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Believers Are Word Receiving



Part 6 (010325AM)

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RECEIVING THE WORD

We are looking at one of the foundational truths of our salvation. True Christians are those who have received God's Word. Think of the verses you know so well:

John 5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

1 Peter 1:23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

But so few have received God's Word, right? Have you been reading the news this week? Another school shooting in California, more terrorist bombs in Russia, and the daily rates of evil in America with 54 individuals murdered every day in America and 16,939 assaulted. That makes 19,810 who are killed and another 6.1 million that are injured in fights and attacks HERE in the USA. So we live in a land overflowing with violence, greed, and suffering.

So what do crime statistics have to do with the Gospel? And what does God expect from us who live in these last days? God wants everyone to receive His Word and be changed from their sinful ways. To see this turn with me to 2 Timothy 3 and follow along as I read these timely verses.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

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Listen to a paraphrase:

Don't be naive. There are difficult times ahead. As the end approaches, people are going to be self-absorbed, money-hungry, self-promoting, stuck-up, profane, contemptuous of parents, crude, coarse, dog-eat-dog, unbending, slanderers, impulsively wild, savage, cynical, treacherous, ruthless, bloated windbags, addicted to lust, and allergic to God. They'll make a show of religion, but behind the scenes they're animals. Stay clear of these people. [1]

God's Word shows that the unsaved, the lost, the worldlings to the very end of time are unwilling to "receive the Word" and be changed. Remember the sky is falling down literally in the Tribulation and the lost cling to their stuff!

Revelation 9:20-21 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. Or in modern English: The remaining men and women who weren't killed by these weapons went on their merry way—didn't change their way of life, didn't quit worshiping demons, didn't quit centering their lives around lumps of gold and silver and brass, hunks of stone and wood that couldn't see or hear or move. There wasn't a sign of a change of heart. They plunged right on in their murderous, occult, promiscuous, and thieving ways. [2]

And to start join me in [Luke 16:8-13](#). Please stand as we read these verses.

- JESUS SAID THAT THREE EVIDENCES OF SALVATION ARE: LIGHT LIVING, GOD SERVING, AND WORD RECEIVING** *Luke 16:8* "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are **the people of the light**. PEOPLE OF LIGHT *Luke 16:13* "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." DEVOTED TO ONLY ONE MASTER *16:31* "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.'" RECEPTIVE TO GOD'S WORD
- A TRUE BELIEVER REALIZES THEY ARE MERCY NEEDING** *Luke 18:13* "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, '**God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**' SEEKING GOD'S MERCY
- A TRUE BELIEVER REALIZES THEY ARE HELPLESSLY COMING** *Luke 18:17* I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God **like a little child** will never enter it." HELPLESS CHILDLIKE RECEPTION
- A TRUE BELIEVER IS LOST-KNOWING AND GOD-OBEYING** *Luke 18:19-27* "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "**No one is good—except God alone.** 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "**You still lack one thing. Sell everything** you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then **come, follow me.**" 27 Jesus replied, "What is **impossible with men** is possible with God." KNOWING YOU ARE LOST-KNOWING GOD IS BOSS
- A TRUE BELIEVER REALIZES THEY ARE FOUND BY CHRIST** *Luke 19:10* For the Son of Man came to seek and to **save what was lost.**" FOUND BY CHRIST
- A TRUE BELIEVER IS REPENTANT AND FORGIVEN** *Luke 24:47* and **repentance and forgiveness of sins** will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. REPENTANT AND FORGIVEN

v.22 1) Only body died

- 2) God escorted Lazarus to bliss
- 3) Rich man to discomfort
- v.23 4) Recognition intuitive – he never had seen Abraham before “seeth Abraham”
- 5) Recognition was over all distances, these are eternal areas ‘afar off”
- v.24 6) Selfish desires still present and would be forever “cool my tongue”
- v.25 7) Memory unimpaired
- 8) Righteous are comforted
- v.26 9) Separation forever of good and evil
- 10) Beyond help
- v.27 11) No communication of dead to living!
- 12) Dead have no influence on spiritual world
- v.29 13) God’s Word determiner of destiny – all else passes away!
- 14) Still want to help those still here but to no avail

So that is the content of the parable, but I think there is more. If you step back ask yourself, so what made the rich man so bad? Did he harm Lazarus? Did he commit gross moral sin? Was he a murderer, liar, or anything like that?

If we look carefully at these 13 verses we see that every word, every phrase is chosen to communicate such depths of meaning. Jesus contrasts two characters.

First, there is the rich man, usually called *Dives*, which is the Latin for rich. Each new phrase builds a picture of this man. The point Jesus is making is about the luxury in which he lived. His clothing was purple and fine linen. If you remember our series in Exodus you know that is exactly the elements God chose for the robes of the High Priests. In modern terms those robes would cost about \$75,000 to \$100,000. Even today a normal person would never be able to afford a wardrobe in which each outfit would require an average person to spend his entire earnings from 6-8 years of full time labor per outfit!

But Jesus goes on, this *Dives* or rich man ate a luxury feast every day. Infact, the Greek word Luke uses denotes a gourmet feeding on exotic and costly dishes. And Jesus emphasizes that he did this *every day*. Think of Bible times where normal people felt very fortunate to get to eat meat once in the week. And that was only after laboring for the other six days. But *Dives* not only didn’t have to work it seems, but he also was feasting. This paints a picture by Christ of indolent self-indulgence.

When Lazarus waited for the crumbs that fell from *Dives*’s table it is another insight into the Biblical world.. In Christ’s time most people had no knives, forks or napkins. They usually ate food with their hands. But in very wealthy houses, the rich would clean their hands by wiping them on chunks of bread, which would then be discarded by the servants into the trash.

Now enters Lazarus. He sat by the trash thankfully getting any chunk of used hand cleaner bread.

Consider Lazarus. Because Lazarus is the only character in any of Christ’s parables who is given a name we are led to ponder whether this may be a true life account. Lazarus is the Latinization of the Hebrew name Eleazar, which means *God is my help*. So Eleazar or Lazarus was a totally helpless, sick, and starving beggar, covered with ulcerated sores; and so helpless that he was unable to keep the dogs that roamed the street from bothering him.

So life passes for both and the scene in the after life shows a drastic switch in their conditions.

Jesus tells us that Lazarus is in the glory of Heaven's waiting room and Dives is in the torment of Hell's waiting room. Again I ask, what can we find was the sin of Dives?

It wasn't cruelty, the text doesn't say he ordered Lazarus to be carted away from his gate.

It wasn't hatred, the text doesn't say he locked his garbage cans.

It wasn't murder, the text doesn't say he wounded Lazarus as he drove through the gate.

It wasn't violence, the text never implies Dives was harming Lazarus at all.

The only sin we can see from God's Word is that Dives seems to never have even noticed Lazarus.

To Dives the Rich Man, this poor, dying beggar was just another clump of the landscape.

To Dives the Rich Man, it was "perfectly natural and inevitable that Lazarus should lie in pain and hunger while he wallowed in luxury. As someone said, It was not what Dives did that got him into heaven; it was what he did not do that got him into hell."

So let me emphasize this, Jesus paints us an unforgettable picture. In it we see a man who could look on the world's suffering and desperate needs and simply never feel the conviction of God.

This Rich Man would look at a fellow human who was starving and deathly ill, and do nothing about it.

So Jesus paints the punishment of those who never noticed. When God's Word is not received, Christ's compassion is also absent.

But why was the part added that Jesus told about refusing to send a warning to Dive's family? Could it be Jesus is saying that to those who are exposed to God's Word and yet when they see the pain, sorrow, and dying of this world, and it moves them to no feeling and to no action, nothing will change them?

The terrible warning of the sin of Dives is not that he did wrong things, but that he did nothing. [1]

What happened to him? The word of God was never received, it never pierced the heart. When God's Word is received the life begins to change.

Self-centeredness begins to die

Self-indulgence begins to be disciplined away

Self-sacrifice begins to be pursued

Compassion, kindness, caring, and love take root and grow.

[Ezekiel 16:44-50](#) says that worst that Sodom's sin were the refined sins of God's People. What can possibly be worst than sodomy? Listen to what God said:

Pride, Fullness of food, Abundance of idleness.

[1] Adapted from Barclay, William, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of Luke (Revised Edition)*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2000, c1975.

[1] Peterson, Eugene H., *The Message*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group) 1997.

[2] Peterson, Eugene H., *The Message*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group) 1997.