

July 31, 2022

8th Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 12:13-21

A very wise person once said to me that most of our problems in life are caused by our egos and greed. Very true words to learn from. This morning Jesus is dealing with people's greed that is driven by their egos. The ego's expectation that we deserve or want more than we have.

In the first part of the passage, Jesus is asked to make a decision on an inheritance. Rabbis at this time in history were often called on to decide such situations. Jesus knows the Jewish laws on inheritance. Jesus is able to read this young man's intentions very quickly. This young man's inner thoughts and intentions were not very good. He wanted to take more money from his older brother than he was entitled to. Then Jesus says to those around who are listening, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." In a very nice way Jesus is saying that the young man's claim to more inheritance is unjust. Otherwise the Jewish laws of inheritance would have kicked in!

Then Jesus takes things a step further, and starts talking and telling parables about greed and trusting in the things you have. Jesus is stressing that a secure life does not depend on your possessions, but on putting your faith in God. Then Jesus takes it a little bit farther. He says that, “you cannot take your stuff with you when you die.” Those things are of no value in the next life. The wise person is the one who is rich toward God. They share their stuff with people who have nothing.

These people invest their time and energy in people. This can be family, friends and those who have a lot less. These people share and spread their stuff among people.

Greed is the complete opposite of generosity. Greed makes us worry about the future instead of trusting in God. Yet God is the one who holds the future in His hands. Greed can destroy us, but generosity blesses us. Sharing is the thing that destroys greed and transforms it into generosity. Sharing is probably the first life lesson we learn as children. Yet it is the one we forget the fastest. The stories this morning challenge us to think about how we use our possessions and resources. We really need to stop and remember that all of our possessions are God’s gift to us. They are not ours, but on loan to us to use. God calls us to share our possessions with those who are in need. It is our job to transform greed in to generosity through sharing

There is some wisdom in Proverbs 11:24-25, “Some give freely yet grow all the richer; others withhold what is due and only suffer want. A

generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water.

Normally, this was the natural conclusion for this sermon. Then I got to thinking and that can be dangerous. Can greed be a good thing? Only if you do not hurt people and that includes yourself, in the collecting of stuff. Greed can only be good if you share. Then it is not greed but ambition. What is the largest amount of people you can help with your new found ambition? Where everyone benefits and is blessed. That is like building the Kingdom but on steroids!

God Bless and have a great week, Pastor D