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**THE GOSPEL OF LUKE (THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS)****Luke 16:19-31 | Reuben Kramer****April 31, 2023****Context**

- Sneering
  - Jesus is speaking to his disciples and the Pharisees are also listening in. He has been telling parables and stories that were not just to teach his disciples, but also to challenge the Pharisees and others who were listening in.
  - At this point in the teachings, Jesus has got the attention of the Pharisees and has rubbed them the wrong way. The NIV translation describes them as “sneering” at Jesus in reaction to his teachings.
  - They were not happy with his teachings because it went against the lifestyles that they were living.
- Faithfulness
  - Ultimately, we find that the underlying theme of Jesus’ teachings in this moment is faithfulness.
  - He is calling us to be faithful to God, faithful in our use of money, faithful in our hearts (not just outward appearance), faithful to God’s kingdom and faithful to our marriages.

**The Parable**

- Two Extremes
  - This parable is set by the social distance between the two main characters both on earth and after life.
- Clothing
  - The rich man was dressed in purple and fine linen. Clothing that projected a certain social status.
  - In contrast, the clothing Lazarus was wearing wasn’t even mentioned. All we know about his appearance was that he was covered in sores. A condition that was undoubtedly a sign of outcast and uncleanness.

- Food
  - Some scholars say that Jesus was painting a picture that this wealthy man had a feast like that as a daily occurrence.
  - Just as the lost son longed to eat the food that was for the pigs, Lazarus longed to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.
- Homes
  - The rich man's gate means that he would be the owner of an estate or house compound.
  - Obviously, Lazarus does not even have a home. He is just laid down in front of the gate, where he stays day and night.
- The men find themselves in Hades.
  - Is this heaven and hell? No, in that culture, Hades was described as the place of the departed spirits. It's seen as a type of "intermediate state".
  - Paradise
    - At Abraham's side. Some translations describe Lazarus as being in the "bosom of Abraham", which speaks to the position and intimacy in which he finds himself.
    - One scholar describes this to be a place where "there is no toil, no grief, no moaning, but peace, exaltation and endless life". (E.P. Sanders)
  - Fire
    - The rich man finds himself in torment and agony. A place so hot and unbearable, that he's desperate for just a drop of water off Lazarus' finger to land on his tongue.

## **The Meaning**

- Warning the Pharisees
  - Jesus is warning the Pharisees to change their ways while they still have time.
  - The Pharisees were treating those who Jesus was welcoming the same way that the rich man treated Lazarus.
  - The Pharisee's focus was on accumulating riches to show God's favour in their lives, Jesus' focus was on helping the poor and the needy.

- If they weren't willing to change, then there will be eternal consequences, just like the rich man experienced.
- A Message for Everyone
  - Jesus was reminding them that following him meant sacrifice, helping others, celebrating the redeemed, and giving up securing "stuff" for their time on earth. Ultimately, where will they going to give their hearts?!

### **What does this mean for us today? What is Jesus calling us too?**

- Masters
  - We all have different masters in our life that distract us from fully serving God.
  - Which master will we choose? God or... wealth, comfort, status, possessions?
  - The master we choose with dictate where we put our time, resources, thoughts, and money.
  - What are we holding on to that is getting in the way of fully trusting God with everything? Are we being wise stewards with what God has given us?
  - As we follow Jesus, we need to allow his Holy Spirit to transform our hearts away from the things of the world and towards what matters to Him.
  - It takes sacrifice, but when we allow God's word to speak to us and for His Spirit to change us, we begin to see the world differently.
- The Poor and the Widow
  - If we choose to serve God, then we need to seriously consider how we use the time, resources, and money that God has given us. If we allow God to bring change to our hearts, then we'll be moved to use those things to help others.
  - Are we being obedient to God's call to help the poor and the widow? Those who a down and out? Those how are being mistreated, trafficked, abuse, forgotten?
- Good News and Eternity

- We are called to share the good news with those around us, but for many of us, it is challenging because of fear of being rejected or others not accepting it.
- Jesus knew the hearts of the Pharisees and he could have just not bothered with them. But he chose to give them chances, to teach them truth and warn them about their choices.
- Let's follow his example to tell others about the amazing life that Jesus has to offer, regardless of whether they will accept it or not.