

Emmanuel Ev. Lutheran Church—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Pentecost 8  
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Sermon by Pastor Christopher Pflughoeft  
**Enough**

<sup>13</sup> Someone from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” <sup>14</sup> But Jesus said to him, “Man, who appointed me to be a judge or an arbitrator over you?”

<sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, “Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because a man’s life is not measured by how many possessions he has.”

<sup>16</sup> He told them a parable: “The land of a certain rich man produced very well. <sup>17</sup> He was thinking to himself, ‘What will I do, because I do not have anywhere to store my crops?’ <sup>18</sup> He said, ‘This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and goods. <sup>19</sup> And I will tell my soul, “Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry.”’

<sup>20</sup> “But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your soul will be demanded from you. Now who will get what you have prepared?’

<sup>21</sup> “That is how it will be for anyone who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

—Luke 12:13-21

“Why do we have so much junk?”

In tired frustration, I said this to my wife on Monday morning. On that day, we were in our garage trying to get a hold of everything and organize our stuff. When we bought our house a few months ago, my father-in-law built a big shelving system in our garage to help us deal with storage.

This week, we wanted to arrange all of these stored possessions. For example, we needed the bins of children's clothes labeled and organized according to size. We also needed holiday decorations moved out of the way of things that needed immediate access.

While we were organizing all of this stuff, it struck us that so much of it we felt we needed, but it also felt that it wasn't necessary.

Can you relate to this feeling? I have heard stories from people, and I think many can. When it comes to possessions, many of us have more than **enough**.

While my garage and closets are overflowing with 'junk,' you know that there are still plenty of things that I need, though. It feels like every week, an Amazon package arrives with stuff for my children, needs for our home, or books that I need and want to read. So, on the other hand, it feels like we do not have **enough**. We have school supplies to buy still. We have gadgets we want. When will it be **enough**?

In our American culture of abundance, whether rich or poor, it is common to have a strange relationship with possessions... with stuff... with junk. We need more... we want less. We need less... we want more. Sometimes, the possessions close in on my wife and me, making us claustrophobic. Sometimes, the list of what we need is endless. This all continues on and on, and I just want to yell out **Enough! Enough! Enough!**

Have you experienced this dissonance? Have you faced this problem? Have you had **enough** of having more than **enough**, yet it's not **enough**?

If you have felt this tension, as is the case with all tensions in our lives, the clue to the resolution can be found in God's Word. What is **enough**?

One day when Jesus was teaching, he was interrupted by a man in the crowd. The man wanted Jesus to settle a civic dispute for him. The problem this man faced was that he felt his brother was not giving him his fair share of the inheritance. The interesting thing is that Deuteronomy 21 lays out very clearly the civic procedure in such an event. The first-born son should receive 2/3 of the inheritance. If this man is the only other brother, then he should receive the other third. So, this man did deserve it. Yet, Jesus' ultimate concern isn't civic affairs. Jesus' ultimate concern is the eternal welfare of this individual.

Hearing this man's question, Jesus didn't engage in the civic dispute. Instead, Jesus recognized a greater concern this man should have. This man was struggling with greed. So, Jesus used this occasion to teach the

crowd an important lesson about greed. This is an important lesson for us as well. It may be greed if we can never have **enough**.

Jesus tells the Parable of the Rich Fool to teach this man a lesson.

There was a man who owned a productive farm. The land of this farm produced an abundance of crops. This was a blessing from God. However, the man had so many crops that he had to figure out where to store them.

In the face of this storage problem, this man came up with a sensible solution. He was going to start a building project. First, he would have to tear down his existing barns. Then, he would build new barns. After this barn extension project, which was a sensible and wise business move, the man had enough room to store his crops.

Are your ears perking up yet? Mine are. This sounds a little close to home as a person who put up extensive shelves to store my excess stuff. As a person who pastors a church in the middle of a building project with storage containers, this sounds a little close to home.

Next, the problems in this man's heart became evident through his speech and actions. This man said that his soul would find rest and security in his abundance of possessions. So he would take it easy. He would eat. He would drink. He would be merry. Why? Because he had found **enough** for his soul and security in his abundance of possessions.

The foolishness of this man's heart, words, and actions were demonstrated by God's reaction to him in Jesus' story. Listen to what God said to this man, "*You fool, this night your soul will be demanded from you.*"

This rich fool gained the whole world yet forfeited his soul. This man gained possessions yet lost the true treasure. This man thought he had found **enough** but lost it all.

As Americans living in the land of abundance, I believe this parable should strike us. This doesn't just strike the wealthiest among us. This should strike us regardless of salary, home size, and amount of money in the bank.

One simple statistic demonstrating the abundance of possessions that we Christians in America have is the average house square footage. According to 24/7 Wall Street, the average US single-family house was 1,048 square feet in 1920. In 1970, that number jumped up to 1,500 square feet. By 2020, this number jumped up to somewhere around 2,300 square feet. In the last 100 years, home sizes have increased twofold. Also, houses are not getting bigger for a greater need due to larger families. At the same time, household size dropped dramatically as well. In this span of 100 years, the average household size had dropped from 4.5 people to 2.5 people.

Now, I do not want you to feel called out if you have a small family and a large house. Because ultimately, this is not the problem. My family of 5 living in a 1,100-square-foot home matches much closer to the 1920s numbers, and you know what? Jesus' parable was told to strike me. And it does.

When we look at the parable of the rich fool, the problem wasn't that he was prosperous. The problem wasn't that this man had large barns. The problem wasn't that this man had lots of possessions. The problem was unseen at first. The problem was with his heart, revealed through his words and actions at the parable's end.

So, if you have **enough**, not **enough**, or more than **enough**, Jesus' parable is directed to and applied to you. Let me apply it to myself. Why do I feel my house isn't big **enough** for my family? Why do I feel that I need to compile stuff? Why do I feel that I don't have **enough**? There's a problem of greed in my heart. This problem of greed in my heart isn't seen in a superabundance of wealth, possessions, and stuff. Other people have more stuff than me, yet I have a problem with greed. Greed... covetousness... sin.

Sin is a big deal. If I recognize sinful intentions, thoughts, and actions, I cannot just accept them. God's law calls me to repentance for this sin. God's law says that is **enough!** I don't want to continue in sin. Sin is dangerous. Greed is dangerous.

People of Emmanuel, examine your hearts and lives. Whether you have a beautiful mansion in the 'burbs or a meager apartment in the city, evaluate your relationship with stuff. I cannot see in your heart, which is a matter of the heart. Look inside yourself. Do you struggle with greed? Do you struggle with covetousness? Do you rest your soul in possessions? At the end of this parable, Jesus offers a good litmus test. Are you storing up treasure for yourself and failing to be rich toward God? Ponder this. Perhaps God's law is also saying to you, '**That's enough!**' Those who struggle with greed need to confess to God and repent.

In repentance, the Holy Spirit turns us from sin to God. This is the God who was not greedy but generous toward you. He generously poured out an abundance of his grace, undeserved love on us. He gave freely and indiscriminately. He poured out his love for people who hated him and rebelled against him.

Think about the generosity and abundance of love that God showered upon us. Dwell on that. The Father generously gave His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for sin. The Son willingly and lovingly gave his life to atone for sin. What the Apostle Paul says about himself is true for you, too, "*The grace of our Lord overflowed on me along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*" (1 Timothy 1:14) God was so generous in his love shown to you in Christ Jesus that his grace outpaces your sin. "*Where sin increased, grace overflowed much more.*" (Romans 5:20) God in Christ Jesus forgave all your sins. He forgave your greed. He forgave your covetousness. He forgave it all.

Let's just marvel in that love of God some more. Think about all the forgiveness that God gives us as the Holy Spirit works through the means of grace. Think about what's happening today. Baby baptized... there's forgiveness! The pastor speaks the absolution... there's forgiveness! The gospel is read in the readings... there's forgiveness! The pastor preaches... there's forgiveness! Finally, we receive Jesus' body and blood in Holy Communion... there's forgiveness. God gives his love to you, so abundantly it's amazing. Truly, "*our cup(s) are overflowing.*" (Psalm 23:5) In Jesus, **there is more than enough!**

Now, you get to live in the abundance of God's love. Now, you get to say thank you to the one who outpoured his abundant grace on you. This can be done by properly handling the possessions that God gives us.

What things can we do that would be fitting with this attitude? If you have little, be content with what God has given. Strive to do well and give what you can. If you have much, give generously to others. Give to those struggling financially. Give to those facing troubles. Give to those who you love. Most of all, give back to the God who abundantly gave to you. Use your possessions and wealth for the sake of the gospel ministry. Give so that other people hear about this wonderful love that changed your life and moves you.

People of Emmanuel, if we struggle with greed in our lives. Let us confess our sin. Let us repent. In repentance, let us look to the wonderfully generous God of ours. He outpoured his love on you. Jesus lived, died, and rose for you. Yes, He gave it all for you! You truly have **enough**. Amen.