

PARABLES - OF JESUS -

WEEK 6 – THE RICH MAN & LAZARUS

PARABLE: A simple story with a spiritual truth.

Luke 16:19-31 [NLT]

¹⁹Jesus said, “There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. ²⁰At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. ²¹As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. ²²Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

²⁴The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’ ²⁵But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. ²⁶And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.’

²⁷Then the rich man said, ‘Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father’s home. ²⁸For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don’t end up in this place of torment.’ ²⁹But Abraham said, ‘Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.’ ³⁰The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.’ ³¹But Abraham said, ‘If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

The Kingdom of God has a different VALUE system.

Lesson from the rich man:

God will hold us accountable for our INACTION.

"There is something profoundly hypocritical about praising God for God's mighty deeds of salvation and cooperating at the same time with the demons of destruction, whether by neglecting to do good or by actively doing evil... Without action in the world, the adoration of God is empty and hypocritical, and degenerates into irresponsible and godless quietism." - Miroslav Volf

Lesson from Lazarus:

God throws the weight of His power behind those who are OPPRESSED.

Luke 1:53 [NLT]

He has satisfied the hungry with good things....

Luke 4:18 [NLT]

He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released...

Luke 6:21 [NIV]

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God...

SO WHAT?

What INACTION do you need to turn into ACTION?

James 1:22 [NIV]

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

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How to start a relationship with God:

- 1) Admitting that you, like everyone else, are in need of rescue.
- 2) Asking God to forgive your sins.
- 3) Saying YES to God by trusting Jesus as Savior & Lord.

You can do that right now by simply talking to God in a prayer like this:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. Today, I receive you as my Savior; and I put my faith in you as my LORD. Help me to look to you and follow you all the days of my life. In Your name, Amen.

For Further Reflection:

:: Talk through the ‘surprise reversal’ of this parable:

:: How does this parable communicate that the Kingdom of God values things differently than what we see from the kingdoms on earth?

:: What are some of the major ‘value’ differences between these two kingdoms?

:: Pastor Josh mentions that God will hold us accountable for our inaction.

:: What do you think are the motivating factors/temptations behind choosing ‘quietism’ in the face of evil?

:: What does the Lazarus perspective of this story teach us about the heart of God?

:: Check out Luke 1:46-55; Luke 4:18-19; Luke 6:20-23. What do these passages communicate about the heart of God towards the downtrodden?

:: How does this line up with the rest of the scriptures? Are there any other scriptures that speak to this issue? (Spoiler: Yes!)

:: Practically speaking, in what ways does this parable challenge you? Where do you need to turn ‘inaction’ into action?

:: Identify one thing you can do this week to help alleviate suffering in this world.

:: This parable can offer other bits of wisdom. What other truths or challenges can you glean by studying this parable from Jesus?

Unless otherwise noted, today’s Scripture is from the New Living Translation [NLT].

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