

JESUS STORIES: THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

I. Icebreaker:

What did you believe about heaven as a child? What are you looking forward to the most about heaven today?

II. What you do with the *gifts* of life and the *pain* of life matters.

Luke 16:19-21 19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores."

1. What are the differences in circumstances between the rich man and Lazarus?

Luke 16:22-26 22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' 25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' "

2. What are the changes in circumstances after they died between the rich man and Lazarus?

3. How should knowing that God sees how we use our wealth motivate us to use it wisely? What does use wealth wisely mean to you?

Pastor Dave stated that Lazarus was comforted and not just healed. Jesus is giving a picture of future comfort to those who have endured the **deepest emotional hurts**, the **most brutal health challenges**, the **gnawing hunger for food**, and affirms there is future comfort for those who have had to endure those experiences in this temporary life.

4. How does knowing that God sees the conditions of our lives and his comfort awaits, help us to persevere during difficult circumstances?

Note: Scholars do not agree whether this story is a true account or a parable to make a point, but it is likely Jesus would give a true view of what happens after death in his illustration.

5. What can be said about life after death from this passage up to this point? How does knowing there are consequences after death make how we live today more important?

III. There is no opportunity for repentance after this life.

Luke 16:27-31 27“*He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ 29 “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ 30“ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ 31“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”*

6. Notice that the rich man continues to expect Lazarus to help him (Luke 16:24, 27). What is the rich man’s attitude and behavior and how does it demonstrate his lack of repentance?

7. How has God warned us to avoid the place of torment?

8. What would you say Jesus is implying was the reason Lazarus was with God? What is Jesus stating that could keep the rich man's brothers from ending up in the place of torment?

9. How do we avoid the place of torment? (John 3:16-17) On what basis are you confident that you will be with God? (1 John 5:11-12)

IV. How are you handling the wealth of your life? Because it matters.

Context: This story is the last in a series of parables regarding money and a not so subtle condemnation of the arrogance of the Pharisees and their disdain for those who do not have money. (See Luke 16:13-15)

Luke 16:13-15 13 *"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."* 14 *The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.* 15 *He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."*

10. How does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus continue the condemnation of the Pharisees?

11. What is highly valued among men and detestable in God's sight? Are there any areas of your life where you need to stop justifying yourself among others instead of God?

12. What is the heart of God? What are ways we can seek to stay in line with God's heart in our lives?

God will judge how you handle your wealth and how you handle your painful experiences.