

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 September 2015

Preacher: Rev Robert Sinclair

- [0 : 0 0] I'd like to jump back again to the passage we looked at this morning, the Gospel of Luke and chapter 16, chapter 19.
- Story with the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man who was clothed in purple and signed linen and was feasted sumptuously every day.
- And the poor man Lazarus who was clothed at his source and laid at his gate. We told the poor man died and was carried, verse 22, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side.
- The rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham, Pharaoh, and Lazarus at his side.
- And he called out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue.
- [1 : 0 7] But I am in anguish in this flame. Especially these words in verse 25. But Abraham said, Child or son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things.
- And Lazarus and like man are bad or evil things. But now he is comforted here. And you are in anguish. Here's the words in verse 25.
- Child, remember. I'm sure you've heard of the experience.
- People trying to arrange surprise parties for those who they want to show their affection for. Usually something always happens.
- And the cat is let at the bag and the person somehow knows. These judgment parables of the Lord, this is one of them, is just that sort of experience that this man had.
- [2 : 2 0] And others also, if you think of the five foolish virgins, what a surprise they had is they tried to gain entrance into the feast.
- And they found the door was locked. And they were told, We do not know you here. I do not know you.
- The sheep and the goats. Those who went to the Lord. And the sheep were taken in. And the goats were denied entrance. Because they hadn't given food or raiment or kindness to the Lord's people.
- It's almost as though the goats were saying, If we'd known it was you, we would have done it. Again, a surprise on the part of those who were judged not to be of the right mind, of the right spirit.
- Each of these expected to be rewarded in some way. Expected to be brought into the kingdom because of who they were and what they'd done.
- [3 : 3 4] To think again of those who cried out, Lord, Lord, we have done many things in your name. We have sat at your feasts. And the Lord has said, I never knew you.
- Peter tells us that you have to add to our faith. Faith is the very basic minimum.
- But we have to add to our faith. Add to your faith. Knowledge. Goodness. Godliness.

Perseverance. Love. But if you do these things, you shall never fail. And so make your calling and your election sure. Our life is not just a sentimental journey that we've received faith and we can go on in the Christian life as though we are doing nothing.

But as I mentioned earlier on there, those who went to the Lord and said, we have done many things for you. The Lord was saying that you didn't do.

[4 : 52] You said you believed, but you didn't do. And so here also in this parable of the rich man of Lazarus.

Lazarus, the sinner, became the beloved of God. Because he believed on God and rested on God, enjoying his lifetime.

The rich man, because he had everything else in his day and during his life, expected the same in the life to come. And he did not.

One of the things about this particular text that I've chosen here, son or child, remember, is that memory is something that continues.

I've long believed that the brain is a motor function. It enables the body to operate.

[5 : 57] All the great cells, if you think about those who have dementia, the channels of memory and the channels of doing, they are gradually interrupted and the person who once existed no longer is there.

But the memory continues, because the memory is contained in the soul, not in the great matter of the brain, because that eventually will just be dust. And so memories are something which continue with us, unendingly, in this life and the life that is to come.

And so here, the rich man is saying, Father Abraham, have mercy on me. The rich man did many things in his life, none of which I suppose he could be very proud about.

But all things have now passed away and all things have now become new. He's no longer inhabiting the world and the experience he had before he died.

He is in a totally new dimension. The purple, the fine linen, the good food have all gone. And in that place is torment and want and something he's never done, prayer.

[7 : 25] The eyes of the rich man had been opened and he sees the kingdom of heaven.

Remember the incident of the Lord Jesus Christ and Nicodemus. You cannot enter the kingdom of heaven because you don't desire it.

You cannot even see it. You must be born again. You must be born again to see the kingdom of heaven. You must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven. And that's such which man hadn't.

And many of us here in this world haven't been born again. And so our desires, whatever our lifestyles or our habits might be, are still without God in this world, without hope in the world to come.

Because we have not been born again. And so here the rich man lived and died without God.

[8 : 30] And that was his condemnation. He was content to live a life without God. Many of us during our days have lived just such lives.

And God in his mercy has brought light and life to some of us, but many others of us and our friends, our families, are still without God and without Christ.

So the rich man lived and died without God. And never saw the kingdom of heaven in this world. But now he lifts up his eyes in Hades, in hell.

And he sees Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom, as I mentioned this morning, in heaven. And there, for the first time, he begins to pray.

Not really saying his prayers. How many of us are taught childish prayers, to say them, to say a few words of repetition, and perhaps some sort of shopping list you might have, you want God to do.

[9 : 52] Not saying his prayers as such, but really praying. Praying, perhaps even with the same sort of desire as the tax collector in the temple, God be merciful to me, a sinner.

And so he's praying. He's really praying. He's praying like Jonah in the whale's belly. Jonah was fleeing from God, and God brought this whale to swallow Jonah up.

And it's there, in the whale's belly, that he first begins to pray, lifting up his eyes to heaven. Says, I will pay my vows unto the Lord.

Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, in the house of, in Damascus, on the street called Straight, there he begins to pray, the Lord tells Ananias.

Behold, he prays. We're really praying. Not the prayer of a Pharisee anymore, but the prayer of a convicted sinner. The prayer which has been given to him by the Holy Spirit.

[11 : 04] And so here is the rich man praying. And he's also seeing, probably for the first time, in his own experience, the river of the water of life.

He's asking for a drop of water, suggesting that what he's seeing is the river of the water of life. Never having wanted it before, he was always perfectly satisfied with the systems, the broken systems of this world is satisfying.

But now he sees the river of the water of life, he is tormented, he's thirsty, and he's wanting a drop of water placed on his tongue.

He wanted it, he needed it, he desired it. Never in his life did he ever think that he would give all that he had for one drop of that water, but now he would.

If he's still had possession, which he already doesn't have, and because when he died, he left all that he had. Same for all of us, when, if anyone asks, what did he leave for all that he had?

[12 : 11] Well, he left all that he had, and he would have given all that he had for just this one drop of water. But there are many, perhaps even here, who have never been murderers, or adulterers, or profaned, or immoral, the pillars of society, immoral and they're upright.

But yet, without God in this world, and without hope in eternity, without hope of the world to come, and for any of us in here, around such a situation, no matter how regular we might be in the means of grace, if we are without God, if we are not yet been born again, well, our condition is perilous, we're standing on the end of a precipice, which we might fall over at any time, or more likely the ground under us will disappear at any time.

How many of us in here would perhaps agree that we are reprobates? And that's what the Lord Jesus Christ says, except you be in Christ, you are reprobates.

You are without God. You are without hope. You are far off. You are not of the commonwealth of Israel. You are not of the beloved.

And yet, if Jesus Christ is not in us, that's exactly what we are. As I said earlier on, contentment in life without God was the rich man's sin.

[14 : 00] Is it the sin of any of us here this evening? Are we content in our life with what life has given us to the blessings and to the goodness that we enjoy in this life?

And that is what gives us our contentment. Or are we restless? As perhaps most of you know what Augustine said, our hearts are restless till we find our rest in you, in God.

And so scripture brings us many examples of those who are content without God. Esau sold his birthright with a mortal of meat.

And though he sought repentance with tears, carefully with tears, he had rejected it at a very early time in his life.

and so he never again regained his birthright. We are not of that caste here.

- [15 : 18] There are another instance in scripture when Herod is faced by the Lord Jesus Christ and he asks them many questions and the Lord doesn't answer them one word.

There came a time in that man's experience that he was past mercy, he was past grace. His wickedness had so gone before him and dealt with him such a pit that even while in this world he was no longer on mercy's ground as he perished shortly afterwards.

It may never be for any of us to be in such a situation that we find ourselves without God and without mercy and without grace.

So the rich man was too late in beginning to think about prayer. But it was being too late he was praying to the wrong person.

He asked the prayers to Father Abraham and nowhere in scripture or this is the only place in scripture where we are told of a prayer made to a human being and of course it was useless.

- [16 : 37] Only God is the answerer of prayer. Prayer is an offering up to God for things agreeable to his will in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That obviously wasn't what the man here was doing. He was looking to what he was, he was trying to plead his own greatness in the world he had left and he was trying to ask Abraham to order Lazarus to do something for him.

As perhaps he would have done in the life that he had been living. But that was no longer the case. So prayer is an offering up to God of our desires.

Not to saints, not to angels, not to spirits of just men made perfect. Again, we've seen just in this past week, the Pope beatifying, making a saint of somebody else in America.

And all these aspects of making of saints by the Roman Catholic Church encourages people to pray to men and women who died. The doctrine is what I've called a supererogation.

- [17 : 46] That jargon word means that they have an extra amount of goodness that can work not only for themselves, but for others also.

So others can pray to them to have some of that extra goodness supplied to their lives. And we know also obviously that is a load of nonsense. Because no mere man since the fall is able perfectly to keep the commandments of God but has break them daily in thought, word and deed.

We all fall short of the majesty of God and obedience to God. And so prayers to saints are nonsense.

So we think back to the passage we read there in John 4. The woman of Samaria is told, only God answers prayer.

You worship here in Samaria, Jews worship in Jerusalem, and God says, God is looking for people who will worship him in spirit and in truth.

- [18 : 53] No longer do places represent where God is. As precious as this building might be to many of the Christians who are here, it is the gathering of the people who make up the church.

Because the people are here, God is here. And God is in the midst of his people to bless and to encourage and strengthen. So it's not buildings.

It is the people of God who make up the temple of God. And God is with his people in his holy temple. This prayer to Abraham is the only example I said earlier on of a prayer addressed to a saint, and that was totally unsuccessful.

successful. When man sinned, we are told there remains only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

The man God ordained, the man who alone is able to be an intercessor the father who is in heaven.

[20 : 08] Had the rich man felt while he was on earth the way that he is now feeling in hell, God would have listened to him. He'd have heard his cries, he'd have heard his pleas, he'd have heard his sense of unworthiness, and he would have answered it.

But during his life, there was no sense of that, and obviously there are many, perhaps of us, others, who are in that same sense. There's no sense of our being in a need for God, for many of us.

When that happens to us, God will hear us, God will answer us, God will bring us to know that peace which passes all understanding.

So here, this living water, as I talked about, which he so wanted now, was nothing compared to the broad consistence of the world in which he used to inhabit.

But what of it now? He was given all that he had for it. If he would be a God fearing man, if he had been a man who feared God and called to God, God would have heard him.

[21 : 33] And you know, it's the prayer of every preacher of the gospel that those under his ministry would be as the rich man is now. Remember, there's not a parable, this is a story.

There's an experience of two people who actually lived. The rich man who is now in Hades still crying out and still wanting mercy of some sort and of Lazarus who is in Abraham's wisdom, who is in heaven, knowing all the glories of that place.

And it's the desire of every preacher that every unbeliever would feel as the rich man now feels, that they would know the words of Psalm 116 upon their lips, the pains of hell to call on me, I grief and trouble found.

that he would love the Lord and he would seek him and call upon him and make him your joy, make him your salvation.

And what was Abraham's answer? Son, remember. what bitter regret those words must have conjured up in that man's mind.

[22 : 56] Remember what they must have graced up from the memory of a misspent life. Perhaps even of ourselves, remember all the times, even the church, Sunday school, times when you learned or didn't learn your catechisms.

Many sermons you heard, many prayers were made over you or perhaps passed over you. And today as of having no consequence whatsoever on your lives and your future experience, it's me that the Lord will bring all those prayers back to memory even tonight.

We can still remember, we can still unlike the rich man whose remembrance of what he had can have no further effect upon his future, it can have effect upon our future, all that we've heard, all the sermons that have passed through our years, all the prayers that we have heard from our parents or our friends or family worship or whatever, and bring them to remembrance so that we might remember what the Lord has done for our souls.

See, the rich man here was the son of Abraham. He was of the tribe of Israel, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, even as Paul, but what prophet now, it were better for him if he had not been born.

For to whom much is given, much is required. How much more so is everyone who has been born into a Christian home, who has been baptized in a Christian church, who has had the name of Christ placed upon them.

[24 : 47] Baptism is not to be a minister to everyone, only to believers and to the children of believers. believers. And so, perhaps many who have been brought into the kingdom and baptized, either on their parents' behalf or because their parents were godly, and we have to examine ourselves to see whether we are following in their ways or in their paths.

remember which man stole from your life the good things, the things which satisfied you and that may have brought about your torments.

Many who would inhabit hell will think back and remember all the privileges that they had and how they led them to a lost eternity.

And that's what's happening here. Abraham asked the man, do you still think they were good things? Do you think those things which so captivated you, are they still good?

Or do you recognise now that they lost you, your soul, they lost you, your heaven? Remember the rich young ruler, the man who looks so promising, the man who goes running to Christ, who falls on his knees before and asks the question, what must I do to have eternal life?

[26 : 19] And he's told what he must do. He's told that he's so promising, but one thing you lack, sell all that you have and come and follow me, but no, he's offered heaven, but he chooses riches, that which moth and rust does corrupt, and which thieves will break through to steal.

He chooses that instead of heaven. I wonder if any of us here today are in that same situation. We choose the riches of today rather than the heaven that can be ours even now.

Enjoy the heaven on earth and that is the possibility for each and every person here this evening. And so the rich man tries to go further and says, I pray you that you would send Lazarus to my brothers.

Why the sudden concern for his brothers? There's no such thing as care or love or concern for others in hell, because hell is very much a place of solitude and a place of isolation.

Well, God did the same to think it's because that he was the head of the house. This example would have been an example which have led others to have gone astray.

[27 : 54] And that speaks so much to each and every one of us who are heads of households. What is our example doing to our families, to our children, to our grandchildren?

And he's asking that Abraham send Lazarus to warn his brothers. And Abraham says, they have Moses and the prophets.

Let them read them. We have Moses and the prophets. We have the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. We have the Bible in front of us when we come to church.

We have the family altar, if we would but use it. we have all these opportunities, all these privileges. Yet so often we neglect them.

And he says, no, but Father, if someone would but rise from the dead, they would believe him. Well, if you live in a world today which has been told again and again that Christ has risen from the dead, there has been ample proof given by Christ that he has risen from the dead and he lives forever more.

[29 : 07] One of the greatest proofs perhaps that we sometimes forget is the giving of the Holy Spirit. He is Christ's purchased possession. The day of Pentecost, two-thirteen years ago, the Holy Spirit came in power, descended upon the mount, temple mount, descended upon the disciples, the apostles, and there they saw the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the tongues of fire, men, women also probably speaking in other languages, not in tongues but other known languages, speaking of the wonderful works of God.

And that is undeniable proof that these gifts were spiritual and manifested and by the death and resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, as we come here to the end of this passage, we are reminded that the Lord Jesus Christ would have none of us to perish.

We are reminded here that he wants each and everyone to come to repentance and to come to salvation and to come to faith. We are to be, as we leave here tonight, if any of us are still without Christ, make it your business to know Christ.

Now, even in your seat, even in your heart, even in your desire to have him as Lord and Savior.

[30 : 55] There are many things which come in upon us, but there is one thing we do. Many things that are urgent in this life, but only one thing important, and that's to know Christ as Lord and Savior.

May it be that the importance of that particular statement will hit home to any who are without Christ, and that even at this time, that he would open your heart and fill you with his love and his grace.

Glory to the Lord. Bless these things. I'll conclude my singing the God's praise in Psalm 8. Psalm 8. Psalm 8. Verse 12.

O Lord my God with all my heart, to thee I will give praise, and I the glory will ascribe to thy name always. At the end of verse Mark 16, that's five stanzas for God's praise.

Standing to say. O Lord my God, with all my heart, to thee I will still speak, and I shall show he will as I come to thy name always.

[32 : 47] Because thy mercy will warn thee in greatness God excel, unloved Song if And men have wed That for my soul And so can be Before them have no sense

But the word for the Lord That God was Jesus Long suffering And in thy truth And mercy, venous O turn to thee Thy fountain of And mercy on thee have Thy servant strength And other son All by your hand may it save

And now may grace, mercy and peace In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit One God Rest on you And abide in you now and always Amen