Sermon Title: The Good Life

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock

Bible Passage: Luke 12:13-21 (NRSV)

Date: January 8, 2023

**Scripture:**

***13****Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.”****14****But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?”****15****And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”****16****Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly.****17****And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’****18****Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.****19****And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’****20****But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’****21****So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”*

**Sermon Notes:**

How do you know The Good Life when you see it? Some think the ultimate aim of life is to seek pleasure and avoid pain. Some think The Good Life is this: how much I *have* determines how happy I *am*.

There is no denying we do have legitimate needs. When we do not have access to what we need it can result in anxiety, anger and/or bigotry. However, if we have the right perspective, the people who block or appear to block access to what we need suffer from a deeper kind of trouble.

Jesus tells the parable of a man who was “filthy rich” and “pitifully poor” at the same time. He was a fool because he was confused about life in three ways. The parable cautions us…

**Sermon Points:**

1. Don’t be confused about the SUBSTANCE of life. THINGS are not the SUBSTANCE of life. THINGS do not satisfy. The gospel of more THINGS destroys life. We need to know what the SUBSTANCE of life is and is not. God is the SUBSTANCE of Life.
2. Don’t be confused about the SUBJECT of life. Life is not about “I” and “mine.” Jesus called the man in the story a fool because the man saw life only in terms of himself and his own possessions. The man saw himself as the SUBJECT of life. God –*I AM THAT I AM*- is the subject of life. Don’t sell your soul to be who you are. (Matthew 16:26)
3. Don’t be confused about the SOURCE of life. Just because we went to work and got a paycheck does not mean we are the SOURCE of what we have. We are cautioned against the foolishness of concluding that what we have is because of our strength because everything we have comes from God. And, because he was a fool, the life of the man in the parable was demanded by God that very night. (God will get our attention, one way or another.) We are reminded that God is the SOURCE of our life.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What is your definition of a “fool?” Have you been a “fool” recently?
2. Do you ever get confused about your life? Can you describe that experience?
3. How would you describe the SUBSTANCE of your life?
4. Who or what was the SUBJECT of your most recent prayers? Why?
5. Since God is the SOURCE of your life, what does it mean to you that God can take your life tonight?