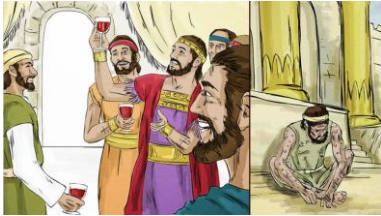


Gospel lesson

Our God is just, and Jesus gives an example.



pictures from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/rich-man-lazarus/>;
credit: Arabs for Christ /
FreeBibleimages.org

Luke 16:19-31

(NRSV)

¹⁹"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.

²⁰And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,

²¹who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores.

²²The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

²³In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side.

²⁴He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.'

²⁵But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is

comforted here, and you are in agony.

²⁶Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.'

²⁷He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house--

²⁸for I have five brothers--that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.'

²⁹Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.'

³⁰He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

³¹He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

The Word of God for the people of God

<Children's time>

<Hymn "God Will Take Care of You">

UMH #130>

Message: Safety in the Shadow of the Lord



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/i-will-call-upon-the-Lord/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Great God of our salvation,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may trust You more readily and help others to seek shelter in Your love as well. Amen.

As "~~I Will~~ [We] Call Upon the Lord," we seek "Safety in the Shadow of the Lord".

"~~R~~[R]eading Psalm 91:1 was [is] like calling 9-1-1: "You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty..." There is a sense of safety and security, a feeling that somehow everything will be okay."



picture screencaptured from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCYPrur6ssU>; fair use (Section 107, Copyright Act 1976); Operation Gomorrah - Bombing of Hamburg

Do you know what happened during Operation Gomorrah of WWII? <Let them respond>

I learned in my class this week that in July 1943 a devastating firestorm was created over Hamburg (Germany), wreaking intense destruction and death. I was struck by how I had heard a lot about the bombing of England in WWII, but somehow had missed that Germany was hit so hard too.

What do people do in the face of overwhelming horror? What do you think you would do? <Let them respond>

One of the most renowned theologians of modern times, Jürgen Moltmann, became a Christian after surviving that brutal attack on Hamburg. I think it is natural for humans, when overwhelmed, to turn to the One who can help us to endure and move on from such things.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/rq-hezekiah/>;
credit: Richard Gunther
(www.richardgunther.org)

Back in the days of the Jeremiah reading, Jerusalem was under siege, about to be overrun, the temple destroyed, and the kingdom dismantled. The people were living in fear. Nobody with any sense would buy property that an enemy was about to capture.

Yet Jeremiah listened to God. He had predicted that Babylon would take over, and now before all was lost, here Jeremiah is buying property and sealing the deeds in a jug for preservation. It was a great show of faith and trust that the Lord would see the people through this time and restore them to their heritage in the future. Do we have that kind of faith?

God did not promise that we would avoid all problems

in this world, only that our Lord will walk with us through everything we experience, protecting us when we ask for it and helping us find the best way forward. As the psalmist put it, “the Lord will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence...under the Lord’s wings you will find refuge...Because they cleave to me in love, I will deliver them; I will protect them, because they know my name.”

Paul reminded Timothy that if our basic needs are met, we can be content. Wanting more leads us to prioritize things other than God; as we heard today,



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/paper-money-falling-around-the-people-in-business-attire-in-the-office-7654628/>;

credit: Pavel Danilyuk

“the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” We see evidence of that all over the world today.

- + Complaints by the rich about the unsightliness of homeless people instead of providing affordable housing: By some calculations, the home buying power of US minimum wage in 1970 equals about \$66/hour wage today. Yet somehow we hear that people working minimum wage jobs today are just not doing enough or they could afford a place to live.
- + War over land that destroys both peoples’ lives and the property in contention: Does Russia, the largest land mass in the world, really need to take that slice of Ukraine? Does Israel really need to treat Palestinians in Gaza as poorly as (or worse than) Jews were treated in 1940 Germany?
- + Disdain for effects on the environment to make a

buck: Fast fashion creates microplastic pollution, CO₂ emissions, and landfill waste while depleting resources used to make them such as water. Other industries are prone to poisoning ecosystems worldwide. Should we support eliminating regulations which ensure environmental protection for the sake of corporate profits?

Ignoring these issues because we have enough is not what Jesus taught. God provides enough for all to thrive; we can trust in God to take care of us. But when others are left without because of self-centered greed, maybe we are to serve as God's agents to help.

Look at the story about Lazarus and the rich man. Clearly, ignoring need while we have an abundance to share is not okay. It ingrains in us sinful habits that will need to be burned away before we can enter the heavenly kingdom. And God protects those who are in the sinless realm by preventing them from going into the refiner's fire.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/i-will-call-upon-the-lord/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

We have safety in Jesus, who taught us to love instead of to sin, who freed us to live fully instead of being trapped in the torment that sin brings. When we seek the Lord and live as He taught, we are protected from sin much as a hatchling is protected by the feathers of the parent under whose wing it nestles. We need to remember, too, that we are not the only hatchlings in the brood.

So pay attention to those around you. Help them to understand that the love of Jesus is for them too. It may seem like there is chaos and malintent brewing, like healthy relationships are hopeless, but have faith in the Lord. Invest in what is good, showing love even when it seems pointless, for it will be of value in time.

Outside My Gate, Outside My Door

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2018

O Waly Waly
Traditional Welsh Melody



1. Out - side my gate, out - side my door, is some-one
2. Is there a child who longs for care? An old - er
3. Out - side our church, is some-one near who cries in
4. Some gates are made of wood or stone, And some are
5. As we look out, Christ, may we see our com-mon,



there who's lost or poor? Is some-one there I do not
friend who needs a prayer? Some-one who seeks a help - ing
pain, who lives in fear? Is some-one close who has no
made of sin a - lone. Some doors are made of greed and
shared hu - ma - ni - ty. May we kneel down and serve you



see— that I walk by— who has a need?
hand? A re - fu - gee new to this land?
way to buy the food she needs this day?
pride; they al - so keep the poor out - side.
more out - side our gate, out - side our door.

Text © 2018 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com | New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1272401304931641&set=a.413019577536489>

Tune UMH #408