

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (i)

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- [0 : 0 0] And we can read verses 19 and 22 again. Luke chapter 16, reading first of all verse 19.
- Before us here is a very famous parable, in fact, one of the most famous and most popular of all parables.
- In fact, this parable and probably the parable that closes the previous chapter, chapter 15, will be, I would assume, the most famous of all the parables.
- The parable here of Lazarus and the rich man, and in chapter 15, the parable of the prodigal son. In this parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we have presented before us two men.
- Two different characters, two different lives, and two different eternities. And we have here revealed to us the eternal state of two different men.
- [1 : 2 7] This rich man and verse 20, Lazarus. The parable is actually unique in giving a name to somebody. This is something you don't normally see.
- You don't normally see anybody in any of the parables having a name. But here, one of these men is given a name. And I wish, if I may, today and this morning and this evening, to cover both of these men in the two services, to reflect here just now on the rich man, and then this evening, God willing, on Lazarus.
- And we have before us here, in this parable, a story that conveys a message. And a message that is the most serious and solemn of messages.
- And it is, of course, for us, our pressing burden. As we consider these men, and we consider their life, the end of their life, and where they end up.
- One of the men, as I've said, is named as Lazarus. The other man, the rich man who we consider just now, does not receive a name. But what we find with him is the kind of life he lives and where his eternity is.
- [2 : 4 3] That this man died unconverted. And so revealed to us is what occurs to those who are unconverted after they leave this world.
- So I want to look very simply at this parable. First of all, the life and character of this man. Because as we survey and reflect upon what is described for us when this man opens his eyes in eternity, what we have to take consideration, first of all, of is the kind of life and behavior that led to where he ended up.
- We know that he goes to a lost eternity. And to the man himself, it was a surprise that he found himself there. It was also a surprise, as we'll see in a moment, to his audience.
- As they reflected and listened to this story. And it calls us to wrestle in our own minds with that great, great question. What does it require for us to be saved?
- What must we do to ensure that we are not lost? What must I do to be saved? And as we see two different men here and two different situations that are contrasting one from the other, we recognize, of course, that this is not about poverty or riches.
- [4 : 1 4] This is about how we relate to these things and how we relate to everything. How we relate to the gospel. How we relate to the demands of the gospel.

How we relate to people. And also our possessions. And to see for ourselves that our life is a time of opportunity. Opportunity to do good.

And opportunity to prepare ourselves for what is certain and what is before us. For we know that our lives are short. And one day we too must leave this world.

In verse 19 we have the description of the man in his life. We are told that he was clothed in purple. Purple, of course, was the kind of clothing that the rich people or royalty would wear.

And fine linen to emphasize what his clothes were like. He feasted sumptuously every day. And so we are told here that this is a man of possessions.

[5 : 19] Of reputation. This is a man who was well off. He had a great deal of comforts of this life. He enjoyed the luxuries of this life. And in fact his life displayed to us seems to be quite extravagant.

He had the finest of things. And he enjoyed them all. He had wealth and means. That displayed a sense of exaltation in his own culture and in his own life.

And he thought himself that he was blessed. That he had been blessed by God. And he actually, in a faulty way too, actually thought that his riches affirmed this.

That he thought he was blessed. Now it's not wrong for us to have certain things in their own context. We know here that there is a reference to Abram.

And the Bible speaks of Abram as somebody who was rich. But the question really is not what we have. But what they're for.

[6 : 27] And how we use what God has given to us. At the beginning of the chapter we heard of a manager. A manager or in the older version it used the word steward.

We are stewards of the resources that God gives to us. And so there is a sense of which we have choices. We have choices in what we do with what we have.

In who we are. In how we treat people. In who it is we serve and what we use our riches for. And I know for ourselves.

Maybe we are inclined to think. Well we are not rich. But we are. The majority of the world. Is a lot, lot poorer than we are.

The generations before us. Would not have imagined. The kind of lifestyles that we live. And here the context. As I've touched on just briefly.

[7 : 29] Is that there is a context here. Of an audience. Of those who are listening. To Jesus. Jesus has told them a parable. In chapter 16.

In verses 1 to 13. Where he's questioned them. In verse 9. I tell you make friends for yourselves. By means of unrighteous wealth. So that when it fails.

You may receive yourself into the eternal dwelling. So he's bringing a challenge to them. Then in verse 13. He goes on to emphasize this. No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God.

And money. Then we are immediately told. Who's listening? In verse 14. The Pharisees. Who were lovers of money.

Heard all these things. And they ridiculed him. Here they are. In a demonstration. Of the height of hypocrisy. In their own religiosity.

[8 : 29] In their own sense. Of separating themselves. From others. In their own self-exaltation. In their own even mocking. Of the demands. Of the gospel. And yet all the while.

Their hearts are desirous. Of the things of this world. And Jesus is speaking to them. And he's portraying this man before them. And they are watching.

And listening to Jesus. And they're hearing this parable. And they're hearing what this description is like. Here is a man who's enjoying himself. Who's received many things in this world.

Many things. Of comfort. And luxury. And ease. And he's rewarding himself. He loves what he has. He loves his position.

He loves his wealth. He loves his friends. He loves his feasting with them. He loves his clothes. The clothes that he wears. He has all of these things.

[9 : 28] Everything anyone could imagine. That was desirous to have. His position. His money. All of these things. He needs nothing.

He's got plenty friends. Plenty feasting. He is living in this manner. And this way. And he is seen in this community as someone. Who people would like to be like.

And he displays his character. We can see it in his life. He feasts sumptuously. Every day. Every day. Huge meals. Every day.

The best of food. Every day. Feasting with others. And he is parading his riches. Purple. And fine linen. The materialism. Of the world. The worldiness.

The hedonism. The indulgence. All themselves. Being united. With this carelessness. Of spiritual things. Not that.

[10 : 26] He is completely void. Of such. But rather. Here he is. He thinks himself as religious. In verse 24. Father Abraham. He's a Jew.

Verse 31. He speaks of Moses. And the prophets. He knows all these things. He's heard the law. He's been under the law. He's attended worship. He even believes that God has blessed him.

In this life. In chapter 18. There is. There. The rich young ruler. Who comes to Jesus. And he thinks himself. That he has been blessed by God.

In the reality. Of all the things he had. And then Jesus challenges him. And Jesus is. How difficult it is. For those who have no wealth. Who have wealth. To enter the kingdom of God.

Luke 18. Verse 24. This is the false understanding. That he has. That because he has riches. And friends. And a lifestyle. And he thinks himself.

[11 : 24] That he is a good person. That he is okay. And the Pharisees. Living. Listening to. What Jesus is saying here. Would affirm this truth as well.

Well. They think that he has been blessed by God. But here he is. Living for the temporary things. God has made us for more than that.

We are made in his image. And in his likeness. Not to live for the temporary. We've got to live in the temporary. But our minds and our hearts.

Are to contemplate. And to meditate. And pursue. The heavenly treasure. The heavenly treasure. And his character is set here.

A character of somebody. Who wants to treat himself well. Who takes the choices. And the opportunity. To do much good for himself. And yet all the time.

[12 : 22] There is an opportunity. To do good to others. That he is failing to do. In verse 20. At his gate. Now a gate. Amongst the Jewish people. Was quite unusual.

And that displays more. And affirms the reality of his wealth. At his gate. Was laid a poor man. Named Lazarus. This poor man.

Is laid at the gate. The word laid here. Is the word thrown. He's been dumped. At the gate of the rich man. And so other people in the community.

Have left him there. And the man is disabled. To some extent. And he's covered in sores. He cannot move himself. He is dependent upon the charity. Of other people. He is vulnerable. And needy. And the people in the community.

Have seen the rich man. And thought. Well this is his problem. We leave him there. And they dumped him at the gate. And thought it was this man's problem. And we're told here.

[13 : 20] That he did nothing. In verse 21. Lazarus desired to be fed. What fed fell from the rich man's table. Even just the crumbs.

That meant absolutely nothing. To the rich man. That just fell off the table. And he never gave a second thought. For here is a man outside. The gate.

Right next to him. Walking past him. And he wouldn't give him a crumb. And he did nothing for him.

And he ignored the poor man. Maybe he had reconciled in his own thoughts. Maybe it's his own fault. Maybe Lazarus is there because.

It's his own fault. He knew Lazarus. He knew Lazarus. Verse 24. Send Lazarus. He knows his name. But he passes by him. Every day.

[14 : 25] And we think. How heartless this is. How does this happen? How does it happen? That we pass by the needy.

Every day. And our hearts are closed to the needs. That are around us. The question. The question. The question.

Not just of. How it is. To pass by. But the real question here is. What happens. After this life.

And how is it. We are saved. Jesus speaks to that great question. In Luke 10. And Luke. Chapter 18. In Luke chapter 10.

He is being asked. By a lawyer. What shall I do. To enter eternal life. The good. The rich young ruler. In chapter 18. Verse 18. Asks the same question.

[15 : 22] And into this. Jesus declares. The commandments. To try and awaken. The conscience. And then he declares. The kind of life. The person who is saved.

Lives. It's a life. That loves God. And loves. Their neighbor. In fact. In chapter 10. Jesus responds.

The lawyer. And he gives to him. The parable. Of the good Samaritan. And the question. In this regard. As we now come. To the parable. Of rich man. And Lazarus. Why is the rich man.

Not the good Samaritan. Where is the good Samaritan. Where is the man. Who crosses. The other side of the road. When he sees. And is aware. Of a need. And is willing. To pay out of his own pocket.

To help care. For another. Where is that love. That real. Practical. And genuine love. That is itself. Identified.

[16 : 18] As part. Of saving faith. Where is it. The problem here is. That this man. Loved himself. Not God. He loved his wealth.

Not his neighbor. We see his life. And character. Being portrayed to us. But secondly. We see his eternal state. Being declared. As well. And being described.

For us here too. Because what we're told. In verse 22. Is that the rich man died. And we believe. We'll. God willing. Come to Lazarus.

In the evening. But we're told. First of all. The poor man died. Then the rich man died. And so. Maybe in our own minds. We're thinking. That Lazarus. Is already dead. And sometime.

Time afterwards. The rich man died. The poor man. Is dead. And then the rich man. This is the one thing. We cannot escape. The one inescapable reality.

[17 : 14] That we cannot avoid. That is absolutely. Unavoidable. This is the great leveler. Rich or poor. Many possessions. Or none.

Living a place. With big gates. Or living on the side. Of the street. Feasting every day. Or starving for crumbs. This is the great leveler. This is the great reality.

Where there becomes. This separation. We are separated. From our bodies. And we are separated. From this world. And we are separated. From our possessions.

And when we think. About possessions. They are of value to us. They are important to us. And yet. When we are gone. And when people are gone. We ask ourselves.

Who then. Will these things be? What is going to happen. To all of these possessions? We will not take them. With us. But the greater question is.

[18 : 11] Where will we be? What will happen to us? The rich man also died. Verse 22. And was buried. We don't read about Lazarus being buried.

But this man was buried. And the burial was appropriate. The burial is what we do. To affirm. The reality of God's promises. And the value.

Of the body. That God has given to us. And he had a burial. He had a funeral. He had people attending. He had people celebrating him. He had people missing him.

But he was gone. And his soul is separated. From his body. And the next image is one.

Which he didn't expect. His soul arrives in a place. That he didn't expect to be there. He never thought. He'd be there. In verse 23.

[19 : 14] In Hades. In torment. He lifted up. His eyes. When his soul awakens.

He sees. His torment. And the consequence of his life. His conduct. His behavior. His lifestyle.

The consequences. Of all his actions. And all his responsibilities. Have taken him. There. This is the lost.

Eternity. This is the real place. That is there. And. I fear. That we lack. That we lack.

To mention this. I fear. That people are scared. Of talking about this. Why is that so? Is this not absolutely essential for us?

[20 : 15] Is this not what Jesus warns us of? Is it not absolutely essential and intrinsic to my calling to stand here and to warn you? Don't go there.

Don't let yourself end up there. Is it not essential for you to be warned? To flee from the wrath to come? And is it not essential to?

For you not to make wrong assumptions about yourself? And to get this absolutely right? Any sense of true love for the people? Will declare this great truth.

That there is a hell. And that. People will go there. Who do not turn from their sin. And turn to Christ.

That this is the place for the unconverted. I would say to you that the language for hell in the Bible. I would say that it is figurative or symbolic.

[21 : 16] And different words are used here. Hades. That's the word in the Greek. It was used in a general sense for the place of the dead. The word genna is also used. Genna was a place outside of the city of Jerusalem.

Where there was the rubbish placed in a fire. And the fire continued to go on day and night. And the people just kept putting the rubbish out there. The constant fire.

Jesus speaks of hell as a place where the worm does not die. Where there is outer darkness. Where there is constant torment. Here is where the unrepentant life takes people.

And the worm that does not die. The torment that is spoken of here. I would say to you. Is the torment of the conscience. That this is what is going on.

That the punishment of hell is not something that is corrective. You know some of the sentences that the judges and the courts announce.

[22 : 19] Are sentences that maybe will try and put other people off as a deterrent. Or some kind of correction. So that somebody would spend so much time in jail. And they'll never do that crime again.

They'll get out and they'll be transformed and changed. And never do that again. This is not what this is. This is not corrective. This is not temporary.

This is eternal. In verse 24. Send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in the water and cool my tongue. I'm in anguish in this flame.

It's a place and a time. That's too late for mercy. Where hope is gone. In verse 24.

He wants a drop of water. For him a drop of water would be a great relief. Just a little drop. The torment is so great.

[23 : 19] He just wants a little tiny relief. You notice what he asks for in verse 24. He called out. Father Abraham. Have mercy on me.

And let him dip the end of his finger in water. He does not ask to get out. When he awakens and he lifts his eyes in that lost eternity.

At first he is shocked and surprised because he never thought he'd be there. But then his conscience is working there and tormenting him. And the person who is in hell will come to realize that they are receiving justice.

That this is not unjust. This is what they deserve. And coming into their mind will be all the excuses they made under the gospel.

All the days and years that they put off the business of their soul. And their business with God. Now their minds, their conscience are alive to convict them.

[24 : 24] In a way and in a manner and in a way that they'd never experienced before. He's woken up to see that he belongs there. Because he ignored his spiritual responsibilities.

And he declares now to Abraham that he wants Lazarus to come. He knew Lazarus. He knew his name.

He knew he was dead. And yet he walked past him in the days of opportunity. He showed him no mercy. And to the one who he didn't even give a crumb to.

He wants a drop of water from him. And it cannot be done. In verse 25. He said, you are in anguish.

And verse 26. Besides all this, between us and you there's a great chasm. None may cross from there. You are here for eternity. And the moment of realization comes.

[25 : 29] No escape. No help. No mercy. No relief. Not even a single drop of water.

And this is forever. It will never end. And he's come to recognize his failure before God. In this unrelenting, unending agony.

That continues to go on. And yet even in the midst of it all, you still see his character. He says to Abraham, send Lazarus.

Get him there. As if Lazarus is below him. Still below him. And the call here is, he can't do it.

It can't happen. And so there's a second plea in verse 27. A second plea from hell. I beg you, Father. Send him to my father's house. Warn them, my five brothers.

[26 : 30] Lest they come into this place of torment. He says, now send him there. Tell him to tell them. They knew Lazarus too. They knew he was dead too.

If he appears before them. If he tells them what's going on here. They won't come. And sometimes we almost think of this as evangelical. As if he's concerned for their souls.

He's not concerned for their souls. He's concerned for himself. Because as each one of these brothers would enter into a lost eternity.

His conscience would feel the weight. That he led them there. We are an example to people in this life.

Whether we like it or not. Have we been those who have been an example of good things of the gospel? Or have we been diverting other people from God's blessing?

[27 : 34] Even our own family. Are we giving them the wrong impression? The extravagance. The worldliness.

The lifestyle. The lack of care. The lack of concern. The reality of not being ready for eternity. Abram says in verse 31.

If they do not hear Moses and the prophets. Neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead. Of course in a sense here. That the Lord is bringing into this disciple. To the Pharisees.

His own resurrection. One did rise. And they did not believe. But what Abram is saying here in the parable is. They have enough.

They have enough. And so do you. You have enough.

[28 : 33] I wonder what you've done with it. The appalling thing here is. That the Lord is directing these words. The Pharisees.

Who thought they were religious. Who thought they were going to heaven. Elsewhere in John chapter 5. We find Jesus here. Speaking in this manner.

And saying. You search the scriptures. Because you think. That in them you have eternal life. It is they that bear witness about me.

There is a warning here. That we are under a test in this life. With what we do. With our possessions. Our relationships. With the gospel.

With God's will. To question us. Are we really God's people? Because there is here a warning against worldliness. A worldliness in our hearts.

[29 : 33] In our minds. In our behavior. There is a warning against living. In a way and manner. That seeks always to satisfy self. With the disconnect.

From the reality of what God demands. From us. The right response here. Is based on truth. What Jesus calls us to.

In order to inherit eternal life. Is quite clear. He says we're to follow him. We're to take up our cross.

We're to deny ourselves. I say these things to you. Because I don't want you to go there.

And I don't really think you want to go there yourself. But time is running out. Time is running out.

[30 : 32] There is a gospel here for you. It's here today. In his power to transform. And bring life to you. I want God willing to come back this evening.

And look at the positive response. But I want you to ask your own soul. Are you sure you know where you're going? Are you sure you're going to be safe?

Amen. Amen. With the Lord. Bless our thoughts together. Let's pray together. Gracious and most holy God. We give thanks to you for your word. And for its solemn truth that searches us.

And searches our hearts and lives. We pray that you'd help us to ensure. That our lives are founded upon the rock. Who is Christ. Bless us then we pray. And all we ask is in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. We'll sing again to God's praise on page 209. Where we find Psalm 9.

[31 : 31] And we'll sing verses 15 to 19. Sorry. Verses 15 to 20. The heathen are sunk in the pit. Which they themselves prepared. And the net which they have hid. Their own feet fast are snared. The Lord is by the judgment known. Which he himself hath wrought. The sinner's hands to make the snares.

Wherewith themselves are caught. Those who are wicked into hell. Each one shall turn be. And all the nations that forget. To seek the Lord most high. For they that needy are. Shall not forgotten be always.

The expectation of the poor. Shall not be lost for a. Arise Lord. Let not man prevail. Judge heathen in thy sight. That they may know themselves.

But men. The nations Lord. Afright. Let's stand to sing these words. And remain standing for the appendix. Amen. The heathen are sunk in the pit.

[32 : 37] Which they themselves prepared. And in the net which they have hid.

Their own feet fast are snared. The Lord is by the judgment known.

Which he himself hath wrought. The sinners. The sinners comes to make the snares.

Wherewith themselves accord. The who are wicked into hell, each war shall turn and be.

And all the nations that forget to seek the Lord most high.

[34 : 14] For they that needy are shall not forecourt and be.

The expectation of the poor shall not be lost for him.

Arise, Lord, let not man prevail. Just heeth and in thy sight.

That they may know themselves but men. The nations, Lord, have right.

May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and every way. The Lord be with you all. Amen.