

In Luke's Gospel, it never ends well if you're rich. In Luke's first century world, if one is rich, it's because the poor have been exploited and used. The rich get richer at the expense of the poor, who become more impoverished and oppressed. The pie is limited and a rich man has more than his fair share. This is not how God would have us live.

I wonder if Luke's retelling of Jesus' teaching to his disciples would have had the same power if he illustrated exactly what God DOES expect. Would a parable that goes something like this, have the same impact?

There once was a man who farmed a certain tract of land that had been in his family for generations. He carefully checked soil conditions and plowed in ways that minimized erosion. His irrigation techniques insured appropriate amounts of water to the crops and didn't short change others downstream. He only used organic fertilizer and was responsible and diligent in his pest control. He hired day laborers when he could and gave them a fair wage. Whether it was a good year for the crops or a bad year, he always made sure to leave more than enough for the widows and orphans to glean.

This year, he had a spectacular growing season and his per acre yield was beyond his wildest dreams.