



Family Stories

The Great Divide

Luke 16:19-31



The Context

- The challenge of serving both God & 'mammon' (Luke 16:13)
- Money can be a powerful distraction

- The need for interpreting scripture carefully

The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him. So he said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.'

Luke 16:14-15

- Pharisees misinterpreting a wealth and prosperity gospel
- Looking at passages like Deuteronomy 28:3,8
- And not hearing others such as Isaiah 58:6-7; Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Scene One

Luke 16:19-26

A Rich Man

- Committed to the abundance of wealth & an opulent lifestyle – symbolized in the wearing of purple, royal clothing & eating sumptuously
- Doing so 'everyday' (v19b) – a telling phrase – limitless wealth, every need is pampered

A Poor Man

- The man at his gate brings a focus on poverty and lack of well-being – covered with sores (leprosy), hungry, a life with the dogs
- He is named – Lazarus – 'God is my helper', seen by God

Both Men Die

- Lazarus is carried to Paradise by angels (v22) – to be with Abraham
- Experiencing true 'shalom'

- The rich man experiences an opulent funeral (v22) – mausoleum
- Now experiencing the torment of Hades – seen in separation from the Divine comfort

A Call for Comfort

- The rich man cries out to Abraham for comfort – still trying to give his commands (send Lazarus to help me)
- Abraham: "No you are experiencing your own reward." - You are experiencing the results of your own selfish choices in life

A Call for Reflection

- It is possible that we experience a certain relief – ahh, good there is a measuring out of justice
- The rich who have despised the poor suffer a future of separation and pain

- We must realize that we are also rich in comparison to many
- There is a Lazarus living at our door as well
- So let us not rush to congratulating ourselves for our beneficence

The Call for Us

- Live compassionately with others
- Be poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3)
- Live open to the Spirit of God in our lives

Scene Two

Luke 16:27-31

A Second Request

- The rich man also asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his 5 brothers of what is to come (v27-28)

Abraham Refuses

- They have the Word (Moses and the prophets) which is sufficient for them
- The key is they must listen to the word
- A specter from the grave will not convince them

Points of Application

- Our place in the parable is as 'one of the five brothers'
- We also must hear & receive the Word both written and in relationship with the living Word

So he came, because of love, in great stillness, and you can hear and see him only if you hold your own heart completely still. You must hear the good words he spoke to the poor, the quiet people.

But you cannot listen to them as you listen to the loud voices of the world, as you listen to the radio the headlines of a newspaper. If you are afraid of the stillness, then you must necessarily miss hearing them altogether.

Helmut Thielicke

About Heaven

- It is not about geography – but about living in relationship with God through the living Word
- Living in the presence of God
- Experiencing God's abundance

Losing Sight of the Prize

- We become spiritually stuck through living a distracted life – focusing on money
- By misinterpreting the Scriptures and missing out on the living word of Jesus