



The Parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus

(Luke 16:19-31)

Luke 16:19-31 reads:

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fed sumptuously every day, but there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

"So it was that the beggar died and was carried to the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, was buried and bearing the torments of Hades. He lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he might dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'

"But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime, you received your good things and likewise, Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and you are tormented, and besides all this, between us there is a gulf, so that those of us who want to pass from here to you cannot. Nor can those from there, pass to us.'

"Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house for I have five brothers; that he may testify to them, lest they come to this place of torment.'

"Abraham said to him, 'I have Moses and the prophets, let them heed them.' And he said, 'No Father Abraham, but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

"But he said to him, 'If they do not heed Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded that one rose from the dead.'

Jesus, in other parables, talks of "certain" people. He may refer to their profession, but He doesn't name them. Here, the beggar is Lazarus! I truly believe that this is not a true parable but because others think it is, I include it here in my book.

I had listed the parables alphabetically and when I found that I was up to this one, my heart sunk and I went to bed. I was going to sleep, but the Lord urged me to get up and begin work despite my lack of enthusiasm for I didn't care for the subject matter. I came to Christ at age eight and I am now forty three years old. In all that time, I have never come to grips with the concept of Hell. Not that I don't believe in it, because Jesus spoke more about Hell, than Heaven. Also, I have heard and [read](#) much teaching on the subject and I've heard "near death" testimonies that send chills up my spine. I have no personal fear, but I have a hard time accepting the consequences that are ahead for people who do not give their lives to Jesus and follow Him. The story centers on a "certain" rich man and a beggar "named Lazarus." Jesus said in Matthew 19:24: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." People say that there was a "Needle Gate" in Jerusalem and for a camel to enter that gate; it had to drop to its knees and be relieved of its load, before entering. It took humility and self-control for a camel to do this.

Other people reject the idea of a gate but suggest Jesus was talking about a little [sewing](#) needle and it was near impossible to put anything through the tiny hole. So, whatever your [school](#) of thought, Jesus stated that it was extremely hard, for a rich person to go to Heaven; the man in this story was very rich!

An abundance of resources, can rob us of a personal need of God. This is confirmed by statistics. Generally, an upturn in prosperity can lead to a downturn in spirituality. In India, there is a caste system that operates, where the lower caste is far more open to the things of God than those in the higher caste system.

I have met an Indian apostle who visits his country often. He is an exception to this rule. He had been very wealthy but empty spiritually, but He then found Jesus. He said that the Christians are quite successful at converting the lower castes, the poor, the beggars, the working class servants and people who have a hunger for answers and are willing to convert to Christianity, but it is near impossible to reach the rich. Do not misunderstand what I say. To be rich is not wrong or evil in God's sight. Money itself is neither good nor bad; the Lord wants to bless His children. It is just that when your needs can be easily solved by money, then the rich will not look to God for help. (The love of money is the common stumbling stone.)

Lazarus was outside the gate begging for bread. Verse 21 says he desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. He wasn't just eating literal bread crumbs: he was eating the scraps left over by the rich man and his household. I guess you could call him their living garbage bin.

Do you remember the story told in Mark 7:24-30 where a Gentile (Non-Jewish person) asked Jesus to heal her distraught daughter, He replied: "It isn't right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs" This sounds rude and hard but Jesus was saying here that His ministry was meant for the Jews and not the Gentiles. (The Jews nicknamed any Gentile a "dog") To the woman's credit she didn't appear to be offended, such was her desire to see her child healed. She graciously replied: "Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." She was saying that she'd gladly take the crumbs of Jesus' ministry that were left behind after the Jews had taken their fill. Jesus saw her great faith and healed her daughter.

In the rubbish heaps in the Philippines, hundreds of people struggle to exist. Many times we might think, "Well, the rich people are so selfish!" But, do you realize you and I make up the rich? An Age Pension or a Disability Pension in the West is a fortune to them. Compared to their poverty, people who are poor in the West are tremendously rich. So, when you listen to a parable like this, do not consider yourself poor.

This particular rich man went to Hell, and being in the torment of Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. Many Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists say there is no Hell, but those of us who are born again know there is a Hell and it really is a place in which you do not want to end up.

Seventh Day Adventists will say that there is such a thing as "soul-sleep". They say that after death, you stay in this soul-sleep until the resurrection of the dead.

This parable is saying that there was a Paradise: a pre-Jesus' resurrection, and there was a Hell where people were actually burning. The slightest hint of soothing water was longed for and appreciated. It says in verse 24, "that he may dip the tip of his finger in the water and cool my tongue."

Before the resurrection of Jesus, it is believed that there was a place in the lowest parts of the earth called "Hades," which had two distinct and separate compartments. One part was the temporary hell called "Sheol." The other compartment, though visible to those in Sheol, was separated by a huge chasm that no one could cross. This beautiful place was called "Paradise." You might remember that on the cross, Jesus told the believing thief that He would see Him in Paradise that very day. Lazarus was in Paradise, along with all the other believers from the time of Adam to the time of the resurrection of Christ. The most honored place in Paradise was a place called "Abraham's Bosom" which was reserved for the very closest friends of God. In this story Lazarus was resting here while the rich man was in agony in Sheol.

The Bible infers in 1 Peter, Ephesians 4 and in other places, that when Jesus died, He descended to Hades to release all the spirits and souls of the believers waiting in Paradise. (Our physical body returns to dust as it's only a temporary shell that houses the real person!) Jesus also visited Sheol where He proclaimed total victory over the devil. His victory over death validated the Father's full satisfaction of the Atonement demonstrated on the cross. (God's wrath against sin had been vindicated!)

Generally speaking, the world has no idea how wonderful the Gospel is. Unbelievers are totally ignorant that their sins have already been punished and forgiven by God and that they only have to call out to God for mercy.

Let me illustrate this to you: Imagine a rich uncle left you a million dollars and his lawyer rang and asked you for your bank details so that he could deposit your inheritance. And you angrily replied: "I hate him and never wanted anything to do with him and he knew it! You must have the wrong person." Then slammed the phone down and totally ignored the incident. That is what unbelievers do: they refuse to accept their inheritance!

There are countless people heading for a lost eternity in Hell when they need not be. Jesus Christ completed a legal transaction on the cross for everyone to avail themselves of. Yet, we can read in the funeral notices every week the words "Rest in Peace" or see on graves in the cemetery "R.I.P." even if the deceased had been the most anti-Jesus person on earth and would certainly not be enjoying God's peace in eternity!

Be assured: there is such a place as Hell for the people who reject Jesus Christ, and essentially, this book of parables—Christ's message—is that we have to be the light to the world. I do not want to bear you down with guilt, shame and condemnation, but many of the people you know—friends, relatives and workmates—many

of them are counting on you and your witness to lead them to salvation. There are people in every Christian's life heading for Hell, because the Christians they came across: failed to share the Gospel.

There is another sobering message for me to share: Jesus left the "physical" part of salvation to the sheep. While it's a fact that no one can come to God unless the Holy Spirit draws them, believers have a great part to play in telling the message of salvation. Many people rely on their pastor or an evangelist to share salvation to people. Pastors do not give birth to pastors. However, sheep give birth to sheep! That is God's natural order of multiplication. It is natural for sheep to give birth to sheep, and it is natural for sheep to share rich pasture with their sheep friend. That's just how it is!

The rich man asked Abraham to send someone from the dead: to send Lazarus to go and warn his brothers on earth. Obviously it was mercy that tugged at his heart: he had some compassion! It's also interesting that his memory was retained even while in Hell. Some people say we have no memory of our life, but this rich man was fully aware that he had brothers who were destined for Hell too, and he wanted to save them. It is even more surprising to me, that Abraham replied in verse 31, "But if they do not heed Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rises from the dead."

That's true! Jesus physically rose from the dead, yet most people do not believe Him or His message. Multitudes of people have been raised from the dead around the world. In the East, in Africa, in India and even in America,—when people are raised from the dead, massive conversions take place. I actually met and spoke to a man who had been dead for four days and I share these details in Chapter 18 of this book.

My favorite Bible teacher: Yes, you guessed it! Andrew Wommack once raised someone from the dead in a church, and the church attendance went from about fourteen people to one hundred people in a town with a population of one hundred and fifty. Raising people from the dead is possible and it always causes revival. So, it seems it does have an effect on people. People are subject to receiving Jesus or rejecting Him, and Jesus wants us to be the lights of the world. He wants us to reach out to people.

You would be surprised how many people who do not profess a faith in Jesus—who perhaps have never set foot inside a church service, may be interested in reading a book about Jesus' teachings made simple. Perhaps you might buy them a copy of this book and see if the words convict them and bring them to repentance and to the True Light.

Bear in mind: Jesus is God's gift to us, but an unwrapped or a rejected gift is never used. It does not benefit anyone even though the giver may have sacrificed everything they had in order to purchase and present it to us. God certainly sacrificed everything He had when He sent His own beloved Son to die for us and yet people in their ignorance or in their pride reject His offer of eternal salvation.