

# Lazarus And The Rich Man

## - *Luke 16:20-31*

- This morning we are going to be talking about a sobering subject, but an important one ... **DEATH**. Man is the only creature that knows that he's going to die, and he's trying desperately to forget the fact that he's going to die. And if you mention death, there are people who will get a little nervous, and they will change the subject, they don't want to think about death.
- We do everything we can do to disguise death. But, folks, reason and experience tells us that death is a real factor. We're going to die. I'm going to die. You're going to die. And may I say this: Until you are prepared to die, you're not ready to live.
- In the passage that we will be reading this morning and even the preceding verse, Jesus had been speaking to his disciples while the Pharisees had been listening in.
  - In previous verses, Jesus had been speaking with them on the love of money and they had laughed and sneered at Jesus for the Pharisees were a very greedy group of people.
  - But Jesus in verse 15 at least seems to quite them for the moment when He proclaims – “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts.”
- In verse 19, Jesus leads into an illustration where He uses the love of money to describe the lives of 2 men from 2 different walks of life and he notes several differences about them.

### I. Difference #1: Life (vv.20-21)

#### a. Rich Man

- i. The Bible tells us a little about the rich man and the extent of his wealth by saying:
  - 1. He was “clothed in purple and fine linen”.
    - a. This man was extremely wealthy and he wanted to make sure everyone around him knew it by wearing only the finest clothing and garments which was typically suited only for a King.
  - 2. He “faired sumptuously every day”.
    - a. This is not a man who would frequent McDonald’s or the Waffle House. He wanted only the best of meals and would put on great feast almost daily.
- ii. He was among the elite of society because his money and his fortune allowed him to do things that most men could only dream of doing.

#### b. Lazarus

- i. Then we have Lazarus. Lazarus was as complete opposite of the rich man as you could get.
  - 1. He had no possessions, he had no money, he did not even have a place to stay apparently because we find him lying at the gate of the city.
  - 2. He was sick & crippled.
    - a. He had sores upon his body that often times would react like what we call ulcers that caused great pain and infection. The Bible tells us that the dogs would come and lick his wounds.
    - b. He could not walk apparently and certainly could not work, and as far as society was concerned he was worthless and a liability to society.

3. This poor man did not even have enough food to meet his own needs and found himself begging for just the crumbs from the King's table.
  - ii. Lazarus was a pitiful man physically when compared to this rich man. We have one who possesses everything a man could want and another who laid at the gate begging from others.
    1. Did the rich man know Lazarus? I feel sure he did.
      - a. He probably passed by and heard him cry out many times.
      - b. No doubt he could have helped him out by feeding him occasionally.
      - c. He could have surely given him some of his old clothes to have and cover himself with.
      - d. But instead the rich man passed by, just like many others, only concerned with his own desires and what pleased him.
- **As sad as this story seems and as tragic it seems that no one was willing to help Lazarus, what we see in the following verses is even more tragic.**
- **Lazarus may have had a rough life, things may not have always gone his way, to some he was a waste to society, but his struggles in this life were temporary compared to eternity.**

## II. **Difference #2: Death (vv. 22)**

### a. **Death Is No Respector Of Persons**

- i. Though the similarities between these 2 men seem endless, there is one thing that both men had to endure, and that was death.
  1. Hebrews 9:27 – “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”
  2. The rich man bought a lot of things to make his life better. He could pay people to be his friends, to make his life comfortable and to make him happy.
  3. He was stingy in that he could not even think of helping a poor beggar lying at the King's gate.
  4. Yet when death came his way, his money could no longer help him.
    - a. It could not buy him more time.
    - b. It could not ease his pain.
    - c. Nor could it secure his eternity.
- ii. Should the Lord delay His return, let me remind you that death will visit each of us one day.
  1. No amount of good works,
  2. No amount of money,
  3. No matter how good of shape you are in,
  4. No matter what your last name or who your family is,
  5. Death will come our way one day.
    - a. It may be 30 years from now, it might be 5 years from now, it might be sometime next year or it may be tomorrow.
    - b. We do not have the ability to control our next breath, only God does.

### b. **Death Is NOT The End**

- i. The Bible tells us that the rich man was buried.

1. He more than likely had a very expensive funeral filled with all of the finest treasures, spices and garments his money could buy.
2. Lazarus on the other hand was probably not even given a descent burial.
  - a. Some scholars have even suggested that his body was more than likely tossed in a garbage heap and not even entreated to a proper burial.
- ii. Nevertheless, though many on earth thought that their life was over as they laid their bodies back in the earth, in essence it had just begun.
  1. For some reason, many believe that this life is all that there is so we had better “live it up” while we can.
  2. But the reality is, this life is nothing more than preparation for eternity, to prepare and organize our lives so that we can enjoy Heaven as Lazarus did, which leads me to point #3. . .

### **III. Difference #3: Eternity**

#### **a. Lazarus Died And Was Carried To Heaven (v.22a)**

- i. The Bible tells us in the first part of v.22 that Lazarus “died, and was carried by the Angels to Abraham’s bosom.”
  1. “To be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord.”
- ii. What a joy it must have been for Lazarus to know that his struggles in life were over:
  1. No more begging for crumbs, for now he would sit at the King’s table as an invited guest.
  2. No longer would he have to tolerate a broken body, he now would be given a new body with which to worship the Lord for eternity.
  3. He was looked upon as pitiful on this earth b/c he had nothing & begged from others, but now he had the riches of Heaven at his disposal b/c he was now a child of the King.

#### **b. The Rich Man Died And Was Cast Into Hell (v.22b-23)**

- i. The rich man on the other hand lifted up his eyes in a place of torment and anguish and pain, a place called hell.
  1. Church, Hell is still a real place today.
    - a. Our society & entertainment field has made a mockery of Hell, but it doesn’t take away from its existence.
    - b. In the Bible, there are at least 162 texts in the New Testament which deal with the eternal punishment of the lost sinner. Over 70 of these were uttered by Jesus Christ Himself.
    - c. Let me ask this question. If there is no hell from which people need to be saved, why did Jesus die? Did Jesus die upon that cross to save you from a non-existent destiny?
      - i. Hell is a place of torment (vv.23, 24, 25)
      - ii. Hell is a place of separation (Matt.25-41)
      - iii. Hell is a place of remembrance (v.25)
  2. The rich man found out too late that there is life after death and all of the things he had leaned on all his life (power, money, and possessions) would now do him no good.

- ii. It is interesting that the Bible points out that the rich man seen Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom and he actually makes several requests of Lazarus.
  1. v.24 – "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."
    - a. Imagine that, one of the first thing he sees in hell is the very one that he had tortured and made fun off.
    - b. And though he had never been a man of prayer, he immediately prayed and asked Abraham to have mercy on him and allow the one who had begged from him so many times to bring him just a drop of water to try and relieve his pain.
    - c. Abraham recalls to the rich man the many struggles that Lazarus had been through in his life and the great truth found in the scriptures that you reap what you sow:
      - i. The nights sleeping by the gate b/c he had nowhere else to go.
      - ii. The tears he shed begging for people just to give him some change or a crumb to quench his hunger.
      - iii. The agony and shame of not being able to do for himself and depending on others.
      - iv. And then Abraham says in essence, "You have enjoyed the best of your life and now must face your punishment while Lazarus days of heartache are over and he will now be comforted."
      - v. Even if Abraham had wanted to help him, there is a separation in eternity from the Redeemed and the condemned.
  2. v.27 – "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:"
    - a. The man who had no time for God desires to be a missionary now and allow Lazarus to save his family.
    - b. He in essence states, "If Lazarus can't help me, at least allow him to go and tell my family of this terrible place."
    - c. One of the great regrets those will have in hell is that they reject the free gift of salvation that was offered to them by Jesus Christ.
      - i. In hades, the rich man could see, hear, and speak. He could feel. He could reason, and, above all, he could remember.
    - d. But another regret will be that they led many of the friends and family to this great place of torment.
      - i. It will not be a "big party" and gathering like many joke of.
      - ii. Neither will it be a place where they will continue living in mockery of God.
      - iii. Hell will be a real place with real people experiencing real pain and torment for eternity.
    - e. Abraham reminded the rich man that God had sent enough prophets for them to believe:
      - i. Moses
      - v. Ezekiel

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| ii. David   | vi. Isaiah     |
| iii. Daniel | vii. Job       |
| iv. Ezra    | viii. Jeremiah |

f. How many must God send? If they won't listen to these, neither will they listen to one that was raised from the dead.

- **What a sad statement. To think that a man would lay aside his eternity just to enjoy the pleasures of this life for a while.**
  - But you know, people are continuing to do the same thing today.
- **Let me say that the rich man was not condemned because he was rich, nor was Lazarus saved because he was poor.**
  - They both made decisions on what or Who they would trust that determined their eternal destiny.
    - The rich man trusted in his riches, his power and his possessions.
    - Lazarus just simply trusted in Jesus.
  - You may choose to go to Hell, but it won't be b/c God didn't do everything to make an escape.
    - God has put some mountains, some blockades between you and hell.
      - This service today.
      - The Word of God.
      - The prayers of others.
      - The witness of others.
      - The convicting power of the Holy Spirit.
      - The love of God.
- **Jesus asks us a very sobering question in Mark 8:36 - "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"**
  - What good will it do for you to gain all of the wealth and all the power of this world only to reject Christ?
- **What will your answer be?**
  - If you were to stand before a Holy God today, why should He let you in to Heaven?
  - If your answer is anything but pleading the blood of Jesus, you will be denied.