

Sermon for the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

*'Fool,
this night your soul is required of you.'*

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This

God has said. He has said it to a rich man. By rich, the Lord does not merely mean someone who has great wealth. He means one who trusts in his wealth. One who takes comfort in his wealth. One who seeks after more wealth; more things; more entrapments; more vacations; more leisure; more security; that he may take comfort.

It

is a strange thing, it may seem, for the Lord to call such a man a fool, for did not the preacher of Ecclesiastes say that there is no higher wisdom than that a *man 'eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil'*? Such is the way of the wise, to find enjoyment in what they earn, in what they create, in what they grow, in what they build.

The

wise indeed enjoy the fruit of their labor; in the sweat of his brow he takes pleasure in his meal; in great pain she enjoys her family. What is wisdom beyond enjoying what the Lord has made?

It

is not merely wise to enjoy created things; it is divine. For our God in six days made all that is seen and unseen; by His Word did He divide the waters; in Wisdom did he lay the foundations of the world and cast the stars across the heavens. In beauty He founded it all; in majesty did He forge the universe.

In

six days did He make it; and then He rested, for *it was very good*.

‘How

great are thy works, O Lord, thou hast made all things in wisdom.’ And Wisdom’s final demand is

this: Rest, and remember the Sabbath day; behold what is good, and enjoy. So the Father heeds the counsel of His own Son by whom all things were made, and enjoys the works of His labor. The seventh day.

God

rests in what He has made, and rejoices. The wise man rests in what he has earned, what he has built, and rejoices. But the rich man says to himself, *‘I will say to my soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; rest, eat, drink, and be merry.’* And he shall burn, *for this night his soul is required of him.*

The

Lord God commands *‘Remember the Sabbath day’*; the day of rest; the day of joy; joy in all that is made. But before this command, another is given: *‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me.’* Before we may rest, we must vanquish the gods. Before we may rejoice, we must crush the idols. Before we may rule over creation, we must crawl out from beneath it.

The

fool in our Lord’s parable has failed to do exactly this. God calls us, indeed commands us, to take pleasure in the infinite beauty and delight He has made for us. The fool does not take pleasure in what is made; he does not delight in what is made; he trusts in what is made; and in so trusting, he has become an idolator,
a worm, and not a man, returned to the dust from whence he was made.

What

is the dust of the earth, that it should be trusted in? What are the stars, that they deserve your respect? What is wealth, but something drawn forth from the earth, and possessions, but what is forged from the earth?

Do

you not know what the Lord has spoken concerning you, dear Christian?

'Ye

are gods, and sons of the Most High.' *'Partakers of the divine nature.'* *'Who shall judge the angels.'*

'Put

not your trust in princes',

neither put your trust in any created thing, for God has no need of creatures, and neither does His image have need of created things, for His image shall rely on God alone, even as the reflection in a mirror exists only because of him who gazes into it.

To

those who worry; to those who are ruled by anxiety; to those *who 'reap and sow and weave and store into barns',* these are fools, and the Lord declares, *'This night, your soul is required of you.'*

For

such as these have become idolators; slaves of things made with hands; captives of green paper; chattels of digitized numbers; partakers not of the divine nature, but of created nature, and as all created things, they shall pass away, for only God is eternal.

Only

God, and God's children. For the Lord Christ has assumed humanity into His divinity; and has sanctified the waters. He has assumed the creation into His infinity; and has consecrated the wine; that all water may give birth to immortal gods; that all wine might nourish heavenly sons.

You

then, who are born of water; are you not as gods? For you have been taken into Christ our God. You then, who drink of the holy chalice, are you not sons? For you have been filled with the only Son.

Live

then, as gods, immortal. Live then, as sons, free. As one who shall never see death, trust not in dying things. As one who is born of water and the word, be not enslaved to what is beneath you.

'Make

not graven images, and have no other gods', 'but remember the Sabbath, and keep it holy.'

Rest,
whether in plenty or in poverty, whether in luxury or lack, rest, be wise, and be free, *and enjoy the day which the Lord has made, and think not of tomorrow, what you will wear.* For there is an everlasting tomorrow, which *shall require your soul*, and on that day, you shall not wear wool or cotton, gold or jewels, but you shall wear all the radiance of God.

'For when Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.'

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*Preached
by Pastor Fields*

Sermon

Texts: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14, 2:18-26; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21.