

# Making History

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Idlewild Presbyterian Church (USA)

*Merciful Wisdom,  
Giver of Life,  
Sustainer of Breath,  
Make what we do here matter, in speaking and in hearing,  
Might the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts  
be acceptable before you. Amen.*

## **Luke12:13-21**

*Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”*

*Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’*

*But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’*

*So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”*

## **This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

Before I pulled out a pair of scissors and cut it into pieces for a quilt, I had a well worn dark brown t-shirt with sky blue lettering on the back. The lettering read, “Make History.” I was wearing the t-shirt and walking down the crowded concourse in the Atlanta airport when a man rolling his suitcase hurried past me and said over his shoulder, “Honey, we all make history; it’s just that the history we make doesn’t get recorded and taught.”

In the moment, I wasn’t sure if he was reacting negatively to my mandate or if he was encouraging me to make more of a difference in the world.

Today’s Bible passage is part of Luke’s travel narrative. Jesus has set his face toward Jerusalem and his eventual death. As he makes his way through the villages and along the

roads, the crowds grow. Jesus makes history; casting out demons and encountering lawyers and sisters, women and men.

Worried about salvation, a lawyer asks “What do I have to do to have eternal life?” Jesus responds “Take a deep breath — live with love always showing mercy — you never know when you’re going to have to give aid along the way.”

Worried about getting things done, a sister, Martha, questions Jesus, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister’s not more productive?” Jesus responds, “No, Mary’s doing something pretty important. What you do is important too, Martha; but right now Mary’s focused on what’s most important. She’s figured out the one thing she really needs and it’s me.

Desiring to honor Jesus, a woman in the crowd shouts out a blessing like a Grateful Dead Groupie, “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you.” And Jesus gently responds with a negation of the blessing, humbly saying, “No, blessed are those who hear the Word, and obey it.”

Jesus says to the crowd — it’s not about your genealogy; about who your mother was or how you latched on, but it’s about how you listen and live obediently in this world.

To live obediently is to live life knowing that each day is a Divine gift to be cherished.

To live obediently is to live each day full with the expectation that God’s grace will intervene and make history through you.

These previous stories in Luke bring us to today’s text where desiring a portion of his inheritance, a man shouts out an imperative, “Make my brother divide the family inheritance with me.”

Jesus responds with a life lesson, “Be careful. Don’t get greedy. One’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” Jesus calls us to make history by how we live, not how much we accumulate.

I’m thinking that if Jesus came to our home on Galloway Avenue, he’d wag his finger, shake his head and ask, “What’s all this stuff about, Anne” and the only history book I’d be in would be the “The World’s Largest Estate Sale.”

We’ve got a lot of things. The house in and of itself is quite the storehouse. On the first floor, a pantry full of food, a cupboard full of crystal and a dresser full of china. On the second floor, more laundry than can ever be folded or put away and a study full of books. On the third floor, decades of memorabilia and boxes of matching smocked outfits nested among the crevices of the attic eaves.

This parable about possessions evokes memories of White Station High School’s spring production of the musical, *Godspell*. I see the young woman who played the rich fool

hopping up onto a black box, twirling her layered muslin skirt and describing all the wonderful things she has and how she was going to store them.

She'd ad-lib, "I love my Skittles and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups; my Heath Bars and Hot Tamales and especially my buttered popcorn and chocolate ice cream. I'm going to build the biggest barns ever to store all this absolutely tasty, delicious, "oh-my-gosh-this-is-so-good stuff!" As she got lost in her exuberance, she'd throw her arms back to show just how big those storehouses would be and then bring them in close as if she were hoarding all that she had.

In between these repetitive movements, the young man who played Jesus would catch her hand and shift her addictive, consumptive energy directed towards her possessions and gently say, "Tonight — you're going to die — and who will all this belong to? No one. You can't take it with you sister."

The way his movement shifted the energy on stage, the young man who played Jesus understood the power of God. His movement on stage communicated how he understood the power of God to pull us out of places of consumption and addition.

When we follow the sirens song for more we're lulled into the myth that more makes us feel blessed, that more makes us happy, that more can fill the empty places in our lives.

But only God can do that.

Our blessings are from God and rooted in right and loving relationships. We love because God first loved us.

Our happiness comes from walking the straight and level path with God.

Our empty places are only made full in God's time.

God gives us life, daily demands our lives and has shown us how to make history.

Maybe one day we wake and wonder, asking should we have made different choices — Sifting through what constituted a blessing, what a farce?

Maybe the crisis fades but pain lingers, and we ask could things have been different — Recognizing a lasting sadness and deep dissatisfaction?

Maybe fear has ruled our choice making, and we plead for a taste of joy, a sense of intimate compassion that soothes like a breeze on an August day.

Maybe life rushes by so quickly we haven't stopped to consider if our life is bound up in our possessions or in our understanding of God's transforming power.

Christ meets us where we are and invites us to table so that we might be fed to make history. Constantly, Christ walks with us — hearing our questions, like sister Martha’s and the Lawyer’s. Christ makes a way for us — turning our distorted understanding of blessings toward God’s vision of blessing, like the woman in the crowd. Christ invites us in — reframing our demands for our share, like the man desiring inheritance.

It is here at the table, today, that we come to be fed and filled with enough — with our anxious wondering and our lingering doubts, with our fear and our distrust, with our hope and with all of our souls. Let’s make some history.

Amen.

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