversion of the mind, and the conversion of the purse."

Jesus talks about money because when we truly understand our roles as stewards, money is a tool we can invest into growing His kingdom.

Here’s the key concluding verse that makes the point most clearly (verse 21): “So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” The phrase “rich toward God” is unusual. What does it mean to be “rich toward God”? The meaning is plain from the contrast: it is the opposite of laying up earthly treasure for yourself. Being rich toward God is the opposite of treating the self as though it were made for things and not for God. Being rich toward God is the opposite of acting as if life consists in the abundance of possessions not in the abundance of knowing God.

Being rich toward God, therefore, is the heart being drawn toward God as our riches. “Rich toward God” means moving toward God as our riches. “Rich toward God” means counting God greater riches than anything on the earth. “Rich toward God” means using earthly riches to show how much you value God. This is what the prosperous farmer failed to do. And the result was that he was a fool and lost his soul. This is the hazard or warning God gives us about money. It lures us out of love for God. It lures us away from treasuring God.

The issue isn’t that the man’s fields prospered. The issue is that God ceased to be his supreme treasure. If God had been his treasure what would he have done differently? Instead of saying, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry,” he would have said something like this: How can I use this extra grain to show the God is my ultimate treasure and not the safety that the grain provided. How could I use this grain to spread the love of god with those in the community? Lord give me a vision to use all that you have given me to impact as many lives as possible for the furthering of your kingdom.

God has blessed us with so much. Let us ask the questions what does my bank statement say about the things I value? How can we use what we have to further the Gospel. How can I be more rich toward God? And lets make sure that we are treasuring God above all else for as Paul proclaims in Philippians 3:8 I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.