# “Overflowing” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Thanksgiving Eve
# November 26, 2025

I. **Luke 12:16** – “And [Jesus] told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully…”

II. **Have you ever stopped for a moment** and really taken stock of all the blessings in your life?

a. Recently, I’ve seen several short clips of a couple of young men from England who travel around the United States and talk about the differences between America and their home country.

i. The main guy is very funny because he tries to get the different American accents right as he tours through Texas, Massachusetts, and other states.

ii. What seems to really capture my attention though is how genuinely taken aback he is whenever he experiences the things we take for granted.

iii. He goes to a Walmart and is amazed by the size of the place… the 20 different kinds of Oreo cookies… the milk in one-gallon jugs versus one-liter bottles… the width of the aisles… the amount of produce from all over the world.

iv. He tries to help his fellow countrymen understand how vast and diverse the 50 states are compared to his home.

1. For example, a 45-minute drive for them is a big deal – but here you can drive 11 hours straight and never get out of Texas.

v. It really is humorous to watch his reaction to what we see as normal life in America.

b. Perhaps you’ve heard this many times before, but mission trips and travel to other countries does give us perspective.

i. Even places we might consider modern by the world’s standards do not have the many blessings we enjoy – or the quality of life we take for granted.

ii. Recent statistics tell us that America produces just over 25% of the entire world’s gross domestic product, even though we are about 5% of the world’s population.

1. Also, if you took California and made it a country on its own, it would be the 4$^{th}$ or 5$^{th}$ largest economy in the world, behind American, China, and Germany or Japan.

iii. Certainly, America has its problems, of which many want to debate the challenges of poverty and wealth distribution.

1. Yet, there is a reason that people from all over the globe travel great distances and risk everything to migrate to our country.

c. We have a land that produces plentifully... that overflows with blessings.

III. **Yet, no matter how much we have, it never seems to be enough**.

a. Jesus can always see the deeper issues whenever people approach Him with a problem or question.
b. As someone in the crowd figured Jesus was wise enough to judge a financial matter between brothers, He quickly gets to the underlying issue.
c. We don't know if the brother asking Jesus for help was being unfairly treated by his sibling, but Jesus sees the man's heart and tells a parable.
d. The parable begins with a wealthy man whose land produced abundantly or plentifully.
    i. So, the starting point is that the man is already rich and has land that gives him more abundance.
    ii. The next several verses should give us all a clue when it comes to the rich man's attitude… as he uses the first person constantly!
        1. Let me just say these verses without the rest of the words so you get a feel for what it sounds like, "I, I, my, I, I, my, I, my, my, I, my."
        2. See a pattern here?
            a. The inward focus and selfishness were shocking and meant to help us see the trouble in his heart.
    iii. Of course, all this selfishness and planning to live off the abundance of his land ended abruptly… because his time was up… and he would die before any of his relaxing, eating, drinking, and celebrating could happen.
        1. And so it is with all who hoard and plan for selfish reasons, the clock is ticking on how long we can enjoy our lives.
e. Jesus was telling the brother asking for his inheritance to be happy with what he currently has… to acknowledge the blessings God has already provided.
    i. Rather than selfishly striving for more, or even seeking a way to rest easy and live off an unearned inheritance, Jesus implies that the world and all it has to offer is transient… it doesn't last forever… and neither do our earthly lives.

IV. **Self-centered is the same as sin-centered**.

a. I was teaching about the selfishness of sin in my confirmation class and used the example of an ingrown toenail.
    i. Sin has us curving in on ourselves, and it usually ends up hurting!
    ii. The first sin of Adam and Eve was to selfishly gain knowledge and have more than was already provided in abundance.
    iii. Out of that came the same sin that each of us struggle against as we fail to recognize the incredible blessings and beauty that overflow from God's hand.
b. Turning everything into a "me" or an "I" problem is allowing sin to take a foothold in our hearts.

i. However, God would have us change that perspective entirely as we love Him and love those around us.
ii. Have you ever done that "pity party" thing, where you are just miserable about all your troubles and how bad things are going?
1. And then someone randomly turns up in your life that is worse off than you… needing help and love… and you are able to take your eyes off yourself just long enough to see that your troubles are not as overwhelming as you thought?
2. In fact, there are times when helping and showing love to others has completely transformed my thinking – as my attitude changed from complaining and discontent to humble gratitude.
3. It's not that I'm downplaying difficult times and suffering as though it's selfish to feel bad… But what I am saying is that oftentimes the sin in us magnifies the bad and downplays the blessings and goodness of God.

c. Instead of living for self-preservation and grasping for more, God calls us to look outward… to remember that we are not the center of the universe… and to see how His blessings richly overflow.

V. **We may not be a rich man with land that produces abundantly**, but we are rich in God's grace with a promised land producing an abundance for eternity!

a. The simple truth is that Jesus entered our world to solve the sin problem – the selfish brokenness in us that always curves inward.
b. None of us had a chance to break free of sin and its power, until Jesus paid the price for it on the cross – delivering us by His overflowing grace through faith.
i. Jesus alone produces grace and forgiveness overflowing, and no one can take credit for this gift… it is a gift of God.
ii. So, I ask again, have you ever taken a moment to really take stock of all the blessings in your life?
1. I pray that the very first thing that comes to mind is your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His work to redeem you.
2. Beyond our salvation, God is so good to bless us with all we need for our body and soul, as Martin Luther expresses in his explanation of the Apostles' Creed we will read in a moment.
3. Stop, consider, and give thanks… our God is good… He is faithful and just… He provides all that we need… starting with the grace that flowed from the cross.

c. So remember, the rich man's barns remind us that anything we build on ourselves will fail… but everything built on Christ never ends.
i. With thanksgiving and gratitude we can look to our God, taking stock of the overflowing abundance He pours into our lives… and, with the help of Jesus, letting that abundance flow into the lives of others. Amen.