

**WORLD IMPACT SUNDAY ALWAYS REVEALS THE IDOLS IN MY HEART** - Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 - 10 a.m.

Pastor Don Horban - Cedarview Community Church, Nemasket

**IPAD TEXT - Romans 10:15 - “And how are they to preach unless they are sent....?”**

A question is better than a statement in the way it draws out a mental response in the one to whom the question is posed. You can't tell if the listener is paying attention to your **statement**. But you can tell from the response - or lack of it - if the listener is paying attention to your **question**. Paul doesn't want his readers left unengaged. So he doesn't just tell us, **“The lost can't be reached without a preacher.”** He doesn't **state**. He **asks**. **“Answer the question,” Paul insists.**

We have even more reason to think through Paul's question. Consider the following fact. At present population growth rates, some estimate the world population will be ten billion people by the year 2030.

As large as that number is, that's not the most amazing part of that statistic. The most amazing fact is this - **one half of all the people who have ever lived - right from Adam and Eve until 2030 - will be alive on the planet in that single year.**

That means - probably during our life-time - the number of people who will need to hear the gospel is not going to get **smaller**. It's going to get **bigger** - a **lot** bigger. Many of those fourteen billion people are going to be born among nations already closed and hostile to the gospel.

And yet, here's the most wonderful news anyone can hear from a pulpit today. ***Christians who are alive in the year 2030 will have the chance to reach one half of the people who have ever lived on this planet with God's gospel of truth and redemption. No one has ever had that chance before - ever!***

Now here's what all this means for the gospel mission of the church. We are nowhere **near** done. We are just getting rolling. There has never been a time when it was more sinful to relax. We are just sprinting out of the gate. We will need a lot more missionaries - a lot more preachers - a lot more proclaimers of the truth of Jesus Christ.

Paul refuses to leave us with the impression those unreached people are not all going to just **come to Jesus on their own**. Paul says they will have to be **reached**. Missionaries will have to be **sent**. ***And God requires the same sacrifice on the part of the senders as He requires on the part of the goers.*** It is not the job of just **some** Christians to reach the lost. It is the assignment given to **all** Christians.

Let that sentence **land**. If we use only our **left over resources** to send missionaries, the unreached people are going to die in their sins and be eternally lost. **How much that bothers you is the real test of Christian authenticity**. That's the test of real Christian compassion. That's what proves whether or not the love of God has touched my heart.

And now I want to quickly show you where Jesus makes the same point even more vividly. Jesus told a parable to a crowd of people who were listening to Him teach, only to be interrupted by two people fighting over the dividing of an inheritance. Jesus was teaching and they were arguing about money (**Luke 12:13**). And Jesus sees something bigger going on. He seizes the moment with a word for the whole crowd and a word for us:

**IPAD TEXT - Luke 12:16–21 - “And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, [17] and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ [18] And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear 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, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ [21] So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and *is not rich toward God.*”**

We can't study this whole parable right now, but common sense tells us it is not a bad thing to be a productive farmer. It's not a bad thing when your land produces plentifully. It's not a bad thing when your business prospers. It's not a bad thing when you get a promotion with a pay raise. It's not a bad thing when your investments increase in value. That's not the evil in this parable.

Why is this rich farmer called a fool? That's the question of the parable because he *is* called a “*fool*” - **Luke 12:20: “God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you.’” - IPAD TEXT**

So he's losing his soul. But the *reason* God called him a fool isn't in verse 20. It's in **verse 19 - "And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; *relax, eat, drink, be merry.*" - IPAD TEXT**

Here's the way I would put it. By the way he used the increase of his riches, he gave no indication of being what Jesus called "**rich toward God**"(21). He kept building bigger barns. And that might be okay if you're going to store up grain to use for something that makes God look like He's your treasure. You could have some big kingdom project in mind. Bigger barns are neither here nor there. It's what this rich fool said that matters.

**Verse 19 - "I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.'" What are you going to do now? And he blew it: *relax, eat, drink, fun.* The use he plans to make of his wealth says only one thing: "***My treasure - my real treasure - is relaxing, eating, drinking, and pleasure. That's my treasure. Those are my heart's desires. Those are my true riches. That's my life. And the riches in my barns make it possible. Those riches are making it possible to get what I really, really value - relaxation, food, fun, pleasure, and leisure.*"****

That's why I gave this little teaching the title - "***World Impact Sunday Always Reveals the Idols of my Heart***"

And then Jesus gives this key concluding verse and makes the point clear. **Luke 12:21 - "So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is *not rich toward God.*" - IPAD TEXT**

**"....*Rich toward God.*"** This is the only place in the Bible it occurs. What does it mean? I think the meaning is pretty plain from the contrast between the ***first half*** and ***last half*** of **verse 21**. Being "***rich toward God***" is the ***opposite of laying up earthly treasures for yourself.*** Being ***rich toward God*** is the ***opposite of treating yourself as though you 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 your possessions.**

Or to strike things home on this World Impact Sunday, ***being rich toward God means using earthly riches to show how much you value God.*** That's where this rich man failed. The result was that he was a fool who lost his soul. And the reason Jesus turns his rebuke of this rich man to the whole crowd listening to Him is everyone will lose his soul if not rich toward God.

If the lost are **unreached**, it's not because God doesn't love them. And it's not because God doesn't have a plan - a way to reach them. He does. That's why God has **saved** you and that's why God has **prospered** you: **Psalm 67:7** - **“God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!”** Notice the link between the blessing of God on His people and the ends of the earth fearing Him. That's why God saved me and that's why God blesses me.

Can we honestly believe - given the time in which we live and the passion of God to reach the lost - can we honestly believe God blesses us materially so we can consume more of our income on ourselves? Does that fit with what I see God doing sending His Son into this world for my sin. God establishes the **pattern** for reaching the world - the one who was **rich** yet for our sake **became poor**.