

“What’s in your Barn?”

By Cathy Love

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Readings:

Psalm 100

Luke 12:13–21 (Parable of the Rich Fool)

Let us pray – Gracious God we come before you today to feel Your presence in gratitude for all you have provided. We ask you to open our hearts to Your word. In Jesus name. Amen.

“Barns. Why would God tell me to take pictures of barns? New ones, old ones, foundations. Barns. At the time I get these messages, I don’t always know why, but – unlike in the past – when God speaks, I try to listen.

Let’s see where God leads this message.

Our family had a rough few months – well, 7 months actually. We had journeyed through death, illnesses, surgeries, and drama. But we had finally reached the end, we hoped, of the stressful journey. We were driving through the countryside of the Hanover area, fresh from some wonderful time with family, celebrating the lives of some incredible people, when suddenly I said to Grant, “I need pictures of barns.” Now, he may or may not

be getting used to this type of request, but he and Courtney honoured this request. As we travelled, we slowed so we could take pictures of barns. Let's take a look of some of these pictures.



Some of these barns were just foundations; they may hold a memory for someone, with pictures in a photo album of them when they were at their finest – maybe shiny and new. Or were they so old that photos were not commonly taken? Regardless, they once served an essential role in the life of a working farm.

Once, people relied heavily on the barn to store their harvests, to protect their livestock, their machinery, their tools, and whatever else was valuable to them. Now the barns themselves are gone but the foundations still hold a purpose, they hold the ground in place with their foundations and likely are a shelter for bugs and maybe some small animals. They give God's small creatures shelter. But most of all, it is a reminder that God is our sure foundation.

Then we have the older barns that are still standing, barns that might have openings between the boards and are no longer as strong as they once were. They may not have the newest equipment or be shiny and new, but they are also not falling down. They are a familiar place for the farmer and his family. They also hold valuable items that belong on a farm. They may not be shiny, but they

have an essential purpose, and they also provide shelter for bugs and small animals. God's smallest creatures. They are a reminder of God's presence when we are struggling, when we have holes or spaces in our faith journey.

The new barns, well they are a sight to behold. Openings to let the breeze through, the latest equipment, they too hold the farmer's most prized possessions, and despite their newness and fancy designs, they too provide a shelter for God's smallest creatures. They are a reminder of God's presence when everything is good.

So what? What is so important about barns? Is the message I am supposed to give one of comparing ourselves and our lives to barns? Maybe we are like some of the barns, worn out, falling down, slipping in our faith with heavy burdens. Perhaps time and the storms of life have broken us down so we feel only the foundation is left.

Perhaps we wonder about the future, maybe we wonder where God is. But we have a purpose still. We just need someone to take that picture and show us our importance, give us a reminder.

The other barns? The steadfast, sturdy barns that catch our attention, or maybe they don't catch our attention because they have been there for so long, standing strong and firm in the storms of life, aging beautifully. Their faith has never seemed to waver. They are the inspirational people we meet. Maybe we are one of them to someone else.

The shiny new barns. They catch our eye. We wonder at their newness and their new way of doing things. Maybe we criticize them because they are too new; we don't need a new way of doing things. The old way always worked but so do the new ways. And, we can learn things from them, they have taken note of the foundations, the barns with openings between the boards and the sturdy ones and are a blend of all.

Am I talking about people or the church? But people are the church. We all have a role.

Or maybe the message should be about what we are storing in our barns, much like the message Reverend Lucas gave on August 24, 2025 when he talked about the vases and what we store in them.

And in reference to our reading this morning, is it about the urgency to collect everything material, to

find the elusive happiness – the “if only I had – and you can fill in the blank – a certain job, more money, a bigger house, a dream vacation – I would be happy. And the problem with greed or gathering things is that there is always something else we want.

We put so much effort into fulfilling our earthly desires that we neglect our faith. Imagine putting as much work into our faith as we put into our careers, our gardens, our hobbies, our leisure activities, or whatever else we prioritize? Sometimes I am amazed at how much time I spend on other things, but then I realize I haven't spent much time with my Bible or studying the Word of God in other ways.

In Biblical days, barns were essential for survival—places to store grain and supplies. Barns were vital. They were where people stored grain and goods after the harvest—a symbol of God's blessing. If your barns were full, life was good. Barns show up in scripture as a place of storage, harvest, provision, and security – in Jesus' teaching, they represent the condition of the human heart.

We all have “barns,” don't we? They may look like storage units filled with things we just can't get rid

of, savings accounts, material things stored in storage units, basements or garages, or even calendars packed with activities. What we store—and why—reveals what we value

Maybe we are storing emotions such as greed, bitterness, jealousy, fear, anger, or sadness.

What if we built spiritual barns such as faith, generosity, love or obedience? Spiritual wealth cannot be corrupted or stolen. It belongs to us. Material wealth can be lost. When we look at the rich man in the reading, he was self-centred and stored up for himself rather than considering others. He assumed he was prepared for tomorrow, ready to live off his bounty and he believed his ideal tomorrow was a guarantee. The problem wasn't his storage of wealth but his worship of wealth and, in the pursuit of it, the neglect of God.

When we trust in God and live a life worthy of God, our barns will be filled and our harvests plentiful.

We are encouraged to cultivate spiritual growth by focusing on developing our relationship with God through prayer, scripture study, and contemplation. We can do this through worship and ministry – as we engage in acts of kindness, charity, and selfless service. Investing in activities

and attitudes that build a connection with God is a way to yield a spiritual harvest of everlasting life.

The Bible holds many references to this, such as Proverbs 3 9 – 10 “Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine”.

Just as the Israelites honoured God with a presentation of the first portion of their harvest as a recognition of the fact that God was the rightful owner of everything – including the land and all it produced, we too should give back to God a portion of what he gives to us. Thus, we express gratitude and honour God as Lord of our lives and possessions.

When we do this, God will bless us generously, which is a promise from Malachi 3:10 from God to His people: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the windows of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough for it.” All God asked of them was that they would change their ways, return to God and renew their commitment to him by giving financially to His work and ministers. This was not just about God giving financial blessings.

“Those who honour me I will honour” is from 1Samuel 2:30 and is God’s promise to all who faithfully and generously give towards God’s work and purposes.

Our time, talents and material wealth, are gifts from God. How we cultivate them is up to us and what we do with them is also up to us but let’s think of Matthew 19:21 in which Jesus answers a young man who is questioning what good thing he must do to get eternal life.

Jesus tells him there is only One who is good but if the young man wants to enter life, he must obey the commandments. The young man questions which commandments and Jesus provides the answer. The young man says he keeps all of these and asks what he still lacks. Jesus tells him “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me.” The young man went away in sadness – his wealth was too significant.

Jesus then tells his disciples, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”. There are other passages, such as Luke 12:33, that give a similar message. What does this mean?

Jesus was testing this young man in his weakest and most vulnerable area – his wealth. The young man believed his wealth to be his security, but it was the one thing that was really keeping him from following God. Unlike other followers of Jesus, this young man was not willing to put Christ above his possessions.

So does this mean we should get rid of all of our material things or possessions or all of our money? No, I don't think God is against the barns, but what we do and what we do not store in them.

Some of us might feel a bit sorry for the person in the reading this morning, he seems like an honest person, putting hard work and thought into his efforts, faithfully working towards fulfilling his dream, only to die before he could enjoy them. But we would be missing the whole point. He did not provide for his eternal life, he did not give back to God, and he did not put work into helping others. His focus was on the word MY – my life, my crops, my barn, my good things, my future. In the end, others benefited from his life's work on earth.

Jesus ends the parable from our reading this morning with a warning: "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

What do these parables mean for us? There are many things, but here are a few to consider.

-We don't need to feel guilty about what we have but we need to explore what we can do with it to further the Kingdom of God. For example, it isn't money that is the issue – it is just an item – it is the love or worship of money, what we do with it, do we share it or hoard it? Do we have gifts, skills or talents we share with our community but not within the Church? Do we look for public accolades within our lives but forget about doing for others just because in quiet and in faith?

- We need to prayerfully consult with and consider God when making plans.

- The man in the parable saw wealth as an end, not a means, and he hoarded what he could have shared.

- He forgot that ****life is short**** and ****eternity is long****. The man thought he had time—but time was not his to own

-Jesus challenges us to store ****treasure in heaven****.

We need to be “rich toward God” by:

- Prioritizing people over possessions.

- Living with open hands and hearts.
- Investing in what matters eternally—souls, love, the gospel, and justice.
- Investing in activities and attitudes that build a connection with God. Acts of righteousness, spiritual growth and dedicating one's life to divine principles rather than earthly pursuits.
- Your spiritual experiences and lessons define a life rich in spiritual wealth.

My challenge for you this week is to think of other ways we can be rich towards God.

This is a time of harvest – a time to celebrate the riches of the fields, gather with friends to share in our gratitude, reflect on our lives, and appreciate all we are thankful for. We think of barns filled and ready for the winter, symbols of the hard work of the farmer. Spiritually, it is a reminder of God's faithfulness and the importance of sowing the seeds of righteousness in our lives. Spiritual harvest is a symbol of growth, provision and God's blessing. Is your spiritual barn filled and ready for eternity?

In closing, going back to the barns, how do we know what is stored in the barns? Are there hints? Maybe a sign saying Dairy Farm or Chickens or eggs for sale. Maybe there are animals in a field, maybe,

unlike me, you can look at a barn and know what it would be used for. Maybe what is in the barn is a surprise. Grant's uncle has a barn that was once on a working farm, however, it is now used to store unique cars with room above for family gatherings and celebrations. You would not know that by looking at it.

What do people see when they look at and around us? What would they say we store in our barns? Let it be said of us—not that we built bigger barns, but that we lived with bigger faith. That we were rich, not just in goods, but in God.

Let us Pray.

Gracious and generous God. We pray today for your guidance as to what we need to remove from our barns and what we need to put into our barns. We pray you will open our hearts and minds to hear your wishes and we pray for the courage to follow them.

In Jesus Name we pray. Amen.

Other readings

1. Galatians 6:9

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

2. Matthew 9:37-38

“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

3. Psalm 126:5-6

“Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.”

4. Proverbs 10:5

“He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.”

5. 2 Corinthians 9:10

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.”

6. James 3:18

“Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”

7. John 4:35

“Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”