

The Rich Man & Lazarus | Luke 16:19–31

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[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ.! I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I share sermons that balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ with the truth of the Word of God.

Together, we'll explore Scripture using observation, interpretation, and application. This helps us discover practical ways to live out our faith every single day.

Let's dive in together into God's Word. It's good to be back after being on, taking some time with my family over in Turner, Oregon.

This is the second time that we've done it, and it's really a great time to just take a step back, to reflect, to pray, to focus on what really matters.

Spending time with family, time with the Lord, and just asking God, how can I continue to connect with you and to have a deep and intimate relationship with you?

[1:09] Sometimes we forget that when it comes to our relationship with Christ, it's an ongoing relationship. It's an ongoing relationship to communicate with the Lord through prayer, asking God to speak to us, to lead and to guide us in our lives, in decisions, to cast our cares upon Him, to think and consider His Word, the promises that the covenants that have been made, the prophecies that have been fulfilled.

It is all connected. that God not only has worked in the past, but He is continuing to work in and through our lives every single day.

And to consider how precious life is, and how every moment is but a gift from God. I'm reminded how Scripture says that every good gift comes from above.

And God gives so many blessings. He gives us so much, especially the greatest opportunity for us to respond to salvation for eternal life.

Recently, I've been, when I was on vacation, I did hear, unfortunately, some bad news of some personal friends that I had known.

[2:47] One of my very close friends passed away in military service. And another friend, I guess you could say, recently divorced.

And it was just back to back hearing the news. And I'm like, I want to offer this to God. And I want to pray for the brokenness, the hurt.

I don't know the scope of what was going on, especially when you're very close to them or semi-close to them. You don't know all the intricacies, but you can certainly pray for people.

And I bring all of that up because it goes to show, as we're going to go in this parable, how important it is for us to consider our mind and to consider our heart.

There is so much of Scripture that is concerned with, what is your posture towards the Lord? In other words, do you have a hardened heart or do you have a softened heart towards the Lord?

[3:55] How has God worked in your life recently? When was the last time that you have seen or experienced transformation in your life?

Or God stirring your heart or molding you through experiences? Because God continues to work through us. And when we think about it, it is important for us to have that relationship, to establish, to begin the relationship with Christ and to continue it.

It's much like any sort of friendship or any sort of relationship that we have with people. You don't just call your friend, you know, once and then never call again.

You visit. You take time. And that's how important it is for our relationship with the Lord. And I want us to open our Bibles. Go ahead and turn to page 1040.

We're going to turn to Luke chapter 16. And it's important for us to understand this parable.

[5:08] As we've gone over in many weeks, we've gone over the teachings, the parables of Christ that has a lot of symbolic language.

These parables are simple, but yet they can be so convicting. They can be so deep and they can move us. So the gospel of Luke chapter 16, I want us to go specifically to verses 14 through 15, which is right before the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

This helps us understand the scene here of what Jesus, who Jesus is speaking to and why. So it says, the Pharisees who were lovers of money, that's very important, heard all these things, or hearing about the teachings, the parables of Christ, and they, what did they do?

They ridiculed him. And he said to them, you are those who justify yourselves before men, but God, what? Knows your heart.

For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. So this is after when Christ is teaching about wealth, about stewardship, and it's addressing the attitudes towards money.

[6:35] That what was leading up to here. When we go over to the rich man and Lazarus, there's some important things that we should take to note. When we go, let's just go over to verse 19.

There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen. Well, just right there, when you see the color purple, that is someone who is of great wealth.

Now, we may not, some of us are wearing purple here today. I'm not going to pick on you here. But, back in the day, the color purple was a very rare color.

It was a, something that only the, those wealthy people were able to have. That's important to know. Clothed in purple, and we can understand in fine linen, right?

Certain materials that people wear. And this man, he feasted every single day. So, this guy is living it up. He's got a good life.

[7:38] Or, at least it appears so. Goes on then in verse 20. So, you first have the first individual, the rich man, wealthy, purple clothed, and feasting.

Lavishly, right? Then, verse 20. It's important. It says, at his gate. At his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores.

Now, church, is this the same Lazarus that was raised from the dead? No. And it's important to identify that. And we'll, you'll see why in the text. So, Lazarus is a common name.

And what's interesting about it is that the word Lazarus means God helps. It's a beautiful name when you think about it.

So, that's important for us. So, he's covered with sores. When you think of that kind of someone who has sores, even nowadays, we can think you kind of want to stay away from them.

[8:43] I mean, if we're being honest here, you kind of don't want to catch what they have. But anyone that had sores over, right, leprosy or whatever disease it was, was not viewed upon very highly back then.

And they were, unfortunately, the outcasts of society. You didn't want to be around them. Verse 21, he desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table.

It's very interesting to note that's the very similar language where you have the woman who is saying, talking about scraps that fall down from the table and the dogs want that if you remember that.

So it's interesting. It goes, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table so he's hungry. Unlike this rich person who has more to eat and you can get this image of scraps falling on the ground.

They're just eating and eating and they just, you know, can't wait to sip their drinks or whatever, right? You get that kind of image and this guy is at the gate and he just wants a little bit. Okay?

[9:51] So, moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. Now, sometimes we can read this and we can have more of a literal reading where it says, okay, the dogs literally are coming over and licking the sores.

There are some scholars that would say that there is an underlying lesson that even the dogs being represented as Gentiles would give care and compassion to Lazarus more than this rich man who is Jewish, who has a hardened heart.

There is that kind of distinction there, but you can come to your own conclusion on that. I just think it's very interesting, nonetheless, that dogs have been viewed upon as Gentiles.

But in this case, we can just look at it as just normal dogs. So we don't have to over complicate that. So the dogs came and licked his sores.

So what happened? Verse 22, what happened to the poor man? He died. What happened then? He was carried by the angels to Abraham's side.

[11:01] The imagery of that, of angels carrying anyone is just, that's very beautiful. And you can think, you can conclude that this poor man, this Lazarus, was seeking the Lord and knew the Lord at some capacity, at least to the point where angels would gather him up.

That's beautiful language to think of. I mean, I want to be carried by angels, you know? But nonetheless, it's still very beautiful to see.

So what happens then, church? The rich man, what? Was he alive and well? He was died and buried. And where did he end up? In Hades. Being in torment, he lifted his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

It's important to note that there's a lot of language that describes heaven and hell. And just to kind of give you a broad sense here, back then, to be in Hades was to be in the underworld, as it were. And it appears that somehow they are able to see one another, despite one being in more of paradise, and the other being in torment.

[12:30] So that's kind of an interesting thing to see here. that in Hades, being in torment, he lifted his eyes and saw Abraham.

So you have to remember, Christ is speaking to the Pharisees. He's speaking to a Jewish audience in this. So, let's see here.

Far off to his side, verse 24, 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 for I am in anguish in this flame.

It is hot there. Just to dip your finger to get a little cooling, I mean, that is pretty hot in there. And so, look, two different people, two different deaths, right?

Lazarus dies, he's carried by angels, the rich man is died, he dies, and is buried and finds himself in torment. It's more of descriptive language of what we would call Gehenna, so to speak.

[13:35] And the rich man is begging Abraham for mercy. Well, Abraham replies and says, child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things, and now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

That's interesting. Verse 26, besides all this, between us and you, a great chasm has been fixed in order that those would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.

So you can't cross over. When we think of heaven and hell, when we think of torment and comfort, there is no crossing over, at least that's what is being described here within the parable.

So Abraham is explaining there is a chasm between comfort and torment, and there's no crossing possible. So that's important for us to know.

And he said, then I beg you, Father, to send him to my father's house. It's interesting to know, I was reading, there's one commentary about this specific parable, and I thought it was very interesting.

[14:45] He is thinking, despite being in torment, he's saying, send this guy who died over to speak to my family on my behalf.

So he still has this hardness of heart, so to speak. He's so focused, he's not even caring about Lazarus. Does that make sense?

He's not recognizing, like, okay, there's this other guy here that just died, and yet, I need you to send him over to my family.

That's interesting. It's the same kind of mindset, not having really a care for Lazarus in there, and I just thought, that's very true, that's very interesting.

I beg you, Father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Well, at least he's caring for his brothers here.

[15:42] At least he has the care for them. But Abraham said, what does it say, church? They have what? Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

And he said, no, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said to him, if they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.

Interesting. They, the Jewish people, had Moses, they had the prophets, they had the law to show them the Lord, to draw close to the Lord, and yet, even despite someone raising from the dead, there are still going to be people who do not believe.

I've always found it very interesting, and maybe you can identify as well. Imagine being back in biblical times and seeing some of the signs and wonders that happened.

The parting of the Red Sea, for example. Right? Or Christ walking on water. It's just two miracles right there.

[16:54] And yet, there were still some that did not believe. Like, in my mind, if I see anything, if I see someone walking on water, I'd be kind of fascinated.

If I see the feeding of the 5,000, wouldn't you be impressed by that? But yet, despite all of that, there are still people back then that did not believe.

Even someone being raised from the dead, there are still people who will reject the Lord. That's shocking. I mean, I've never been able to just get myself to think, like, if I saw a miracle right in front of me happen, I'm not interested.

Can you imagine? But yet, there are people that are that way. And it's important for us, where God has worked in and through our lives, or maybe he hasn't, pray that God will soften your heart and change your mind to recognize who Christ is.

Recognizing the power of Christ's miracles, the ministry of Christ, all of these things, the things that we find in Scripture. Now, here's the thing, there's a lot of us in the world that we want to psychoanalyze and come to understand how and why and where and when things happen.

[18:28] I want to understand how the Red Sea was parted, so I can understand it. Well, there are some things, even in the scientific community, even in academic pursuits, that we just do not understand.

And that's okay. It's okay to not know how, we know that God split the Red Sea, we know that God raised the other Lazarus from the dead, but it goes to show that God has far greater power than our understanding.

We try to understand so much, don't we? God is beyond our understanding. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your what?

Your understanding. But yet we try to lean on our understanding. We try to understand things that don't make sense. God is so, let them hear.

It's important for us to learn from this about how important life is. Now, I don't want you thinking that having money is evil.

[19:49] I don't want you thinking that being poor is holy. it's all about the what? The heart.

Are there not wicked people who are rich? Are there not? All right, right? Can the same argument be made?

There are people who are wicked that are poor. Of course. It has so. It doesn't matter your socioeconomic status. But what is interesting is that very often, specifically in parables, you have what appears to be successful, what appears to be good.

The Lord is comparing. Look at this poor beggar. This guy with sores and the dogs are licking his sores to give him some sort of comfort.

And yet, he's being transported by angels. If you remember the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, that was very different.

[20:57] Actually, it's the same. It's very similar. Two completely contrasting people. If you remember that, the Pharisee and the tax collector, the Pharisee, he, the tax collector was justified before the Lord, but not the Pharisee, logically, that does not make sense.

Logically, the rich person should make it to heaven. Logically, the religious person that follows the rules and is keeping everything to a T should make it.

person. Let's think about how our world works. You perform well, you get a promotion. You perform well, you make it on the honor roll. It's very logical when it comes to that.

But when it comes to things of the Lord, matters is your heart. the softening of your heart. I think I've mentioned it before about the story of the Grinch, right?

Where his heart was so small, right? And, spoiler alert, his heart grows, right? Signifying a change of his heart. Well, I know that's just a movie, but when we think of the Lord, there is change that happens within our heart.

[22:17] Going from hardness of heart to a softening, the ability to love, to live and love like the Lord. So, things to take note is, yeah, the connection with the Pharisee and the tax collector and even the rich fool.

And, certainly, this parable can be very challenging for us because it's addressing, well, what happens after death? You know, only light reading, right?

But it's important for us, nonetheless, to read and to study scripture to understand it. And this leads us in, okay, what can we learn from this?

Number one, church, our actions reveal our heart. So, the rich man was neglectful. He revealed a hardened heart by not having kindness and compassion and care for the person right outside his gate.

do you know anyone who is right by your gate? That's a hard question to ask. But, certainly, consider someone who might be at your own front door needing help.

[23:31] And, faith is then shown through transformation. Having a compassionate heart. That's what this is about. Having a changed mind and a changed heart.

the second thing then, church, what does it say? Eternal life exists. That's pretty self-explanatory when we have, at least for the Jewish understanding, those who end up in torment and those who end up in comfort.

Much like how we understand heaven and hell. So, there is life after death. In this parable, speaking of being comforted or being tormented.

It's important for us to note then that we have decisions to make in this life which goes to show how important it is for us to seek the Lord, to know the Lord, to grow in Him, and to continually be transformed.

Because, if you think about it, responding to the gospel message, you know, only has eternal consequences, but you should respond accordingly. It's kind of the biggest decision you'll ever make, you know.

[24:45] The third thing then is scripture is sufficient for salvation. What does that mean? It's that God's word gives us a guide to understanding salvation. Okay?

To understanding salvation and newness of life. And it's also important that even when we think of miracles and signs as wonderful and as beautiful as they are, we have to think, do those signs and wonders change our hearts or our minds towards the Lord?

And then that leads us to, what do we do about this? All right, you have this parable about two people, right?

You have the rich man and you have Lazarus. The one parable that mentions a specific individual. That's interesting because you have the Pharisee and the tax collector, right?

You have the widow and the unjust judge. You don't have specific names here, but here you do. That's very interesting.

[25:54] So you have these two people, Lazarus, the rich man, both die and they both end up in different places. one appears to have it all, but yet loses, and the other doesn't have much in gains.

But in order to understand this, it goes back to the heart. And so, what do we do about this? Well, the first thing is to respond to Christ's invitation for you.

As we partaken of communion, we do this in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for us. There are some people, there are so many people in the world who do not know the Lord.

And it's important for us to share in the gospel message, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and we ourselves have got to respond to it first and foremost.

Believe in the Lord and be saved. So recognize that you need the Lord in your life. You need Jesus Christ. And respond to that invitation.

[27:11] The second thing then, upon being saved, being saved by grace through faith, is to live your new life being transformed.

Being saved by grace through faith, making a decision for Christ, is the greatest decision you can make, and it is the beginning of your new life in him. To continue to be molded, to become more like Christ.

I don't know about you, but the very notion of becoming like Christ is an incredible, it's an incredible journey. Because Christ is way better than I'll ever be. I want to be like him.

I don't want to be like the old me that was some punk. Okay? I don't want to be that. I want to be more like that which is holy. I want to be closer to the Lord.

And we think we should think of how important it is for transformation, for holiness, right?

Continuing on the path.

[28:11] Now, here's the thing. We should all be on a path of growth. And what that growth looks like is unique to you. How God works in and through your life, that is specific between you and the Lord.

God, we are all a work in progress. Amen? So we are saved by grace. We are a work in progress. And that should mold us. As we are being molded, we should then in turn be moved to act. And this is very important. There's a lot of books and media courses out there that will tell you that we got a lot of head knowledge, right?

But we have to live out what we have learned. And so when it comes to things of scripture, the things of the Lord, God transforming our lives, we have got to be molded and go out and share in the life, love, and truth of Jesus Christ.

So share God's word, share grace and truth to others. The love of Jesus Christ to the misfits of society. Who do you know who is a leper?

[29:26] It doesn't have to be a literal leper, mind you. Who do you know is like the Lazarus who is at the gate, needing help? Right? That's where we have the love aspect.

Then we have the truth aspect. Knowing that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and knowing that we are blessed to have this Bible, that we continue to grow on an individual level, but also on a collective level.

So, share God's word, his grace and truth. It's all about you living and loving like the Lord every single day. Now, I'm not saying you have to go out and wave signs all day.

It is being an ambassador for Christ in the words that you speak and the actions that you do. Some of you, you may be attending college, you may work at a specific job, but you might have met someone and you knew they were a Christian.

You couldn't explain it, then later you find out they are a Christian. How you perform your work, how you conduct yourself, how you are continuing being molded and letting the light of Christ, just like that song, this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.

[30:50] And we let it shine for others to see we are to be salt and light for our community, for our neighbors, for our friends, for our families, being examples, being present with others.

That is for us to think and to consider. Live and love like Christ. Live your faith. Don't sit on the sidelines. If you remember the children in the marketplace, right?

those spoiled children who just were not doing anything in times of joy and in times of sorrow, they didn't participate. Don't be like those children in the marketplace. Actively participate in the world around you.

You'll be surprised at how your influence can affect someone else. A simple smile, a simple act of kindness, words of encouragement, the ministry of presence, just sitting with someone through a hard time.

Praying for someone. Calling someone on the phone, how you doing? I'm not doing so well. How can I pray for you? And just listen. Hear them out.

[32:02] That's part of what we are called to do as Christians. So share in the gospel, share in your story. Live and love like Christ.

And in closing, Jesus challenges us to examine our hearts. Consider this parable. Do you want to be like the rich man? Or do you want to be like the Lazarus?

And it's not a money thing. It's a heart thing. Respond clearly in faith. Steward your life intentionally. And respond to God's call for your life.

Remember, salvation, responding to that invitation is the greatest decision you can make. May you respond wisely to his call.

Let's pray together. And Father, we thank you for this time and this opportunity for us to go through this parable of the rich man and Lazarus. What a crazy and very challenging parable this is.

[33:09] I pray, Father, that this message was preached in such a way that it is understood by everyone who is present here in the church or those who are tuning online or listening to the recording or whatever.

Father, I pray for transformation, for decisions to be made for Christ. If there hasn't been a decision made, I pray for continued transformation, healing, forgiveness, love, kindness, compassion.

In other words, Father, I'm asking that we grow, that we are healed and we are mobilized to live and love like you. We're so grateful for your son and we're so grateful for your word.

We are reminded about how your word is living and active. May we continue. May we first and foremost believe in you. May we be molded by you. and do good in your son's precious name.

It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray and we all say together, can I get an amen? Amen.

Thank you for listening for this week's message from Ontario Community Church.

[34:22] I pray that you are encouraged and strengthened in your walk with Christ. For more sermons and resources, visit Ontario Community Church dot org. May God bless you as you live out his grace and truth every single day.

Thank you. Thank you.