

GOSPEL MESSAGE

September 28, 2025

LECTIONARY 26

A Tale of Two Worlds

The only thing the rich man and Lazarus have in common is that they both have died. Death, after all, doesn't respect income. We can imagine that Lazarus succumbed to his hunger and the rich man perhaps choked on his own abundance. But despite their differing statuses on earth, it is poor Lazarus who gets a first-class ticket to the loving embrace of father Abraham.

The rich man, stripped of his money, prestige, and influence, is flung down into the filth and rot he had long avoided in life. The rich man's failure was not that he had money, owned possessions, or enjoyed a good meal; it was that he was not attentive to the suffering at his doorstep. And when he did at last see Lazarus—finally acknowledging his existence—all he could think about was himself.

Through this provocative story, Jesus is teaching his disciples and us to pay attention to the needs of the people around us. He is urging us to look and see Lazarus in our own world.

Who is Lazarus among us? Who are the hungry people at our own doorstep? Who are the ones we can name but perhaps cannot see? They might be a person with no reliable shelter or food, someone of a different race or religion, or a neighbor alone and lonely. They may even be a rich individual with all the means in the world but no real substance. What would our world look like if we truly acknowledged and embraced them?

When we recognize and serve the Lazaruses of our world, we not only extend compassion; we also encounter Jesus. His healing presence is in the midst of human suffering. Once we start looking for Lazarus, we start finding Jesus too.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.