

## The Rich Fool

Richard arrived on the movie set and was greeted with a hug and a slap on the back from the director, Joseph. "Good to see you again Richard. What treasures have you brought me today?" Richard waved several tractor trailer trucks over and instructed the men to gently unload them. Out rolled a sporty 1954 Nash-Healey Le Mans Coupe that was used in the film, Sabrina. "Richard, Richard, when are you going to sell me this beauty? You know I have wanted it for years." "It's my bread and butter, you know I can't let it go."

They both laughed and headed over to the movie set, a replica of part of the French Riviera, and discussed which car would go where and who would be driving which car. Richard owns one of the largest collections of vintage cars in Europe and leases his cars out to movie companies. His cars make films feel more realistic because they help the scenes to feel like the era in which the films are set.

A 1925 Silver Ghost Rolls Royce was rolled out and parked in the large tent that had been put up earlier in the day. The tent was large enough to house fourteen cars. It was important to load the cars in order of use in film scenes.

Richard's cars were immaculate and so valuable that armed guards patrolled the tent twenty-four hours a day. Every car had a tracking device in case one was stolen.

Richard enjoyed his work. Filming with his cars usually lasted seven or eight days. Each car was pristine and Richard aimed to keep them that way. He personally parked each car on the streets of the set and he spent several hours training actors to handle vintage cars so they would be at ease driving them. There would be no cologne, perfume, hand lotions, food or beverages in his cars.

Richard usually stayed in a luxury apartment on wheels, parked next to the car tent. His crew slept in the extended cabs of their tractor trailers. They had almost every comfort of home. He wanted the crew to be alert and well rested when transporting his cars. Before turning in for the night, Richard received a phone call he had been waiting for. He was the highest bidder for the famous Fabio car collection, twenty three cars that formerly belonged to one of the richest families in Italy. He had much to do when he got home, arranging transport and taking delivery of the new cars.

He had been thinking about where to house them in case his bid was the winning bid. Because he owned so many cars, he decided to tear down his smaller showroom garages and build one mega showroom garage that could house every car, with room for a few more. As he lay in bed envisioning the design of his new mega showroom, he heard someone calling him. He got up to see if there was trouble with the cars. All was well so he went back to bed. Again, he heard a voice call his name and this time the voice said; "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get your cars?" Shaking, he thought this must be a joke, one of the film crew must have planted a microphone somewhere." He called Joseph, the director, told him what happened and asked that the crew come remove the microphone. It wasn't the least bit funny. Joseph said "he would be right over."

Joseph was out of breath when he arrived, he must have run all the way over, and he was carrying a book under his arm. "Richard, sit down quickly, we may not have much time." "What's with you Richard, you act as if this is a great emergency." "It is my friend. Sit and listen as I read to you." The book he brought was a Bible and he opened it to Luke

12:16-21; and he read him this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, “What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.” “Then he said, ‘ This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry. “But God said to him, You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

Speaking urgently and quickly, Joseph looked intently at Richard and said; “God has spoken to you tonight Richard. He is telling you that you do not own your possessions, but your possessions own you. A person who has wealth is tempted to devote their life guarding and growing their possessions. True security is not in wealth. After all, when you die you can’t take it with you. Notice that this man only talked with himself about what he would do to make his life one of ease. It was all about him. And he was going to tear down perfectly fine barns to build a bigger barn for just one year’s bumper crop? The burden of his possessions worried him. Instead of thanking God for the bumper crop he was given, or rejoicing in the opportunity it would give him to help the poor and needy, he was consumed with how to guard his new wealth. What if fire, flood or tornado ruined or destroyed his possessions? He would have nothing to show for his gain. The things he was hoarding were not his. He did not own them, they all belong to God and we all are just stewards of them for God.”

“Richard, God knows what we do, what we think, and the motives of our choices. Even though our friendship may come to an end, I will tell you plainly; Richard, the man in this story is you. Gathering and collecting cars. Hiring guards to protect them. Building luxury accommodations for them. They are for your enjoyment only, they don’t benefit anyone but you. You could have auctioned some cars off for charity, to improve the lives of others, but you spend your life admiring and caring for your wealth. Just as these movie sets are not real, your life is not real. It is lived only to benefit yourself and your wealth.”

With tears running down his cheeks he said; “Richard, God told you your life is coming to an end tonight. If you don’t repent of your sins right now and ask God to forgive you for these sins, you are not going to heaven. Ask God to give you another chance to live for Him and to do as He says. Quickly, let me tell you about Jesus and how you can invite Jesus into your heart as your personal Savior and make a commitment to live for Him.”

Over the next two years, Richard’s cars were put up for sale at auctions. The money was used to build orphanages, and housing for widows and the homeless. Job training was provided so the disadvantaged could find jobs. Soup kitchens were opened and families in third world countries were shown how to irrigate and farm their land. Richard’s money could not do everything, but what it did do was a blessing to many people. Richard would be pleased to see the ongoing results. He died three months ago and went home to be with his Lord, whom he loved dearly. Richard was truly transformed one night on a movie lot when the Lord spoke to Him and gave him another chance at life. Joseph never made another movie. He and Richard set up a foundation, working with churches worldwide to reach others for Christ by first meeting the needs of people. Oh yes, the fancy showrooms and the property they sit on are now free health clinics staffed by volunteer dentists and doctors. Richard built a small chapel there too. Richard’s legacy lives on in the changed lives of people, not through a showroom full of cars.