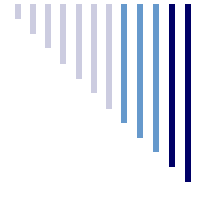


He called them “whitewashed tombs”—beautiful on the outside but rotten and decaying on the inside.

We need to constantly remind ourselves to put Christ first (not Country first no matter how good that political slogan seems). Christ must be for us “all and in all.”

None of us will ever do this perfectly. That’s a fact! So what we need to do is to seriously and diligently practice regular worship, regular prayer, regular reading of the Scripture, regular reception of the sacraments. The key word here is “regular.” If we do this then over time the result will be that we will put Christ first more often in our life—that we will see the foolishness of our world and the wisdom of God.

Conclusion: The man in our text put the world and its wisdom first in his life. Money and material things were most important to him. But at the end of his life none of these things meant anything. They were all useless—a fool’s treasure. The question we need to ask ourselves this morning is “Am I a fool too?” or “Is my treasure in heaven?” “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” *Amen!*



Priorities

“We need to constantly remind ourselves to put Christ first. Christ must be for us ‘all and in all.’ ”

Homily given at All Saints Orthodox Church
on the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost, 2008,
by Fr. Nicholas Sorensen

The Lord spoke this parable: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And 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. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." As He said this, Jesus called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 7:11-16)

Our Gospel reading looks at the difference between a wise man and a fool—between one who puts Christ first and one “who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” It is a question of priorities.

I. The Way We Live Exposes Our Foolish Priorities.

- *What is important to you and me? For what do we live?*

If we are being honest we may answer as follows: family, children, grandchildren, country, economic security, knowledge

- *What occupies most of our spare time thinking?*

If we are being honest we might answer as follows: vacations, recreation, hobbies, motorcycling, fishing, hunting, shopping, food, sex,

- *When we are in trouble to whom or to what do we first turn for a solution?*

If we are being honest we might answer as follows: money (more of it), a secure job, politics, modern or alternative medicine, pharmaceuticals, more education.

The answer to these questions will tell us a lot about our priorities, our values, and our treasures. The fact is most of these things or persons are not evil in themselves, but when we put our trust and faith in them

and make them our first and most important priorities in life, then we are laying up treasure for ourselves and Jesus would call us . . . **fools.**

II. The Way Christ Taught Us Is To Live with Wisdom.

So what is it that our Lord would teach us here?

He tells us to lay up treasure in heaven—“to be rich toward God.” Instead of being fools and living foolishly we should rather embrace wisdom as the Scripture tells us:

Wisdom stretches out from the one end of the earth to the other, and she governs all things well. I loved her and sought her from my youth and desired to take her as a bride for myself; and I became a lover of her beauty. (Wisdom of Solomon 8:1-2)

Like Solomon the great king of Israel we should choose not riches, or victory over our enemies, or power, or long life but rather wisdom to judge between good and evil. (3Kingdoms 3:4-13). We need to see and understand that it is better to be a poor man who is rich toward God than a rich man who is a fool.

We need to recognize that the most important truth in our life is Jesus Christ and His love for us, His salvation, His mercy, His forgiveness, His healing. He is in fact the Wisdom of God Himself. The Wisdom we should seek above all else. We need to live as St. Paul who said “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

And that doesn’t mean that we are to be as someone has said “So heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good.” Nor does it mean that we only outwardly (and not inwardly) put on a demeanor of piety and righteousness and speak using religious and pious words as Pharisees and legalists of all times have done. Jesus had stern and revealing words about these people.