

# The folly of denying God His place

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening, it is a pleasure to be here with you all on this year's annual rally. And I suppose on one hand it is perhaps a reflection of the hardness of Argyle, but the particular part where Mr. Roberts missioned in 1951, today remains as hard as ever.

And in fact, today there is no church in that particular area. And with that in mind, may I ask you and urge you to continue not only to uphold the work of the gospel in Inverness, but uphold the cause of Christ to the ends of the earth.

Because it is the world that needs Christ. And that world includes Argyle, as well as it includes your own town here in Inverness.

I want us to turn this evening for a short time, and I know it's getting late on in the program, and one girl said to me, you'll excuse me if you find my head down, but I haven't slept for a long time, and I hope this next half hour or so will not encourage her to sleep either, nor you.

And I trust that as we look at God's word together, we may know his blessing. But I'd like us to turn to the verses that we read, and to centre our thoughts around this parable, looking perhaps in particular at verses 16 to the end, taking for our text, verse 20, where we read, God said to him, You fool, this night your soul will be required of you.

[ 1 : 59 ] Then whose will those things be which you have provided? Now I'm sure that many people here this evening who are Christians, I'm sure there are many police officers here this evening who would vouch for the same fact, or to the same fact, that on many occasions, as a Christian, one has been viewed as a fool.

Perhaps you can remember the first shift you went to, maybe 10, maybe 15, maybe 20 men, and you were the only Christian, and you had to bear testimony to the fact that you were a follower of Christ.

You can remember perhaps the night you spoke to the first one, maybe on night shift, and for the rest of the night shift it was a long, long time, because you sensed his attitude to you, and one that viewed you as an absolute idiot.

I'm sure there are many of you who have equally encountered that same sentiment, that because you live differently, because your values are slightly different, you are fools.

perhaps you are in business, perhaps you are in business, and you have many colleagues, many associates, who are of the same opinion. there may be ministers here this evening, and on many times, either in your own congregation, or in other congregations, where you have stood up to preach the old, old story of the cross, you have sensed the indifference, you have sensed the hostility, and you have even been told to your face that what you speak of is absolute nonsense.

[ 4 : 19 ] You are a fool for believing it. You are an utter fool for preaching it. But the great legacy of the Christian is that, in every generation, the world has viewed it as foolishness.

But I want us this evening, to remember, and to remind ourselves, of something very, very important. And I want to remind those here this evening, who perhaps aren't Christians, that it's the Christian, who's the wise one, not the fool.

Now I'm not saying to you this evening, that the Christian life is one bed of roses, with no problems, no difficulties, no trials, no troubles.

I would be telling a lie. And I would be denying the reality of the Christian faith, if I were to say it was. Because all who love Christ this evening, will vouch for the fact, that it is something absolutely marvelous to be a Christian.

But it is also something very difficult. Because it's a trial. It's a warfare. And there is enemy, there is the enemy, at every quarter, at every corner, in every day.

[ 5 : 41 ] Sometimes very obvious, sometimes very subtle. But the Christian is confronted, daily almost, with the reality, that he is in the midst of a warfare, because he is on the side, of the King of Kings.

Because he has moved camps, from that of darkness, to that of light. Because he has turned, from following the Prince of this world, to giving obedience, and honor and glory and worship, and to the God of gods, and to the God who is no equal, and to the God who is much less.

And the Christian, therefore, this evening, is the winner, even though, confronted with all these difficulties. We are reminded by John, that the Christian, is an overcomer.

He is on the winning side. He is on the winning side, because of what Christ has done, in his heart, and in his life. He is conqueror, winner, overcomer, because of this new, dynamic relationship, that he has, with Jesus Christ.

He is winner also, because of the glorious prospects, that he has, on account of that relationship, on account of that, promise and commitment, by Christ to him.

[ 7 : 04 ] That yea, though he has departed, he is coming again, to take the believer, to where he is. To glory itself. To everlasting life.

To an endless, relationship and experience, with him, in glory. And when I say that, I say it in order to, reiterate the fact, that if you're a non-Christian, in this hall this evening, the non-Christians, of the world this evening, they are the ones, that are the fools.

And I want us to turn, for a short time, to this parable this evening, to find out, exactly why, such people are fools.

And I want us to see, that it's not, my opinion, not is it the opinion, not is it the opinion, of the church, not is it the opinion, of the minister, it is the opinion of God, that the non-Christian, the unbeliever, the indifferent one, to his love, and to his grace, and to his invitation, is the fool.

And it's highlighted, this assessment, and this statement, it's highlighted for us, in this particular parable, here, concerning the rich farmer, Jesus was interrupted, by a man, who obviously had been untouched, by all this serious matter, that Jesus had been speaking of, from chapter 10, to chapter 12.

[ 8 : 40 ] And he interrupts him, with this very, earthy and materialistic, kind of question. And Jesus uses it, to show, the foolishness, of man's mind, and man's heart.

To lay up his, eternal security, on the things, on the things of this world. On the things, that matter little. In the abundance, of the things he possesses, as he says, in verse 15.

Now here, you notice first of all, that the assessment, that is made, is not on account, of the fact, that man, this particular man, or any man, is successful.

That is not why a man, is classed a fool. Because God, nowhere condemns a man, for being successful. Nowhere does God, condemn a man, for being wealthy.

Because throughout, the scriptures, there are many men, who were not only successful, but very wealthy. And therefore, that's not the reason, that man is a fool.

[ 9 : 47 ] And it's not, also the fact, he isn't a fool, because, of the great gain, that he's made.

Because, throughout this parable, the implications are, that it's God, that made him so prosperous, in the first place, so successful.

So why is it, that we say, men are losers? Men, who store up, the weight, or who place, all their confidence, in the abundance, of the things they possess.

Why is it, such men, are deemed foolish, by the great God, who made them? By the God, that they must all, stand before. By the God, that will ultimately, separate those, who love him, from those, who hate him.

And I want you to note, four or five things. I want you to notice, first of all, that this man, is deemed a fool, because he lived, first of all, with no place, in his life, for God.

He had no place, no, iota, in his experience, for the living God. No place, in his thoughts, first of all.

[ 11 : 01 ] Because, his thoughts, were taken up, solely with himself. His thoughts, were concerning, all that he had, all that he was to do, all, that he could plan, to do.

This man, in all practical terms, was an atheist. He had no mind, for God. God never came, into his reasoning, at all. And no matter, how his heart, at times, must have told him, on account of the fact, that he knew, that he was a man, that must face God.

And he knew, that he was a man, that was accountable. And his conscience, forever, rebuked him. He still, blanketed from his mind, the reality of God.

God. And no matter, how often, he, strolled in his farm, across his fields, surveying all he possessed. Looking up, into the heavens, and reading the skies, as to what day, it would be tomorrow.

Looking into the glory, of the heavens, as they declare, the glory of God, and the God, who made them. Did he give place, in his experience, for God?

[12:14] God. But you notice also, he lived with no place, for God, in his thankfulness either. He's a very prosperous, he's a very successful farmer.

And we must always remember, as we look at this parable, that the caricature, that is made, fits any man, who lives like this man. And perhaps this man, is you this evening.

And not only, did this man live, with no place, in his mind, or in his reasoning, for God. Perhaps he's like you, this evening. He's living, with no thankfulness, to God either.

He had so much. In fact, his barns were so big, that they couldn't hold, all that he had accumulated. And so he's planning, the bigger barns.

And yet bigger ones, in order to store more. But for one moment, does he stop, to give God thanks? For one moment, does he stop, to give God thanks, for the sunshine, that brought the seed forth?

[13:19] Does he give God thanks, for the abilities, that he gave him? That is, these innate abilities, to be the kind of person, that made him so successful? Did he thank God, for all, that he possessed, to be the kind, of successful man, that he was?

Because, we find in this parable, that in no place, is given at all, to God, and to thanksgiving, to God. Nowhere is he lifting up his voice, and saying, blessed be Jehovah, for all his benefits.

What shall I render, unto him? There is no thought like that. But you notice also, just as he lived, with no thought for God, just as he lived, with no thankfulness.

So he also, lived with no time for God. There was time, for the speculation, as to how he may better, invest his income.

There was time, for strategy, as to how to produce more, how to accumulate, a more storage space, and more grain. How to better distribute it, in order to, bring in more income.

[14:33] There was time, for eating. There was time, for drinking. There was time, for merriment. There was time, for self. But there was no time, no one moment, in his experience, for the living God.

Now I'm asking you, this evening, does this fit, your experience? If you're a non-Christian, if you've never, come to the Lord, Jesus Christ, if you've never, humbled yourself, before him, if you've never, sought his forgiveness, if you've never, experienced a peace, that passes, all understanding, is this your kind, of experience, this evening?

That no matter, how much your mind, tells you, God is, you deny it. And no matter, how much God, has given you, because he shines, on the unjust, and the just, with his favor, in providence.

That no matter, how much he's given you, no matter, how much prosperity, he's given you, no matter, how much stability, in your home, he's given you, no matter, how much love, in your marriage, he's given you, no matter, how much friendship, in the community, he's given you, you have never, lifted up your heart, and said to God, thank you.

You have never, said to God, thank you, for the breath, I'm breathing today. You've never, said thank you, to God, for the home, you live in, for the family, you possess, for the job, you hold down, for the income, that keeps you secure.

[16:08] Have you ever, given time to him? You have time, for all your plans, like the farmer. You have time, for all your speculation. You have times, for dreaming, great dreams, for the future.

But how much time, have you given to Christ, in the last week? How much time, have you given to the Savior, in the life, that you've lived?

Whether you be 80, 70, or 17, have you given time? But I want you, to notice also, that this man, was a fool, not only because, he lived without God, but because, he lived, a pretend, existence.

And the pretend, existence, that he lived, is reflected, in several ways. He lived, first of all, denying the truth, of his existence, denying the fact, that he was mortal.

Because it seems, that the more, he accumulated, the more, he pushes back, from his, experience, at this time. The fact, that he must yet die, the fact, that he must yet, meet his maker.

[17:20] The fact, that he is a spiritual creature, made for God, made to glorify God, and ultimately, made that, that he will stand, before God, doesn't come into his existence, or into his reasoning.

He thinks, that life's going to go on, and on, and on, and on, and never end. You have accumulated much, sit back, take your ease. You have a great, great stores, laid up for many years.

That's a pretense, that so many of us, live with. We're young, and we think, we have all the time, in the world. We'll think, we'll take seriously, these matters, in a number of years time.

But this man, lived with this pretense, and that pretense, caught up with him, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. But not only, was his pretense, seen here.

You notice, that he's also, pretending, because he's, believing that things, will satisfy. Things, will please.

[ 18 : 31 ] Things, will bring the answers, to all his deep cravings. And it's suggestive, isn't it, even in the parable, as we read it. That no matter, how much he's accumulated, and he's got a lot, he's still, totally dissatisfied.

He's still, unable to say, he's got enough. He's still, unable to say, that he's arrived. He's complete. He's content. He lived, a pretense existence.

Do you live like that? Do you live, in a, make believe world, that denies the fact, that you're a mortal creature, that will ultimately face, the valley of the shadow, as all men, and all women, and all boys, and all girls, will face.

Do you live, in a, make believe world, that imagines, that the abundance of things, is what really matters. This man lived, with that kind of mentality.

And God's assessment, is this, that he's a fool, because man's life, does not consist, in the abundance, of the things he possesses.

[ 19 : 43 ] But thirdly, he was a fool. He was a fool, because he lived, a life, that was pitiable. Now I'm sure, that we have many friends, that we wish, we only had something, of what they've got, because that something, would answer, our particular problems, or dilemmas, at a given time.

And looking into the experience, of this particular man, this evening, I'm sure there are many of us, who would say, if only we had a portion, of his fortune, what a great answer, it would be, to our particular problems, this evening.

But I want to suggest, to you this, that God says, this man's life, is pitiable. There is nothing in it, to be coveted, because it is a life, that is foolish. Why is it foolish?

It's foolish, you notice, because he's, so contemptuous, of everyone else. He's a man, who's utterly selfish, who's thinking, only of number one, all the time.

And that kind of man, possesses no endearment, no attraction at all. To God, or to any man, when man is honest, with this kind of individual.

[ 21 : 00 ] But not only, is he pitiable, because of his contemptuous attitude, to everyone else. He is pitiable, you notice, because, of his captivation, with himself.

He's your number one egotist. He's the sort of man, who does stand in the mirror, many for mourning, and put his shoulders back, and marvel at what he is.

Marvel at his dignity, or his imagined dignity. Marvels, at all that he's accumulated. Look how many times, I, or my, comes into the picture, throughout this parable.

Twelve times, in a matter of four, or five verses. I will say to myself, I shall do this. I have no more room, to store my crops.

And so on, the I and the my, permeates, this man's character. He lives, for himself. No one else matters.

[ 22 : 01 ] He's the one, that is only important. But you notice also, it is pitiable, because of his carelessness, over his own soul. Because throughout this parable, as he's captivated with himself, and as he lives, with no time for God, so this man is careless, over the most important thing, that a man can deal with.

The safety of his soul, and his rightness with God, before he meets his make. I have a picture of this man, in our own generation.

I have a picture of him, as Jesus told the parable. In our own generation, I see this man, as the kind of man, who comes home, from his work in the evening.

The fire is lovely, and burning hot. The meal has been served. He's talked a little, with his wife. And maybe talked a little, even with his children, if he spared the time.

He's eased himself, into his big, armchair. He's taking a drink, relaxing with a cigarette, or a cigar even. Around him lies, the papers of success.

[ 23 : 17 ] The journals of, farm management. The journals of financial investment. Around him lies, all these paraphernalia, of success.

As this man sits, in his easy chair, is there a thought for God? Is there a thought, over the safety of his soul? No, there's not one thought given.

Not one thought. I again picture this man, as someone who saves, in his mind, as he eases into the chair. Sure, the minister was around last week.

He talked a lot, about eternal security. He talked a lot, about the necessity of faith, in the Lord Jesus Christ. He talked a lot, about the need, for sins forgiven.

He talked a lot, about the life, that one could experience, if we allow Jesus, enter the life, enter the heart, and change it.

[ 24 : 23 ] But he pushes himself, further back. Ah, he's only too zealous. He's a bit fanatical. He's a bit, too narrow minded.

He's a bit extreme, our minister is. I'll give him my donation. I'll uphold the cause. I'll be seen, maybe even at times, within the walls, of the building.

But concerning my soul, there is no need, to be alarmed. All is well, with my soul. Because my barns are full, my bank balance is good.

My manager never has, to rebuke me, for being overdrawn, the too often. My family are well fed. that they are well looked up to. All is well, with my soul, as the man's, own estimation, of his position.

Peace, peace. He's crying out. Never mind, the fanatical approach. Never mind, the cry for, responding to the invitation, of the gospel.

[ 25 : 31 ] Never mind, this conversion line. Never mind, the new birth, never mind, the whole death, and all its significance, of Jesus Christ, two thousand years ago.

He died, to save me all, as well. There's nothing else, I need to do. He lives the lie. He believes the lie. He takes no care, for his soul.

Are you like that, this evening? Is that you, this evening, in the parable, that we read? But this man also, is a fool, because he lived, with wrong perspectives.

Roy said earlier on, when he spoke, about perspective. We live, as men and women, who haven't just got, a three score, and ten, if we're fortunate.

we are men and women, who are made, for eternity. We are men and women, who must ultimately, meet our maker.

[ 26 : 46 ] And we will ultimately, meet our maker, to be drawn, into the glory, that he has prepared, for his people, all those that love him. Or we will be cast, into that place, that he himself, calls hell, and he himself, describes as a place, where there is only, weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Where there is only, the realization, in people's hearts, that they were, absolutely foolish, when they ignored, the days of opportunity. When they were, absolutely stupid, in failing, to have responded, to the days, when they were invited, to come.

To the days, when their hearts, told them, there was a God, there was a judgment, there was a day, when they would be, separated from him. How wrong, this man's perspective was.

I have laid up much, take your ease. I have many years, this is dream. Is that yours? It certainly, it certainly wasn't, the apostle Paul's.

For the apostle Paul, to live was good, but to die, was gain, because to die, was far better. When Paul is defending, the great reality, of the resurrection, to the church in Corinth, again he reminds us, of the perspective, of the believer, and the reason, why the believer, is no fool, but an overcomer, a winner, one that is more, than conqueror, when he's talking, of the nature, of that resurrection body, he says, in a moment, in the twinkling, of an eye, we shall be changed, because we shall rise, and we shall rise, to live, eternally with God.

[ 28 : 37 ] There is eternity, and lo behold, if we ignore, the reality, of that perspective, as we live, our lives through. You go back, even into the Old Testament, with Abraham, and how many years, did Abraham live, before Christ came, and before man knew, with all confidence, that the grave, was not the end.

Many years, he lived, but yet Abraham, looked through the years, through the tunnel, that he saw, to eternity, and what did he look for? He looked for a city, whose maker was God, and whose existence, it would be eternal.

Is that your perspective? Or is your perspective, that of the fool, this evening? Because you haven't, reckoned with it, and you're not, particularly interested in it.

Well if your perspective, is earthly this evening, like this man's, let me conclude, by showing how he was so foolish. Because he lived, yes he lived, and he lived, a marvellous life doubtless.

He lived with all, the accoutrements, of good living. And I could doubtless, say that he enjoyed it. And there are many things, in this man's life, that is absolutely commendable.

[ 30 : 04 ] He fended for his family. He used his initiative. He put the gifts, God gave him, into practice. And God blessed him, abundantly for that.

But though he lived, with all these, pluses, or all these, seeming pluses. Yet his life, was lived so foolishly. And ultimately, you notice, the climax, of his foolishness, is seen.

In that very moment, in that very night, maybe as he speculated, on the future, and the many more years, that he had to enjoy, his wealth. The night God came, the night God called, the night he died. Notice, that he lived a fool. But notice also, that this man, died a fool, and you also will die, a fool, if you die, unprepared, to meet your maker.

And you die, with sins not forgiven. And you die, without love of Christ. And without any, endeavor to glorify, the name of God.

[ 31 : 17 ] Notice three things, in the man's death. Notice how sudden it was. Tonight. Tonight. Now Roy, and Tom, they live with a reality, every day they step out, of their homes, that perhaps, in a moment, it can be gone.

But you don't have to be living, under the threat of the bullet, for the call of God, to come so suddenly. It can come, even now, so suddenly.

But notice also, how solemn it was. Because he lived, with no God ever, in his thoughts. But when his end comes, it is God, that he is to reckon with.

Because it is God, who says to him, tonight, tonight, your soul, will be required of you. And notice how sad it was.

Notice how sad it was. Because he lived, with everything. He lived, with absolutely everything, that was possible, to achieve, at his fingertips.

[ 32 : 35 ] And where did it leave him, as he stands, before his maker? Jesus tells us, bankrupt, with absolutely nothing.

he couldn't call upon his riches. He couldn't call upon his riches. He couldn't present his abilities. He couldn't use all the initiative, that he'd put into practice, as possible reasons, for this God, not to cast him from his presence.

And to put him to that place, where Lazarus, where Lazarus ended up, you remember, where the rich man ended up, lifting up his eyes, being in torment.

None of these things, could save him. And none of these things, could help him. None of these things mattered, when he stood before his God. And I say to you this evening, as we close, if you live without God, and if even tonight, God comes and calls you, and thus you die without God, because it is appointed unto man, to die, once to die, but is that the end?

No, that's not the end. Because the scriptures tell us, that just as it is appointed, unto man once to die, there follows the judgment.

[ 34 : 12 ] The rich man faced that judgment, and he would face the ultimate judgment, with bankruptcy. Is that the way you would meet him this evening?

Is that the way you would stand before him? Unable to tell him, that you loved his Savior. Unable to tell him, that you knew, of his grace, and his love.

Unable to tell him, that you'd experienced, his forgiveness. Unable to tell him, that yes, you knew, of that moment, when he lifted you up, from the mighty clay, and set your feet upon the rock.

Because, if you are unable to, stand before him, with these reasons, and stand before him, covered in the blood of Christ, cleansed from the sin, that separates man from God, then you will stand, with this kind of bankruptcy, you will stand a fool.

I wonder if I'm speaking, to a police constable, who's maybe not, even long joined the force.

Looking ahead, with many years ahead, to enjoy, put a lot into.

[ 35 : 40 ] But have you been considered, as you've thought, through the years, of police service, of the most important, priority of all? For the Lord Jesus Christ, and your relationship to him.

I wonder if I'm speaking, to any, officer of rank this evening, who has enjoyed, perhaps many years, of police service, and enjoyed, the experience of promotion, enjoyed, the stability, of the job that

you can do.

And even looking ahead, to the prospect, of retirement, and many years yet, beyond that, to enjoy and fulfill. Have you, and I ask you with all, earnestness, have you, made certain, of your calling? Have you made certain, of a right relationship, with the Lord Jesus Christ? I wonder, if I'm speaking, to a visitor this evening, what about you?

If God came to you, this evening, would his assessment, be of you, that you're a fool, or that you're wise? If God comes, to any one of us, this evening, where would we, spend eternity?

[ 37 : 15 ] Let us not be fools. The Lord Jesus Christ, came into the world, to make men, that are losers, winners.

to make men, and women, that have no real standing, before God, individuals, that can stand, before him, in complete confidence.

He came into the world, to deal with the problem, of our foolishness, of our lostness, in order that eternity, might not be fearful, but might be glorious, might be looked forward to, with expectation, might be like Paul, anticipated with joy, because of all that it holds out, to the man, and to the woman, who have bowed the knee, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So may, God help you, not to be a fool, but to come to Christ, this evening, and love him, dearly. Amen.