

The rich man and Lazarus

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Date: 07 April 2019

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[0 : 00] In the parable that we have before us today, we see right away in verse 19 that we have a rich man.

A man that had accumulated much wealth. He doesn't tell us how he'd come about his wealth, whether he'd earned it, been born into it.

But we get a sense that he had great wealth. And then we learn about what he had done with it. He dressed himself in fine clothes.

We read that he had purple clothes and fine linen. And elsewhere in scripture we read that those that dressed in purple did so to let others know of their wealth.

So he wanted everybody to know that he was a rich man. So he wore the appropriate clothing. We read that he ate well every day.

[1 : 03] Sumptuously is the word that is used. His food, his table lacked for nothing in respect of food. And then in verse 20, we can take it that he had bought himself or he had built himself a very large home.

On a nice piece of ground. On a nice piece of ground. On a nice piece of ground. On a nice piece of ground. They had put gates on. And that's where the beggars came and sat. In the hope that from this man's wealth that they might receive some of his pennies.

He also had dogs that patrolled his grounds to make sure that nobody that wasn't welcome got in. And kept his ground safe and secure.

When Jesus told this parable there would have been many rich men sitting around or standing around wanting to hear what Jesus had to say.

Probably in the hope that when they had all their friends around at the house for one of their sumptuous meals. And they're sitting there drinking their wine.

[2 : 24] That they would have been able to say that they had heard this man Jesus speak. And they probably laughed and scorned everything that he had to say.

As the wine flowed for each one of them. In contrast, we have Lazarus. Lazarus sat outside the rich man's compound.

He sat at the gate. He wasn't clothed in fine clothes. We learned that his body was covered in sores. He didn't eat.

His desire was just to get some of the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. But he got nothing. The only respite he received.

And what we read here is when the dogs came out and licked the sores. In some crude way giving moisture to the broken sores that he had on his body.

[3 : 35] We know very little else about Lazarus. How he had come to be in his current position. Had he worked for the rich man. Had he taken ill and been dismissed from service.

Had he previously had wealth. Had he previously had wealth. And squandered it. And been deserted by his friends. And then left. In his current state.

We do know. As we read in verse 22. That Lazarus. Was a man of faith. And we'll see what happens later. In his death.

But what faith Lazarus must have had. To suffer the way he did. Lying at the gate of the rich man. Thirsty.

And in need of aid for his sores. And all he got. Was a lick from a dog. The psalmist.

[4 : 36] In Psalm 73. Sums it up. And I'll read Psalm 73. Surely God is good to Israel. To those who are pure in heart.

But as for me. My feet had almost slipped. I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant. When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They had no struggles.

Their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens. They are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride. Is their necklace.

They clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity. Their evil imaginations have no limits. They scoff and speak with malice.

With arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven. And their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore their people turn to them. And drink up waters in abundance.

[5 : 37] They say. How would God know? Does the most high know anything? This is what the wicked are like. Always free of care. They go on amassing wealth.

Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure. And I have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted. And every morning brings new punishments.

If I had spoken out like that. I would have betrayed your children. When I tried to understand all this. It troubled me deeply. Till I entered the sanctuary of God.

Then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground. You cast them down to ruin. How suddenly they are destroyed.

Completely swept away by terrors. They are like a dream. When one awakes. When you arise Lord. You will despise them as fantasies. When your heart was grieved.

[6 : 37] And my spirit embittered. I was senseless and ignorant. I was a brute beast before you. Yet. I am always with you. You hold me by my right hand.

You guide me with your counsel. And afterward. You will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you. And earth has nothing I desire beside you.

My flesh and my heart may fail. But God is the strength of my heart. And my portion forever. Those who are far from you will perish. You will destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

But as for me. It is good to be near God. I have made the sovereign Lord my refuge. I will tell of all your deeds. You can imagine the beggar lying.

Outside the rich man's gate. And meditating upon these words. Feeling the pain. Of lying there. Hungry. Thirsty.

[7 : 39] Soar. Seeing the rich man. And all his friends. Back and forth. Every day. Laughing. Cajoling. And he is nothing. But yet.

Close to God. He understands. That this is not. His final destiny. As they lived. The rich man.

In his pomp. And circumstance. In his own home. With his own fine clothes. The contrast. For Lazarus. Couldn't have been more stark.

In nakedness. In soreness. In thirst. And hunger. He lay. At the gate. And then. In verse 22.

We read. They both die. The picture that is painted. Is then a complete. Turn around. For both.

[8 : 37] The rich man. And for Lazarus. What do we read of Lazarus? The rich man.

He died. And he was buried. The end. We don't hear anything. Of all the ceremony. That would have taken place. How he was maybe. Carried through the city.

Because he was such. A well known rich man. Of how his coffin was laid. For everybody. To come and see it. He died. And he was buried. What had gone before.

Stood for nothing. When Jesus told this story. He had great wealth. We were given that picture. But now. He died. Nothing.

No record. Of what happened. With his money. No record. Of who fought for it. Who got it. Anything. He died. And was buried.

[9 : 56] He had lived the high life. He had accumulated great wealth. Spent his money on fine clothes. Food. And a home. He had entertained many.

Probably even thought. He was a popular man. He died. He died. He took nothing with him. Nothing is else recorded.

About what happened to him. Stark reality. He took none of it with him. It counted for nothing. What we do read of him.

He went to Hades. And Hades is referred elsewhere. There's a place where the unrighteous dead dwell. How the tables had turned.

The one who had lived in great comfort. Wanted for nothing. Ate. Drink. And was merry with his friends. Was now in torment.

[10 : 56] Not just. In torment. But as the scripture says. In torments. From which. There was no relief. Not even.

For the lick. Of a dog. In his torment. He lifted up his eyes. And he saw Lazarus. In the bosom. Of Abram.

In the bosom. This makes hell. The more unbearable. That the lost. Can behold.

The bliss. Of the blessed. This makes hell. The more unbearable. That the lost. Can behold. The bliss.

Of the blessed. He looked up. And he saw Lazarus. In the bosom. Of Abram. Tells us two things.

[11 : 53] Firstly. It tells us. That he knew. Who Lazarus was. And secondly. He had an understanding. Of who Abram was. He recognised.

Lazarus. As the man. That he had passed. Every day. At the gate. He had seen him there. He had done nothing.

Nothing for him. How would this add to his torment. That the beggar. That did nothing but lie at his gate. Was right there.

In heaven. And he. And he. In his wealth. And in his. With his popularity. Had nothing. He then adds to his own torment.

He doesn't question. What he could have done differently. But why so unworthy. One so unworthy. As Lazarus. Should be treated. Better than him.

[12 : 54] His pride. Was still there. What's pride. Keeping. You from. Today. Ask yourself.

That question. But secondly. And probably more importantly. In recognising. And having an understanding. Of who Abram was.

The rich man. At some point. Must have been taught. And learnt. The scriptures. You must have heard. About father Abram. And how he was the father.

Of many nations. You would have heard. Of how his faith. Had been tested. And you would have heard. How Abram. Had remained faithful. Even with all the wealth.

That we're aware of. That Abraham. Accumulated. He remained faithful. And lived for God. Not so the rich man.

[13 : 53] He'd accumulated great wealth. He'd accumulated great wealth. But he'd made a God of his wealth. He'd made a God of his popularity. Of his fine clothes.

And his sumptuous food. He had no time for God. He had no time for God. In his life. He lived. And in his death. He was cut off.

For a sad. Reality for this man. And a stark reminder. For each and every one of us. Is how we live. In this life.

All that we have heard. About Christ. When we've attended Sunday school. When we've come to church. Do we just let it pass by.

Do we not. Let it impact our lives. No longer was Lazarus in torment. He was comforted. The reality of the rich man's.

[14 : 55] State. Is graphically depicted here. While we learnt nothing. Of his funeral. Now in his state of judgment. We see far more about him.

He cried out for mercy. Not for forgiveness. But for rest. He was tormented in the flame. When you read that again.

Just pause on that. He was tormented in the flame. A clear picture. For any of us. If there's any doubt. That hell is not a place of comfort.

Where sinners can come together. And party. As some people would have us believe. The flame burns. But the body is not consumed. It's in continual torment.

The conversation between Abram. And the rich man. Then plays out. Abram refers to the rich man. As son.

[15 : 59] A reminder to the rich man. Of his status. As a child of Abram's line. He had received good things. And Lazarus. Evil things. Was the rich man.

Moved to forgiveness. Was he challenged. By the fact. That while he had been given so much. He passed Lazarus. Every day. And gave him nothing. While he had been blessed.

With so much. Unlike Abram. He had not gone out. And been a blessing. To others. What blessings. Have we been given. Are we keeping it to ourselves.

Or are we sharing it. With others. And then we get the finality. Of the state. Of the rich man.

He wanted Lazarus. To come. And just dip his finger. And touch his tongue. Probably providing. The same relief. As Lazarus got.

[16 : 59] When the dog. Came and licked his sores. But Abram reminds him. Between us. And you. There is a great gulf.

So that those. Who want to pass. From here. To you. Cannot. Nor can those. From there. Pass to us. A real reminder.

To us. That how we live. In this life. Will determine. Our eternal destiny. When we die. There is no second chance.

No matter how much. Those in Hades. Or in hell. Wanted to pass to heaven. The opportunity. Had gone. There was no second chance. Will you live.

Will you live. For Christ now. Will that be your choice. As the alternative. As we read here. Is for a life. Of eternal.

[17 : 57] Torment. But that's not enough. For the rich man. He makes a further plea. Verses 27 and 28.

Since Lazarus. Can't come down to him. He wants Lazarus. To go to his brothers. One writer suggests. That this wasn't. Because of concern.

For the souls of his brothers. It was because. He didn't want his brothers. To come and mock him. And add further. To his torment. But Abram.

Says to him. They have Moses. And the prophets. Let them listen to them. No father Abram. But if someone.

From the dead. Goes to them. They will repent. He said to him. If they do not listen. To Moses. And the prophets. They will not be convinced.

[18 : 58] Even if someone. Rises from the dead. Remember Jesus. Replied. To the crowd. The same way. In Matthew 16. And he called them.

A wicked and adulterous. Generation. Looking for a sign. But none. Will be given. Except the sign. Of Jonah. Again. Referring them back. To the prophets. And what they had read.

Before. We cannot ignore. Scripture. And what scripture. Teaches us. Some of you. May be sitting here.

This morning. And thinking. Well. I've read it. Doesn't really mean much. To me. I need more. In a book. By Kevin de Young. Taking God.

At his word. He writes. And I quote. Most Christians. Are familiar. With the attributes. Of God. At some point. And at some level. We've studied. God's holiness.

[19 : 54] Justice. Omnipotence. Sovereignty. Goodness. Mercy. Love. And whatever. Other characteristics. Might be listed.

As divine attributes. But I doubt. That we could name. Much less. Explain. The attributes. Of scripture. Traditionally.

Protestant. Theologians. Theologians. Have highlighted. Four. Essential. Characteristics. Of scripture. Sufficiency. Clarity.

Authority. And necessity. Each of these attributes. You can recall. By the handy acronym. SCAN. Sufficiency.

The scriptures. The scriptures contain. Everything we need. For knowledge. Of salvation. And godly living. We don't need. Any new revelation. From heaven. Clarity.

[20 : 49] The saving message. Of Jesus. Is plainly taught. In scripture. And can be understood. By all. Who have ears to hear. We don't need. An official magisterium.

To tell us. What the bible means. Authority. The last word. Always goes. To the word of God. We must never. Allow the teachings.

Of science. Or human experience. Or church councils. To take precedence. Over scripture. Necessity. General revelation. Is not enough.

To save us. We cannot know. God savingly. By means. Of personal experience. And human reason. We need. God's word. To tell us. How to live. Who Christ is.

And how to be saved. Or to. Or to. Rearrange. The order. Of the attributes. We could say. God's word. Is final. God's word.

[21 : 43] Is understandable. God's word. Is necessary. And God's word. Is enough. If it's not enough. For you. This morning. Why not?

We've read. Of the consequences. Of not living. For Christ. Christ. One final thing. I'll say. And I'll leave this.

With you. Of all the parables. Jesus spoke. This is the only one. In which we read. Of the characters. Been given a name.

Yes. There are a generic. Character names. Given. The good Samaritan. The sower. The prodigal son. All names. That could have been referred.

To anyone. In the surrounding area. And ones. That people have often. Referred to. As being themselves. At different times. In their lives. However.

[22 : 41] In this parable. Which speaks of eternity. We're given the names. Of the people involved. Lazarus. And Abram. Why is this.

Of significance. Well. Jesus is a good shepherd. And he knows. His sheep. And his sheep. Know him. Do you know him?

Do you know him. This morning. Have you heard. And have you read. About scripture. Have you read. Of the wounds. He bore for us. Not like the sores.

Of Lazarus. But wounds. That were inflicted. On him. And he bore. For our sin. And as the great shepherd. He will one day.

Open the book. As it's written of. In Revelation. 21 verse 7. And as he speaks. Of heaven. And we're reminded.

[23 : 44] Of the great chasm. That exists. Between. Heaven. And hell. And he will open. The Lamb's book of life. Will your name be there.

The same as Lazarus. His name is there. Or will you choose. This day. To walk from here. And ignore. The lesson.

That we have. That how we live. In this life. Will affect us. In the life to come. My prayer. For each and every one of you. Is that if you don't know Christ.

This morning. That you will stop. And examine your life. So that you can actually say. As you sang earlier on. No guilt in life.

No fear in death. This is the power of Christ in me. From life's first cry. To final breath. Jesus commands my destiny.

[24 : 41] Amen. Pray. Dear Heavenly Father. As we. Come before you. At the close of this service. As we consider.

Heavenly Father. What you teach us. Through your word. May each one of us. Heavenly Father. Look to the Lamb of God. Who threw the wounds.

That he was inflicted. For us. Dear Heavenly Father. For the. Wounds that he bore for us. To the cross at Calvary.

Dear Heavenly Father. That we would come. When bended knee. This day. And that we would say. Be merciful unto me. A sinner. Heavenly Father. That our lives.

Would be lived for you. And Heavenly Father. That you would indeed. Command our destiny. Heavenly Father. In the life hereafter. That we would know.

[25 : 39] What it is. To have communion with you. Forevermore. Amen.