

The storyteller enjoyed joining the wisdom of the Teacher at times, combining information and parts of stories into something new that offered a different perspective.

I remember when Jesus said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.¹”

The Teacher then told a parable that taught a lesson, but the storyteller presented his own contrasting variations². He told this story first:

“The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest³. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’

“Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’

“The rich man regularly dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus⁴, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. But the rich man only ignored him.”

“But God said to the rich man, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself, since there is no one besides yourself that you care for?’”

“So the rich man died and was buried. “The time came when the beggar also died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. In Hades, where the rich man was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.’”

“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

Then the storyteller told a contrasting parable⁵: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops so that they can be distributed to the needy.’”

“Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for the community. I will be comforted knowing that this will ease the pain of the less fortunate.”’ He thought with great anticipation of how he would care for those who lived in the village.

“The rich man supplied clothes to the poor and checked on them every day. When he discovered a beggar named Lazarus at his gate, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table, he took him to an inn and paid for his care⁶. He established the means for stewardship of the resources in his possible absence, and dictated that he would keep only enough to ensure that he was not a burden to the people.”

“But God said to him, ‘You good and faithful servant⁷! I will bless you with the abundant life⁸ because you have prepared to help your neighbors even after you have been received by Father Abraham.’”

“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things not just for themselves but is rich toward God.”

I could see how the Teacher might have added in conclusion, “Which of these men went to their rest in favor with the Father?”⁹”

1. Luke 12:15.
2. This idea was inspired by Nick Hibdon during a Sunday School class.
3. The Parable of the Rich Fool, Luke 12:13-21.
4. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31.
5. We might call this “The Parable of the Rich Patron”.
6. Think of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25ff
7. Matthew 25:21, 23
9. Consider the parallel or contrast of these two stories to Matthew 25:14-28. Also the evaluation of the two men from the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, Luke 18:9ff.
8. John 10:10b.