

Sermon Notes – August 3, 2025
The Holy Gospel of St. Luke 12: 13-21
Peace Lutheran Church
“Relationship With God”

Great thinkers as far back as the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, the Lutheran church icon Martin Luther, the more recent theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and even popular radio personality Paul Harvey - highlight the liminal status of humanity. We are not properly in a stagnant state of being, whether complete or incomplete, but rather, we are *becoming*. Such a process of becoming is extolled by way of analogy to a parent and child, in Hosea's description of God's steadfast love for Israel in 11: 1-11.

Martin Luther most famously expresses a similar sense of progressive development in his explanation of the human state as *simul justus et peccator* (simultaneously saint and sinner). For Luther, this begins to live into righteousness in this life, though it is never fully complete until the next .

Such a view reflects an inaugurated, or realized, eschatology (that of judgment day) similar to that of the author of Colossians, who exhorts his audience as those who have already “been raised with Christ” (Col. 3: 1). This contrasts with the apostle Paul, who also writes of a hoped-for future eschaton (end day of this world) in which, “If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him” (Rom. 6: 8).

Colossians, like the Gospel of Luke, was likely written in the second generation of followers of Jesus, after it was clear that Jesus' return would not be immediate. As such, the emphasis of each is not solely on fulfillment and salvation in eternal life with the Father, but also on encouragement in the present world, to “set your minds on things that are above” (Col. 3: 2), living, ...in this life, into the righteousness, justice, kindness that is promised, in its fullness, in the eschaton.

To this end, the scripture texts advise not against participating in early productivity but, rather, against single-mindedly storing up treasures (Luke 12: 20-21) and working endlessly in vain (Eccles. 2: 22-23). Luke's vision of salvation, like that of the author of Colossians, is not one that is separated from this world but, rather, one that is moving to completion in this world, with an eye toward the wholeness that comes not from wealth

or self-worth but from relational love with the Lord and each other. So God exhorts at the end of Jesus' parable that "it is better to be rich toward God" (Luke 12: 21)-and indeed toward neighbors.

Finally, some years ago Paul Harvey introduced to his listeners *An Open Letter From God*. The letter speaks of God's desire for humanity ...focusing not on the value of earthly things, but on things from above. Look the letter up. I believe you will smile and maybe consider what the Father desires.