

# The Rich Man and Lazarus - Luke 16:19-31

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- I. Introduction
- II. Key Thought
- III. Text
  - a. V. 19 – The Rich Man
    - i. Extreme Luxury
      - 1. Linen was worth more than its weight in gold
      - 2. Purple would have been the attire of kings and princes
        - a. Dyed with certain sea mollusks
      - 3. This was his everyday attire
    - ii. Sumptuous feast
      - 1. The noble Romans and emperors were famous for this kind of feasting
        - a. Bringing delicacies from all over the Roman empire to their table
        - b. Having their food turned into artwork by skilled chefs before they ate it
        - c. Dedicating dozens or more of servants spending hours each day to prepare just one meal
      - 2. Inviting choice guests among the most rich and influential to impress and be impressed at these meals
  - b. V. 20-21 – Lazarus
    - i. Not a greater contrast
    - ii. A picture of
      - 1. Complete misery
        - a. Full of sores – some assume leprosy, but not necessarily
      - 2. Complete helplessness
        - a. Unable to move himself – had to be laid wherever he happened to be
        - b. Unable to prevent the dogs from licking his wounds
      - 3. One bright spot
        - a. He was at the gate of one who could have supplied his every need and made whatever was left of life to him as comfortable as it could possibly be
        - b. But that is not what happened
          - i. He may have gotten crumbs at the gate, which may have kept him alive a little longer
          - ii. But he never got any other assistance
      - 4. One other bright spot
        - a. Jesus knew his name!

- b. As an ancient preacher from centuries ago said, “It is as if our Lord is reading from his Book of Life and finds Lazarus’ name there” and tells this story.
    - c. The rich man, however, is unnamed. How significant that is.
    - d. It is not surprising, since Jesus knew his name, what we are told next
- iii. V. 22 – Two funerals
  - 1. We are not told what kind of funeral Lazarus received upon his death, but we can imagine
    - a. The least possible respects for the body one who perish at the utter bottom of the scale of human existence
    - b. And yet, what a testimony to Lazarus – His spirit was carried by the angel’s to Abraham’s bosom
      - i. Abraham’s bosom –
        - 1. A Jewish term for the blessed state of those who die faithful while they wait for the Messiah
        - 2. Reflects a picture of the faithful dead reclining at a great feast (Mat. 8:11-12; Luke 13:28-30)
        - 3. Abraham’s bosom represented the favored position right next to the most notable guest – like John had at the last supper (John 13:23-25)
        - 4. Jesus referred to it on the cross as Paradise (Lk. 23:43)
  - 2. We are not told what kind of funeral the rich man received upon his death, but we can imagine
    - a. Attended by thousands
    - b. The most notable people in the nation or the world present and perhaps even speaking to give tribute to a man who wielded such power and influence in his life
    - c. Lavish expense to make the funeral a tribute to the type of life he lived
    - d. A final resting place marked with a monument meant to last for millennia so that his name and notable achievements would not be forgotten
    - e. But then..
- iv. Torments – v. 23-24
  - 1. He wakes up in torments
    - a. Not hell, but Hades – the realm of the dead
    - b. Not comfort, but torment

- i. Torment – v. 23 – touchstone, rack, torment/torture
      - ii. Agony
      - iii. Weeping and gnashing of teeth – Luke 13:28-30
    - c. Flame
      - i. Much like the lake of fire and brimstone which is the second death (Rev. 20:14-15)
      - ii. Where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:44-48)
      - iii. Where they are tormented day and night, forever and ever (Rev. 20:10)
- v. The Great Reversal – v. 25
  - 1. His sin
    - a. Not being rich
      - i. Abraham
      - ii. Job
    - b. Not accused of any specific sin
      - i. Not ill-gotten gain
      - ii. Not conspicuous consumption
      - iii. Just you had your good things
    - c. What went wrong?
      - i. He did not use his blessing on earth to secure blessings in heaven
      - ii. Luke 16: 9 – make friends of yourself by unrighteous mammon -> eternal habitations
      - iii. Lay up for yourself treasure in heaven – Mat. 6:19-21
      - iv. 1 Tim. 6:18-19
      - v. He had opportunity – Lazarus was witness to that
      - vi. He failed the test that Job passed - Job 31:16-23
      - vii. He was inhuman and unfeeling and selfish
      - viii. This night your soul will be required of you, then whose will these things be
  - 2. The irony
    - a. He delighted in comfort and the company of the rich and famous
      - i. He had it then, now he cannot have it
      - ii. Lazarus lacked it then, now he had it
      - iii. If the rich man had seen to it that Lazarus had enjoyed some comforts, then perhaps they both could have enjoyed it
    - b. Joel Olsteen – You Best Life Now
      - i. I don't want my best life now

- ii. I want my best life in Paradise
- iii. Too many people are trying for the good life in this world and getting it at the expense of the life to come (Luke 6:20-26)
- iv. It doesn't take much
  - 1. Just to act with unfeeling toward the Lazarus' that are all around us
  - 2. May keep us out of the banquet feast of heaven
- v. Jesus said (Matt. 25:40,45-46)
  - 1. Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren you did it for me
  - 2. Inasmuch as you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.
  - 3. These will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.
- vi. It is more blessed to give than to receive
- vi. The Life Beyond – v. 26
  - 1. An unbridgeable divide
    - a. No purgatory
    - b. No second chances after death
  - 2. A conscience existence
    - a. Not annihilation as some even in the Lords church teach
    - b. Not unconsciousness until the final resurrection as the Jehovah's Witnesses teach
      - i. God is the not the God of the dead, but of the living
      - ii. He is not the God of the unconscious either
  - 3. Not his main point, but Jesus knows what he is talking about!!
    - a. Man's speculations don't count for anything next to Jesus plain description
- vii. The Final Appeal – v. 27-31
  - 1. Has he begun to think of others?
    - a. Wanting to warn his brothers
  - 2. Or just seeking to justify himself
    - a. If someone had warned me, I would have done things so much differently!
  - 3. Abraham said, they have Moses and the prophets
    - a. That's all they need
  - 4. Even if one came to the m from theh dead
    - a. Proven by another Lazarus

- i. Raised from the dead
    - ii. John 12:9-11 - Their only thought was to plot to kill him so that he would not be a cause of faith in Jesus
  - b. Now another has risen from the dead
    - i. Jesus Himself
    - ii. Moses was sufficient to condemn the wicked
    - iii. Jesus was necessary to redeem the wicked
    - iv. If we will not listen to Him
      - 1. What hope do we have
    - v. If we listen and do not do the things which He says
      - 1. We are foolish
      - 2. Our whole life will one day come down in ruins
      - 3. We will see others partaking of the blessings of fellowship with Jesus Christ
      - 4. And ourselves cast out

IV. Conclusion

- a. Does Jesus know your name?
- b. Will He speak for you in the final judgement on the last day and welcome you into everlasting joy?
- c. Or will he say depart from me, I never knew you?
- d. Invitation