



# MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church  
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<https://aulc.us>

**TITLE:** On Being a Fat Cell for Jesus

**SERMON IN A SENTENCE:** Christ calls us to prepare for eternity by generosity to people in need.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 12:32-40

Today's scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 12, verses 32 to 40.

Starting at verse 40:

Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Make money-bags for yourselves that won't grow old, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"Be ready for service and have your lamps lit.

You must be like people waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet so that when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once.

Those slaves the master will find alert when he comes will be blessed. I assure you: He will get ready, have them recline at the table, then come and serve them.

If he comes in the middle of the night, or even near dawn, and finds them alert, those slaves are blessed.

But know this: If the homeowner had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

You also be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.”

-- May the Lord add His Blessing to the reading of His Word!

-- Hello, I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries with our message this week.

-- I am happy that you can take a few minutes out of your busy week to be with us today!

Do you ever read stories or watch movies about dragons, those make-believe creatures that live in caves? The story is usually about how dragons guard their treasure of gold and jewels, breathing smoke and fire out of their mouths and noses if anyone tries to take their treasure.

Perhaps you have read stories about pirates who sailed the seas long ago and captured treasure such as gold and silver from other ships. They hid their treasure chests on islands. Then they drew maps to where the treasure was hidden so they could find it when they returned.

Maybe you have gone on a treasure hunt? It's a fun party game. Someone hides objects around the house or yard and then writes directions on pieces of paper. The treasure hunters must figure out, from the written clues, where the treasure is hidden.

A lot of time and effort can go into finding treasure and if we think about it a bit more we will discover that there are many kinds of treasure. The dictionary says a treasure is "any thing or person greatly valued or highly prized."

And, Jesus tells us that **"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"** (Luke 12:34).

When we store up treasure we should gather something that is really important. Love is a treasure. The Bible tells us that love is the greatest of all treasures. We don't have to hunt for love. It is inside of us at all times. We don't have to hide love or guard it. Love is meant to be shared with others. We give love and we also receive love that comes to us from our parents, grandparents, and friends.

Keep love in your heart. It is your greatest treasure.

What does it take to be secure? That's a question with a thousand answers:

- To be secure requires a good JOB, so we need to get a good education or learn a good trade.
- To be secure requires INSURANCE to protect us against catastrophe—life insurance, health insurance—car insurance. It probably makes sense to have an umbrella policy to protect against a wide variety of risks.
- To be secure requires CASH to tide us over in an emergency. Some people say that we should have a rainy day fund containing the equivalent of six-months wages.
- To be secure requires good HEALTH, so we need regular medical checkups—a healthy diet—regular exercise.

- To be secure requires us to be smart about FIRST AID and CPR—to be able to respond quickly and effectively to a medical emergency.
- To be secure requires PROTECTION FROM ACCIDENTS. Quite a number of people drive SUVs because, in a wreck, the person in the larger car usually wins.
- To be secure requires a FAMILY PLAN so that everyone will know how to respond in a major disaster. How can our kids contact us if phones no longer work? Where will we go to re-assemble the family? How will we get there?
- To be secure requires that we have basic EMERGENCY SUPPLIES—bottled water for a week—food—a good first aid kit—a camp stove—fuel.
- To be secure requires a GOVERNMENT PLAN to combat terrorism—to make airliners safe—to catch the bad guys before the next attack—to get emergency responders talking on the same wavelength—to protect nuclear facilities—to guard ports—to establish evacuation plans.
- Now they tell us that we need to GET SMART about the various kinds of attacks and how to respond to each of them. If a nuclear device detonates, avoid fallout by finding shelter in a basement. If it's just a dirty bomb, use a mask to avoid inhaling radioactive dust. In a chemical attack, go indoors and close the windows and doors tightly.

And those are just the things that come immediately to mind. As they say, the devil is in the details, and there must be a million details—so the list goes on and on.

And even if we do all those things, how do we protect ourselves against drunk drivers? How do we keep our kids from doing something stupid?

Honestly, as much as I believe in being prepared, I am prepared for some dangers and unprepared for others. Preparation makes good sense, but no amount of effort can protect us against every danger.

In our Gospel lesson today, Jesus takes a different approach to the issue of security. He has been talking about money and the security that it offers—or fails to offer. He told about a rich man who, upon becoming even richer, said, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry" (Luke 12:19). But God said, "You fool! This very night your soul is being demanded of you" (Luke 12:20).

Jesus' point is that money doesn't buy security. He advises us not to be consumed by money, but to be rich toward God. He advises us not to be consumed by concern for security in this life, but to store up treasure for eternity.

"Sell that which you have,  
and give gifts to the needy," Jesus says.

"Make for yourselves purses which don't grow old,  
a treasure in the heavens that doesn't fail,  
where no thief approaches,  
neither moth destroys" (verse 33 of our scripture text today).

Does Jesus mean that we must give away all our money? Probably not—although in one instance he did tell a man to do that (Luke 18:22).

Does Jesus mean that we shouldn't take reasonable precautions? No.

In this scripture, Jesus is calling us to lift our eyes from the everyday concerns that lie at our feet and to look to the horizon. He is calling us to see the big picture.

- He means that, if it's important to provide for our bodies, it's also important to provide for our souls.
- He means that, if it's important to guard our lives on earth, it's even more important to guard our lives for eternity.

And his one bit of advice on how to do that is this: **"Sell that which you have, and give gifts to the needy"**.

Jesus often emphasizes the special place that God has for the poor and the powerless—for widows and orphans—for the sick—for marginalized people. Jesus tells us that, if we want to show our love for God, one of the best ways to do that is by taking care of people in need.

- That might mean a donation to a local food pantry.
- It might mean an offering for disaster relief.
- It might mean helping a child to learn how to read.

There are a million ways to help the needy. What God expects of us depends on the opportunities that he places before us. We need to keep our EYES open to see those possibilities. We need to keep our HEARTS open to caring about people in need.

Some of you know of Philip Yancey, a wonderful Christian author. Some years ago, Yancey had the opportunity to meet Dr. Paul Brand, a surgeon who devoted his life to helping poor people in India. At one point in their conversation, Dr. Brand started talking about fat. You don't hear much that is good about fat today. We are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of fat—and of our growing obesity problem. But Dr. Brand brought a different perspective to fat. He said:

"Fat is absolutely gorgeous!

When I perform surgery,  
I marvel at the shimmering, lush layers of fat  
that spread apart as I open up the body.

Those cells insulate against cold,  
provide protection for the valuable organs underneath,  
and give a firm, healthy appearance to the whole body."

And then he continued:

"But those are just the side benefits.  
The real value of fat is as a storehouse.  
Locked in those fat cells are the treasures of the human body.

When I run or work or expend any energy,  
fat cells make that possible.  
They act as banker cells.

It's absolutely beautiful to observe  
the cooperation among those cells!"

Then Dr. Brand likened the fat in our bodies to the body of Christ. He said that every Christian in a wealthy country is like a fat cell in the body of Christ. Each one of us has the potential to help the rest of the Christian body when it is in need. Our great challenge is to use those resources well. Yancey concludes:

"Ever since talking to Dr. Brand,  
I have taken a sort of whimsical pleasure once each month  
in thinking of myself as a fat cell—  
on the day I write out checks for Christian organizations.

He says,

"It has helped my attitude.  
No longer do I concentrate on how I could have used that money I am giving away;  
rather, I contemplate my privilege to funnel those resources back into Christ's body  
to help accomplish his work all around the world."  
(from an article by Phillip Yancey, *World Concern Update*, Jan. 1982)

Most of us wish we were fatter—had more resources with which to help—could do more. God doesn't expect us to give what we DON'T have, but he does expect us to use what we DO have for the benefit of others—whether a little or a lot. In God's hands, a little becomes a lot. John Sutherland Bonnell put it this way:

"Take that gift that God has entrusted to you  
no matter how humble it may seem to be,  
and use it in the service of Christ and your fellow men.

Christ will make it glow and shine  
like the very stars of heaven."

Someone else put it this way:

"I am not everyone  
But I am someone.

I cannot do everything  
But I can do something.

What I can do  
I ought to do.

What I ought to do  
I will do, by the grace of God."

-- That's our Lord's message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!

-- Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed! -- For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!

-- Thank you all for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

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