

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS”

For individual study or group discussion

During the *Gospel of Luke* sermon series, we’ve noted over and over again that God’s ways are not man’s ways. Christ’s upside-down Kingdom is where the meek inherit the earth, the hungry are satisfied, and the pure in heart see God. Luke 16:19–31 tells a story of a complete reversal in fortune for two men. Within the story of **The Rich Man and Lazarus**, we find the kind of reversal Mary sang about in Luke 1:53: “*He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.*”

The stark contrast between two men (vv. 19–21)

J.C. Ryle describes the stark contrast between the two men: “*The one ‘fared sumptuously every day.’ The other was a mere ‘beggar,’ who had nothing that he could call his own. And yet of these two, the poor man had grace — and the rich man had none. The poor man lived by faith, and walked in the steps of Abraham. The rich man was a thoughtless, selfish worldling — dead in trespasses and sins.*”¹

- Jesus starts the story with the words, “*There was a rich man...*” When you hear those words, what other passages in Luke do you recall?
- Read Exodus 23:11, Leviticus 25, and Deuteronomy 14:28–29. If the rich man had followed God’s laws, what could have happened to Lazarus?

The sobering reality of death and judgment (vv. 22–23)

Death and judgment are inevitable (Hebrews 9:27). Ecclesiastes tells us that death does not discriminate, rich or poor, wise or foolish—we all return to the dust from which we came. And death can come at any moment. Why is it, then, that some live their lives as if tomorrow is a certainty? In John Bunyan’s classic allegory *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Interpreter counsels Christiana to always live with eternity in view: “*If a man would live well, let him fetch his last day to him, and make it always his company-keeper.*”²

- Read Matthew 16:24–27. When death comes, what is the only thing that matters?
- **The Rich Man and Lazarus** follows closely on Jesus’ earlier teachings on the use of wealth. Reflect on previous lessons from Luke 16:1–13. How are we to use our wealth? What does faithful stewardship look like?
- Read James 2:14–17 and Matthew 25:31–45. Describe true faith and its fruit. How will God judge us if we fail to take care of our neighbors?

The solemn lessons from the dialogue (vv. 24–31)

After death, there is no opportunity for repentance. The rich man seems to recognize his punishment as just, because he doesn’t ask for deliverance, but water to quench his thirst (v. 24). The first solemn lesson we learn from the story is that after death there is a great, irreversible chasm. The second lesson is that Scripture is all sufficient. Abraham tells the ex-rich man that even if the resurrected dead were to testify, the dead will add nothing more to what the prophets have already spoken. The testimony of the prophets is enough.

- Read Isaiah 55:6–7 and 2 Corinthians 6:2b. What are the warnings? Can we be certain what tomorrow may hold? Now is the time for repentance.
- What are Jesus’ words to the disciples on the road to Emmaus about the sufficiency of Scripture? (Luke 24:25–27).
- It is interesting to note that only a few weeks later, Jesus did resurrect a man named Lazarus from the dead (John 11). Did the Pharisees believe? How did they respond?

DATE: January 14, 2024

SPEAKER: Wil/Brian

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 16:19–31

Family Dinner Table

The Unexamined Life

Socrates once stated, “*The unexamined life is not worth living.*” If only the rich man in Luke 16:19–31 had been more introspective about his life. He lived in luxury with no thought for tomorrow and no regard for his neighbor. Despite his Jewish heritage, the warnings of the law and the prophets fell on deaf ears. He had no concern for the suffering of others.

Most of Jesus’ solemn warnings have been against the love of money and living only for self. Eleven of the thirty-nine parables have to do with money and stewardship. Jesus constantly urges his audience to keep the end in view, because the door of opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God won’t stay open forever. How you steward your time and wealth matters to God. They are gifts from him to be used for the upbuilding and expansion of his Kingdom.

- Read Amos 6:4–7 and Ezekiel 16:49. What happens to those who live for themselves and ignore the needs of the poor and suffering?
- Read Hebrews 3:1–19. What should be our response to hearing God’s Word? How can we exhort others to live with the end in view?
- Have you examined your life? What have you been living for? Do you know where you will spend eternity?

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¹Ryle, J.C. *Expository Thought on The Gospel of Luke*. January 9, 2024. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/bunyan/pilgrim.v.iv.html>

²Bunyan, John. *Pilgrim’s Progress*. January 9, 2024. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/bunyan/pilgrim.v.iv.html>