

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon May 17, 2020
Luke 16: 19-31 – “The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man”

14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. 15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. 16 The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. 18 Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery." 19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' 27 Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

I. Introduction

- a. Henry “As the parable of the prodigal son set before us the grace of the gospel, which is encouraging to us all, so this sets before us the *wrath to come*, and is designed for our awakening; and very fast asleep those are in sin that will not be awakened by it. The Pharisees made a jest of Christ’s sermon against worldliness; now this parable was intended to make those mockers serious. The tendency of the gospel of Christ is both to reconcile us to poverty and affliction and to arm us against temptations to worldliness and sensuality. Now this parable, by drawing the curtain, and letting us see what will be the end of both in the other world, goes very far in prosecuting those two great intentions.”¹
 - i. Do you desire to see the depths of suffering in this world? Or, could such a sight cause too much compassion and change in your life?
- b. Today’s Sermon: The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man – Part 1

¹ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1883). Peabody: Hendrickson.

- i. Their situations compared in this life v19-21 – this week
 - ii. Their situations compared in the afterlife v22,23 – future
 - iii. The Rich Man’s Pleading with Abraham from hell v24-31 – future
 - iv. Questions to know, love and obey Christ our Lord
- II. Lazarus and the Rich Man compared in this life v19-21
 - a. “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.”
 - b. The Rich Man in this life v19
 - i. “A certain rich man” – anonymous: no honor afforded him by Christ. This man’s identity is his wealth. Foreshadows this man’s coming eternal loneliness.
 - 1. Mt 7:23 “And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'”
 - 2. Does God name you now? Does He know you as a friend?
 - ii. “Clothed in purple and fine linen”
 - 1. Public admiration: His wealth is always on display for the world to see. He makes no efforts to conceal his wealth. Rather, he seeks out clothing that displays his wealth. By placing purple on himself, he also claims a sense of royalty/superiority.
 - a. Purple:
 - i. Sproul “The colour of his clothes is significant, for purple was the most highly esteemed dye of all. It was the colour of kings. This rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, lived in splendour every day.”²
 - ii. Bock “Purple clothes came from dye derived from snails and were extremely expensive”³
 - iii. Henry “He had *purple* for *state*, for that was the wear of princes, which has made some conjecture that Christ had an eye to Herod in it. He never appeared abroad but in great magnificence.”⁴
 - 2. Personal comfort: fine linen.
 - a. The rich man gives much attention and expense to what touches his own skin. His own comfort occupies him.

² Sproul, R. C. (1999). [*A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke*](#) (p. 315). Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.

³ Bock, D. L. (1996). [*Luke: 9:51–24:53*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1365). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁴ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1883). Peabody: Hendrickson.

- b. Bock “βύσσοις (*byssos*, fine linen) refers to undergarments ... Some people have nothing, while others can afford expensive underwear.”⁵
 - iii. “and fared sumptuously every day”
 - 1. The rich man never missed a meal. And every meal was extravagant. Every day was like this. No fasting. No moderation.
 - 2. Henry “His table was furnished with all the varieties and dainties that nature and art could supply; his side-table richly adorned with plate”⁶
 - iv. Calvin “This denotes a life spent amidst delicacies, and superfluity, and pomp. Not that all elegance and ornaments of dress are in themselves displeasing to God, or that all the care bestowed on preparing victuals ought to be condemned; but because it seldom happens that such things are kept in moderation. He who has a liking for fine dress will constantly increase his luxury by fresh additions; and it is scarcely possible that he who indulges in sumptuous and well garnished tables shall avoid falling into intemperance.”⁷
 - v. The pictures, the scenes in our minds show a healthy, laughing man, busy in his affairs, surrounded by his servants, well-clothed, well-fed, and constantly engaged in his own concerns, giving no thought to his own soul, being brought to a point of sinful self-love making him blind to the suffering of others right before his eyes.
 - vi. In what ways are you like this rich man?
 - vii. How do you tend to view such a man?
 - viii. How does this parable instruct us in how to view such a man?
 - ix. Could it be that we all desire (secretly) to be like this man?
- c. Lazarus in this life v20,21
 - i. “But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.”
 - ii. “A certain beggar named Lazarus”
 - 1. Beggar: he was so sick he could not work. Reduced to begging.
 - 2. Named Lazarus: Jesus honors him by giving him a name.
 - Foreshadows his eternal intimacy with God.
 - a. Rev 2:17 “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

⁵ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1365). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁶ Henry, M. (1994). [Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume](#) (p. 1883). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁷ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 184–185). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

- b. Think upon that moment. Your very own white stone, given into your hand, for you to hold and sense its texture and weight, not given by a courier angel, but from God's Hand, and upon that white stone God has written for you to see the Name He has for you, to see with your own eyes only.
- 3. Bock "The Hebrew name... means "God helps." The name is significant, for it indicates someone dependent on God. In addition, one suspects the significance of this name from Lazarus's being the only figure in any of Jesus' stories who receives a specific name ... That he is named may also suggest that, though unrecognized by people, the person and fate of Lazarus is known by God ... The name also sets up a poignant detail in 16:24: the rich man shows he knows who Lazarus is."
 - iii. "full of sores, who was laid at his gate"
 - 1. Lazarus suffered every day. His clothing was so lacking that one could notice that he was "full" of sores. His skin was full of pain, oozing, stench and shame. Obvious intense, daily suffering.
 - a. Bock "his body is full of sores..., likely surface ulcers or abscesses ... This condition sharply contrasts the rich man's fine apparel"⁸
 - 2. "laid" – so severe he could not transport himself. Apparently, he is left there alone on the ground.
 - a. Bock "Lazarus is very poor, since he is lying at the rich man's gate in hopes of receiving food. He is probably crippled and has been placed at the gate; ... suggesting someone too ill to move... The term here suggests that Lazarus is a cripple or at least so hungry that he is immobilized (this is affirmed by the next verse, where Lazarus cannot avoid the dogs who lick his sores and thus render him unclean). He is not, however, a leper for then he would not be begging in public."⁹
 - 3. "at his gate"
 - a. The rich man's wealth is so great that he has a stunning gate. Another way he displays his wealth.
 - b. Bock "Lazarus lies before the home's high ornate gate....usually used of entrances to cities, temples, or palaces ... The rich man is portrayed as living in a mansion. The imagery is graphic: the rich man feasts inside, while

⁸ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1366–1367). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁹ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1366). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

the crippled poor man lies outside in hopes of receiving a few crumbs.”¹⁰

- iv. “desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table”
 1. So, here is crippled, oozing Lazarus, alone on the ground another day, eaten so deeply by his hunger that his strongest desire is not for healthy skin, clothing or companionship, but rather for some crumbs that might fall his way from the rich man. Lazarus longs to eat from the rich man’s trash.
 - a. Bock “All he wants is the man’s leftovers. This might be something as simple as the bread used as a “finger towel” to mop up any gravy from the dish and then tossed under the table for the dogs after the meal...This is hardly an extravagant request, since such food would have been thrown out anyway”¹¹
 2. No food, clothing, company, or secure lodging came to Lazarus. He just laid there suffering and alone, longing and longing.
- v. “Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.”
 1. Moreover: If, already, tears have traced your cheeks, if your heart has already burned toward the rich man, the scene has yet to reach its depth of misery. The curtain has yet to close, though we don’t want to hear anymore.
 2. As the day goes on, we see dogs coming and going, tongues out, licking Lazarus’ sores. The shocking life of Lazarus portrayed by Jesus. Will the Pharisees listen? Will we listen?
 3. Bock “To add insult, Lazarus has to endure wild dogs licking his sores, which both infect him and leave him ceremonially unclean. There is no more pathetic scene. There is no suggestion that the dogs picture mercy extended to Lazarus, since such dogs were not viewed positively ...Lazarus desires food and gets only the embarrassing attention of unclean animals. By all observable criteria, one would conclude that the rich man is blessed and Lazarus is not. Lazarus never speaks in the parable; he suffers alone and in silence.”¹²
- vi. The absent person is the one who comes and helps Lazarus. This story has no Good Samaritan. Lazarus suffers and dies.
- vii. Have you ever suffered like Lazarus? Do you recall your physical pain, or perhaps times of fearful poverty, or loneliness? Have you ever been so helpless?
- viii. Why aren’t we more involved in seeking out and helping and comforting those who are suffering?

¹⁰ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1366). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

¹¹ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1367). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

¹² Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1367). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

1. Because we don't really love Jesus like we should. He has shown us clearly where we can find Him in this world.

d. Matthew 25:32-46

- i. "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, **inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.**' 41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 44 Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, **inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.**' 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

1. Henry "Note, It is not enough not to oppress and trample upon the poor; we shall be found unfaithful stewards of our Lord's goods, in the great day, if we do not succour and relieve them. The reason given for the most fearful doom is, *I was hungry, and you gave me no meat.*"¹³

- III. Their situations compared in the afterlife v22,23
 - a. Lazarus in perfect bliss. Rich man in torment.
- IV. The rich man's pleading with Abraham from hell v24-31
 - a. There is no hope once in hell, so listen now to the Word of God.
- V. Questions to know, love and obey Christ our Lord

¹³ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1884). Peabody: Hendrickson.