

## THE REAL POINT OF CAMPING

2<sup>nd</sup> in a Series on Difficult Sayings of Jesus called, “What Did He Say?”

Passage: Luke 16:1-9 – Topic: Living Wisely

I won an award this week. It is known in French as the *croix de coloscopie*. It is a beautiful medal shaped like a toilet, given only to those brave souls who endure a colonoscopy without flinching. Okay, so maybe I flinched. And no, I wasn't really awarded the Colonoscopy Cross medal. But I should have been because I did endure it. Part of the reason I got through it was I thought it was going to be a cinematic adventure because they told me a live camera would be involved and it all began with something called “Moviprep.” Hey, I'm going to be in a movie! Just in time for the Oscars tonight, too! Talk about deceptive advertising! That stuff has nothing even remotely related to movies. The whole thing felt like a big-time bait and switch. And if the movie is showing at a theater near you, don't go see it. You won't like it. I saw some of the pictures the camera took and I assure you they would not make a good movie.

Fortunately as you know they put you to sleep before they actually invade your personal space with said camera. That's a good thing, but it had some interesting effects. That night, dinner was a blessed event because I got to eat real food for the first time in two days. During dinner I told Laurie about something that happened as I was about to have the test. Laurie said, “Yes, I know, Rick, you told me that in the car on the way home from the test.” I had no memory of that at all. I remember being in the car on the ride home, but zero recollection of telling her that story. A few minutes later I told her about something else that had happened. She said I had told her that too. I found this very disturbing. But then I realized what had happened. In preparation for the test, Moviprep drained every single thing out of my body and I'm pretty sure in the process it sucked out some brain matter. So if I repeat myself or don't make sense this morning, please understand it's the result of Moviprep-induced brain damage.

Okay I don't really think that. I believe it was an effect of the anesthetic they administered to me. The thing with the anesthetic is just weird. Just before they started the test after explaining what he was about to give me a guy said, “I'm going to give you the med now.” Nothing happened, and I remember thinking, “Oh no! This isn't working on me. I hope it starts working because I don't want to be awake for what they're about to do.” Then I got this sort of woozy, floating feeling, and the next thing I knew I was waking up in the recovery area. I have no knowledge of what happened in between. It's like a little slice of my life is gone. Apparently a slice from the ride home in the car is also missing. That's all right, because I didn't want to experience all that went on in that slice of life. But wouldn't it be awful to essentially have your whole life be a sort of unconscious non-event like that? Surely we don't want that. To be fully conscious, aware, living life to the fullest there are some things we need to know. Today we will look at a story Jesus told that is important in becoming fully aware of what life is really about.

Jesus told lots of stories. The one we look at today is considered by some to be the most difficult of all of Jesus' stories to interpret. It looks a lot like Jesus is commending unethical behavior. He is not, but it will take us a bit of effort to sort through his words to grasp their true intent. The meaning of these words has enormous significance for all of us. It is crucial for understanding why life is the

way it is and for keeping on track as we go through it. If we don't understand what Jesus was really saying in these verses, we are going to end up either missing the point of life or end up with some disastrous theology. Let's look at Luke 16:1-9.

### JESUS TOLD US TO BE PRUDENT

Jesus was a master communicator. He used lots of figures of speech, humor, and especially stories. I've noticed when I'm listening to a speaker that while I may be tracking what they are saying, when they start to tell a story, I really tune in. That's because I'm human. It is human to love stories and to find them easy to listen to. Stories also are effective tools for communication because not only do they draw us into what a person is saying, they also speak to us in ways that are not purely intellectual. They touch us at a deeper level and can inspire or challenge us in ways that go beyond our minds. They reach our hearts. So Jesus used his stories to capture attention, to illuminate ideas, to challenge or inspire in ways that were riveting and often funny.

This particular story leaves many people scratching their heads because it sounds like Jesus is teaching things that are totally against everything he stood for. He is not, but we have to do some work to realize that. First, we have to hear this story in its cultural context. And second, we have to remember that it is an illustration. It has one main point. We run into problems if we try to make every nuance in the story have an implication. We need to hear the main point and not insist that every other detail in the story have some larger significance.

The main character in this story is a business manager for a wealthy man. Our translation calls him a "manager," and that is technically correct, but this position was larger and more important than a manager. The Greek term for his job was *oikonomos*. The first part of that word, *oikos*, meant "house," and the second part, "*nomos*," meant "law." So he was the house law. He ruled the house. In other words, he ran the wealthy man's estate. He was in charge of the whole thing. The wealthy man had essentially an agricultural corporation. The manager was kind of the CEO of the entire company. This was a highly respected position. He oversaw the operations, personnel, sales and finances of the estate and the business. A wealthy person had to completely trust his *oikonomos*, because that guy controlled all of his finances and his business interests.

Unfortunately this manager proved to be unworthy of the trust his master had in him. He had given in to the temptation to sort of appropriate some of his boss's funds for his own purposes. We knew some people who had a successful small business. They had a woman working for them who had been a friend of theirs for years. Then they discovered that the woman had been embezzling from them and had stolen many thousands of dollars. This guy was doing something akin to that. Somehow the wealthy man in Jesus' story was tipped off, so he demanded to see the manager's financial books. The manager knew he was toast. He was caught with no explanation for what he'd been doing.

The manager is freaked out about what he's going to do after the owner fires him, which is inevitable. In verse 3 he said, "I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg." He realizes he's not really suited to anything other than what he'd been doing. He was apparently a bit like me. He couldn't do construction work. Put me on a construction job and I know for a fact two things will

happen. First, the building is not going to be constructed right, if at all, and second somebody is going to get seriously hurt. Probably me. This guy had the same problem. The only other thing he could think of to do is to beg, but he was too proud to do that.

He's got a problem. What he needs is another job managing someone else's estate. It's what he knows how to do. But who's going to hire him after he had been so fast and loose with the boss's money? Then he has an inspiration. He sees a way to ingratiate himself to other wealthy men in hopes that one of them will give him a job.

The manager had negotiated contracts with several wealthy men who owed the boss large sums. So he contacts those guys and asks them to come see him. He reviews the first man's account and they determine that the debtor owes the wealthy boss 900 gallons of olive oil. One scholar said that much olive oil back then would have been the equivalent of two or three years' wages for a common laborer. In today's terms if the new minimum wage is \$15 per hour, a year's wage at that rate would be \$30,000. So two years' wages comes to \$60,000. The manager says, "I really like you. So I want to offer you a killer deal. If you will pay off the remainder of your debt today, I will give you a 50% discount. I will accept 450 gallons of olive oil." So he was willing to take \$30,000 worth of olive oil as full payment of this man's debt instead of \$60,000 worth of oil.

The manager and the second man determine that Debtor No. Two owes 1,000 bushels of wheat. Again one scholar said this amount of wheat would have been equal to 8 to 10 years' wages. So now we're talking about a minimum of \$240,000 worth of wheat. The manager said, "I'll offer you a deal too. I can give you a 20% discount if you pay up today." So 800 bushels of wheat instead of 1,000 would be full payment. That would have knocked the amount owed from \$240,000 down to \$192,000 worth of wheat, saving the debtor \$48,000 minimum. Both men jumped at the chance to get such a good deal.

In verse 4 we see the manager's plan. He would make these deals so "when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses." He didn't mean they'd invite him over to their house for dinner, but into their business. He meant they'd be so grateful for him giving them such a great deal that they would offer him a job in their estates.

Jesus then had the schemer's previous boss commend the dishonest man because "he had acted shrewdly." The word translated "shrewdly" meant "wisely," or "prudently." Jesus then says we should also be prudent or shrewd, we should use our worldly wealth so that we will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. Well that's a little weird. Jesus seems to condone the conniving behavior of a dishonest man and tells us by doing the same with our wealth we can buy our way into "eternal dwellings."

There are a couple of reasons to think that Jesus was not condoning theft. There are two obvious questions which make us think something else is going on. The first question is, do you really think the manager's previous boss would commend him for yet another scheme, for ripping him off again after he'd been caught? Would his reaction after this guy essentially stole more money from him likely be, "Yeah, that guy is a real snake, but there's no denying that he's a clever snake"? Would he commend him for that? No. Jesus knew human nature better than anyone, and he knew that if that

guy ripped his boss off yet again the boss' reaction would be anger and indignation, not admiration. And I think it safe to suggest that Jesus absolutely would not say we also should be clever, scheming, dishonest snakes so God will let us into his kingdom.

The second question is, do you really think that this plan would convince other people to hire this guy? He got in trouble because he misappropriated funds, then when he was exposed, he stole more money from his boss. That would make other businessmen want to hire him? Oh, yeah, I'd really like to hire that guy. No way. Prospective employers would be thinking this guy is nothing but an unscrupulous crook. I wouldn't trust him to manage my garbage cans. If he stole from his previous boss like that, I have no doubt that he will do the same from me, so no thank you."

What is going on here? We must be missing something. Otherwise, this story makes no sense. If Jesus was portraying this guy purely as a scheming crook people would have just figured Jesus was an idiot if this is how he thought. There are some cultural factors that come into play here. Look for a moment at Luke 3:12-14. John the Baptist had called people to change their ways, to repent. They asked, "What should we do?" In verse 12 we learn even tax collectors were asking that. John said, "Don't collect any more than you are required to." Then some soldiers asked, "What about us?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely. Be content with your pay."

What was going on there? Tax collectors never told people what the true tax rate was. The Romans told them how much they were required to turn in, and whatever they could collect over that amount was theirs to keep. So they put the screws on people to force them to give way more than was required in order to enrich themselves. That was the expected way of doing business and everyone knew it.

Soldiers extorted people by accusing them of crimes they had not, in fact, committed, then demanded a bribe to let them go. That's a scam that is still common in some parts of the world today. In many parts of the world today to make any kind of deal or to get anything done it is just assumed that you will have to pay off some people. That's just how business is done.

It is highly likely that something like that was going on with this manager. He negotiated deals for his boss, but whenever he did he always tacked on an extra percentage that he kept for himself. I think it was assumed that's how the deal would work. It was the expected way of doing business. The boss knew all about it. It was a part of his salary package.

In our culture we have some similar practices. If you buy a house today in our country you will likely have a real estate agent, as will the seller. Included in the cost of buying the house will be a percentage of the cost that goes to the agent. That's not dishonest. That's his or her pay for representing you and doing the work to enable the deal to go through. This manager got paid the same way. He included his percentage in the cost of the deal.

I believe that what he did in this situation is he slashed his commission for the debtors. Jesus' audience in that day would have understood that. His boss would have gotten what he was owed and expected out of the deal, so he was happy. But the manager would get nothing. I think it possible that the manager is called dishonest because he had misappropriated his boss' money. But essentially

what the manager was cutting in these deals was his commission. The boss approved of him foregoing his personal gain in the short term in an effort to set himself up for a job later. That was a smart and honest thing to do.

The boss was satisfied because he got what he wanted. He received the money that was owed. The debtors got a great deal because they ended up paying much less than they had agreed to. Everyone agreed that this manager was wise, or prudent in his actions. His prudence is seen in the fact that **he sacrificed short term profit for a long term good**. He gave up immediate money to prepare for his future.

So Jesus wasn't approving theft or unethical behavior. He had one point in this story. It was that it is smart, it is wise, it is sensible to do what is necessary to prepare, especially to sacrifice in the near term, for a certain long term future.

#### BEING PRUDENT MEANS PREPARING FOR ETERNITY

Verse 9 is the whole point of this story. "Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings." The prudent thing to do is to prepare for eternity, because it is an absolute certainty. In this story the phrase, "Gaining friends for yourselves so that you can be welcomed into eternal dwellings" stands for entering into God's kingdom and living in it eternally.

We need to come to grips with this reality. Eternity is coming for all of us. This is not merely a possibility. It is not a maybe, it is not even a probability. It is a certainty for all of us. To not come to grips with this is the height of folly. It would be like the manager in Jesus' story refusing to face the fact that he would soon be out on the street. He was going to lose his job and he needed to prepare for that certain future.

Every year I get a letter from our insurance company telling me that I can get earthquake insurance. Insurance is kind of an interesting thing. It always costs you money, but it essentially is a bet that something bad is going to happen to you. If it doesn't, you lose. You buy car insurance because you have to, but it is basically a bet that you are going to have an accident. Obviously if you have an accident, you lose. Your car is damaged, you could be too, you'll be out some money and the inconvenience of having your car repaired. That's all bad. But if you don't have an accident, you lose and the insurance company wins because you gave them money and got nothing in return. So either way you lose. You lose if something bad happens, but you also lose if that bad thing doesn't happen. Anyway, in the case of earthquake insurance you are betting that a catastrophic earthquake is going to happen and seriously damage or destroy your house. I've been told throughout my adult life that such an earthquake will happen. The Big One is coming! It's a near certainty. A near certainty, but not an absolute certainty. So I can bet the bad thing isn't going to happen. Don't buy the insurance. And so far I've been right. I've won the bet! But when it comes to something that is a near certainty, the odds are in favor of that bad thing eventually happening, which means the wise thing to do is prepare for it. Maybe I'd better rethink this. But when it comes to facing eternity, it is not a possibility, not even a near certainty. It is going to happen. So Jesus says you would be foolish not to prepare for it.

But in verse 9 what Jesus says causes us some heartburn. He says we should use our worldly wealth to make friends so we will be welcomed into the eternal dwelling. Uh, that sounds like he's saying you can buy your way into God's kingdom. Use your money to make friends, make God happy so he'll let you in. If that's what Jesus was saying it would make great fodder for those TV preachers. "You want to be welcomed into God's eternal dwelling, don't you? If you don't give, God's not going to give to you. You won't be allowed in. But if you give, God will welcome you with open arms. But that's not all. You must ask what kind of a dwelling do you want to have for eternity? A cramped, one bedroom apartment? Or a mansion, with beautiful grounds, a swimming pool and more luxurious rooms than you can count? Well you need to put in your down payment on your eternal dwelling right now! Send in a check to our ministry, and God will reserve a place for you. But think about what you're buying. A thousand dollars is a nice sum, but that's just going to reserve a condo for you. Fifty thousand dollars will get you a nice house on a golf course. But if you want to spend eternity in luxury, well those units start at a million dollars." Um, didn't Martin Luther and the other Reformers have a problem with that idea almost 500 years ago? The church was selling "indulgences" so people could buy their way in. Yeah, this is making me more than a little uncomfortable. It's making me sick. That's just wrong.

This where we need to be careful with our interpretation. Jesus is still using his story here. He's saying we need to be like the manager in the story who used his worldly wealth to make friends. He was not being literal about buying your way in. He was still using the story to make a point. He's speaking figuratively. Don't get too literal about what was an illustration. Just understand the point. The point was the man in the story made preparing for the future his priority so that he sacrificed in the short term in order to make those preparations. Jesus is saying we should do the same.

Jesus was seeking to change his disciples' paradigm, their understanding of life. Just like it is hard for us to get outside the influence of our culture, so it was hard for them. The most powerful voice at that time in their society, the one with the most influence, was that of the religious leaders of Israel, especially the Pharisees. This story addresses a big problem with the Pharisees' mindset that affected the people of Israel.

Look a little farther in the chapter at verses 13-14. There Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." Those comments have some enormous implications. One of them is that everybody is going to serve somebody or something. You don't have any choice in that. You will serve someone or something. All you can do is choose who or what you will serve. In the end, this is about what owns our hearts. Something will rule them. Something will be our deepest underlying motivation in everything we do.

The second implication is that you can't serve two masters at the same time. You know that is true if you've ever been in a place where you've tried because you have two people in authority over you. When my son, Toby, was in high school he played baseball for 3 years. It was not his best sport. He first went out for it because we made him pick a spring sport, because we found out when he didn't play a sport he didn't do as well in school. At first he was terrible. But he improved some his freshman year. His sophomore year he made dramatic improvement and turned into a very good hitter. His junior year he, at first, kept getting better. But that year he had a terrible coach. This guy

was awful. One day Toby came home from practice and said, “Dad, you’re not going to believe what my coach told me.” He proceeded to tell me that his coach had given him some instruction about hitting that was absolutely wrong. Toby was one of the best hitters on his team at that point, and this coach was going to “fix” him by destroying his ability to hit. I was appalled. If Toby followed his advice he’d never get another hit. I didn’t say what I felt like saying. I didn’t say, “Your coach is the Titanic of coaches. He’s going to take you down. He’s dumber than your bat.” I stayed calm, but said, “Toby, be respectful to your coach. Try to support him. But do not follow his instruction. Do not do what he told you.” At that point Toby, in a sense, had two masters, his coach and his dad. He could not serve them both. He had to choose who to listen to. He listened to me, did pretty well, but fell out of favor with the coach. That was his last year playing baseball, because of that coach.

Interesting that Jesus said two of the primary candidates for master in the lives of people back then were God and money. Those people needed to know they could not serve both. So do we. It’s one or the other. Why were those the two prime candidates? Verse 14 tells us. “The Pharisees, who love money, heard all this and were sneering at him.” The Pharisees loved money. Hey, they could have been TV preachers, because a lot of them love money too.

The word translated “money” here is actually the Aramaic word Mammon. It meant more than money. At its root it was about what you trust in. What you think will give you life. Money was part of it for the Pharisees, but not all. In Matthew 23:5 Jesus said of the Pharisees, “Everything they do is done for people to see.” In verse 6 he said, “They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogue.” In verse 7, “They love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and be called ‘Rabbi’ by others.” That’s why I really don’t like it when people address me as “Pastor.” I don’t want any part of this “give me a holy title that puts me above you” business.

Not only did they trust in money, they trusted in status. They wanted it. They wanted to impress people, to have the best seats, to be the most important, to be called “rabbi.” They wanted to be celebrities. They believed that they could serve two masters. They believed that they could serve God and have their hearts owned by money and status at the same time. They were sure they could do both. In fact, they had a theology that even claimed they *should* do both.

It’s not hard to figure out where that theology came from. In the Old Testament there are many passages that say that if God’s people would obey his commands God would bless them with abundance and success. Psalm 1 says the person who delights in God’s law and walks in his ways will be like a tree planted by streams of water and at the end of verse 3 says, “Whatever they do prospers.” Everything they touch is going to turn to gold! Perfect! Just what we want. Obey God and you get wealth, success, fame, power, all of it! That’s a promise from God himself! That’s just what we want.

So how do we know who are the godliest people around? Connect the dots. Pretty easy to figure that one out. Surely it will be the richest, most successful, most powerful people around, right? Their great success will be evidence that they delight in God’s law! This is a great theology because it tells us we can be absolutely driven by money, power and fame, and claim to be really godly when we get it, because otherwise we’d be like the wicked in Psalm 1, who are like chaff that the wind blows away. This is why the Pharisees sneered at Jesus when he said you can’t serve God and Mammon.

They believed that you can and should! They ended up with a theology that allowed them to put all their focus on things like status and money in this world. It is what resulted in them rejecting and seeking to kill Messiah in order to protect their position in this world.

Jesus had to constantly deal with two failings of his disciples in order to transform them. One was a lack of faith. They often failed to believe in who Jesus really was and what he could do. The other failing was an obsession with who among them was the greatest. Why was that a problem for them? Because their thinking was formed by the Pharisees who wanted to be God's celebrities. The disciples wanted the exact same thing.

The problem is that all of that thinking is aimed squarely at this world and its stuff. It is a mindset pre-occupied with the here and now. Jesus told this story to try to dynamite his followers out of that deep rut that they were stuck in. It's an important message, because all of us are stuck in that same rut. We are obsessed with ease, comfort, success, approval, money, power right now in this life.

Some people think this passage is all about money. It certainly applies to money, but this story really has to do with mission. Jesus is telling us that eternity is coming, it is much more important than the few years we have on this earth. He says the way we think should be oriented toward eternity, for it is coming, and there is no doubt about it. We should be willing to sacrifice whatever might benefit us in the short term of this world to prepare for the much greater world to come.

## APPLICATION

### RECEIVE JESUS AS LORD

At other times Jesus said the way to have eternal life, the way to be invited in to eternal dwellings, is to believe in him. The most quoted verse in the Bible is John 3:16, which says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." We start with preparing for eternity by believing in Jesus, putting our trust in who he is, what he has done, and what he says.

### PURSUE THE ETERNAL

In Matthew 6:19-20 Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy and thieves do not break in and steal."

In 1 Timothy 6:18 Paul told those who have the goods of this world to focus on doing good, being rich in good deeds, and being generous and sharing. Then in verse 19 he said, "In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age."

We understand very little about eternity in the kingdom of God. We know it will be joyful. But Jesus made it very clear that in some way there is a direct correlation between what we do here and what we experience there. We can build up treasure there by using our time, energy, money and resources



to build the kingdom of God right now. We don't know how that will work out, but it is very clear in Jesus' words and those of Paul.

Laurie and I have spent a lot of time driving up to San Clemente the past year and a half. We are all too familiar with that stretch of Interstate 5. I would like you to envision that freeway stretching up the coast. Imagine it going from here all the way up to Seattle, more than 1,000 miles away. No suppose that someone paints a blue stripe, a half inch wide, across that freeway. Maybe they put it right there at the Avenida Vista Hermosa exit where we get off to go to Toby and Anna's house. That half-inch stripe represents the entirety of our life here in this age. The rest of those miles and miles of freeway stretching into a seemingly endless distance, represents eternity. We need to keep in mind that our life here is only that tiny, half-inch-long section.

A few years ago Laurie and I went on vacation to our favorite restful place, Hawaii. We left on a Sunday after church so we got there in the evening. It was a long day and we were very tired when we checked into our hotel. But one of the first things we did was to walk out on our Lanai into a spectacular tropical evening. It was warm with a gentle breeze, the sky was spectacular and we could hear the ocean waves crashing on the beach. It was paradise. Just after we stepped onto our lanai we could hear a couple in the room above ours beginning to argue. They had their doors open so we could hear them all too well. There had been a conflict during the day over how something had been handled, and now there were hurt feelings. Out came the recriminations, the rebuttals, the attacks, all very loudly expressed in harsh terms. Welcome to paradise. We went back in our room and closed the door. Imagine you were one of those people. Does what Jesus said here have anything to do with that situation? Yes, it does. The argument happened because those two people had not gotten their way and their feelings had been hurt. Their pride had been offended and they had to set things "right." What if they did what Jesus said? What if they decided what was most important was sacrificing in this short term life for the long term good of treasures in heaven? What would happen? They would know that God has called them to forgive and to love and give grace. They would choose to express love, to serve the other person above their own good. And the argument would never happen, or it would be short and peaceful at worst.

If we learn from Jesus' story we will prepare for eternity by not pursuing our own agenda, seeking our own comfort, trying to establish our worth, impress other people, build up a financial kingdom, amass as much power as possible here on this earth. Instead we will seek to build God's kingdom, to humble ourselves, to bring God's grace and his love to everyone and every situation we encounter. Above all we will seek to serve and honor God.

#### HAVE AN ETERNAL VIEW OF LIFE

We are going to face stress, conflict, hardship, illness, loss and all manner of difficulties in this life. If we have that eternal view of life how will we see them? In 2 Corinthians 4:17 Paul called his "light and momentary troubles." Compared to eternity they are but a flicker.

I recently was communicating with a friend who is going through some very distressing and painful circumstances that are hard to comprehend. How are we to deal with such things that make no sense?

If we try to figure them out, to view them only through this life, it will never add up. We will be left confused, hopeless, cynical and bitter. There will be no joy at all. Just frustration, disappointment, loss of faith and hope. It is when we view it through the lens of eternity, that we know that eternity is coming and in eternity we will see the beauty of what God was doing, even in the hard things of life, that we get hope. The equation will only balance for us when we factor in eternity. This is the only way we can have hope in the face of the onslaughts of this world.

Paul David Tripp says this life is like camping. He says when you camp there is the initial excitement of arriving in nature and setting up camp. But then he says, "You're four days in and your back hurts, there seems to be no more felled wood to forage and you're tired of keeping the fire going anyway. You look into what was once an ice and food filled cooler to see the steaks (you brought) floating gray and oozing in a pool of blood-stained water. Suddenly you begin to think fondly of home. You stand there hoping that someone will break the silence and say, 'Why don't we go home?' Your four days in the wilderness have accomplished their mission. They have prepared you to appreciate home. He concludes, "I am persuaded that the whole purpose of camping is to make a person long for home!" If you were camping would it make sense to focus your whole being on piling up camping riches, treating this as if it was all that matters? That would be foolish. Expect it to be uncomfortable and remember the discomfort is aimed at pointing you toward home. This story by Jesus reminds us that in this world we are camping, and remembering that is what enables us to have hope and a clear mind about it.