

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon May 31, 2020

Luke 16: 19-31 – “The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man – Part 3”

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 “Here is an account of what passed between the rich man and Abraham in the separate state—a state of separation one from another, and of both from this world. Though it is probable that there will not be, nor are, any such dialogues or discourses between glorified saints and damned sinners, yet it is very proper, and what is usually done in descriptions, especially such as are designed to be pathetic and moving, by such dialogues to represent what will be the mind and sentiments both of the one and of the other. And since we find damned sinners tormented *in the presence of the Lamb* (Rev. 14:10), and the faithful servants of God looking upon them that have *transgressed the covenant*, there where their *worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched* (Isa. 66:23, 24), such a discourse as this is not incongruous to be supposed.”¹
 - i. Can there be a sweeter treasure than the mercy of God, washed and refreshed by His Spirit’s outpouring, made sensible to our Creator’s glory

¹ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1884). Peabody: Hendrickson.

and the truth of His Word, in this life? Enter in, enter in, the Door of Mercy now, and remain, remain, forever.

- b. Today's Sermon: The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man – Part 3
 - i. Their situations compared in this life v19-21 – Part 1
 - ii. Their situations compared in the afterlife v22,23 – Part 2
 - iii. The Rich Man's Pleading with Abraham from hell v24-31
 - 1. The plea for water – Part 3
 - 2. The plea to send Lazarus to his family - future
 - 3. The plea to send a message from the dead - future
 - iv. Questions to know, love and obey Christ our Lord
- II. Lazarus and the Rich Man compared in this life v19-21
 - a. The self-focus and lack of compassion of the rich man are shockingly obvious to us as we hear Jesus tell this story, but the rich man himself didn't see his own trajectory. Do we see our own trajectory accurately? Do we allow the wealth of others to blind us to the potential emptiness of their souls, the tragic trajectory of their lives?
 - b. The quiet suffering of Lazarus (covered with sores, unable to walk, alone, ignored, starving, licked by dogs) draws out our compassion, yet Lazarus was on his way to bliss. Do we rightly assess life according to what is valuable to God?
- III. Their situations compared in the afterlife v22,23
 - a. 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.
 - b. Lazarus at Abraham's bosom -the lonely and suffering beggar now rests in comfort and love, honored by angels. Body and soul free of suffering, enjoying eternity. The great reversal occurred at death.
 - c. The rich man tormented in Hades – every comfort and friend gone. Lost. Alone. Shame. Aware Lazarus is comforted and loved. Moved to cry out.
- IV. The rich man's pleading with Abraham from hell v24-31
 - a. Water – today Part 3
 - b. For Lazarus to go to his family - future
 - c. For a message from the dead - future
- V. The rich man pleads with Abraham for water v24-26
 - a. The request for water v24
 - i. "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.'
 - ii. The rich man cries out to Abraham for mercy.
 - 1. The rich man has come to realize he is receiving justice from God. Once, (via comparison to the Pharisees) he believed he was just and would be rewarded by God at death, but reality is now upon him, and he sees he has no hope except for mercy.
 - 2. Can you imagine crying out to God for mercy, yet finding it is too late? The sweet door of mercy remains open to all on this side of

- death. Yet, alas, the most precious promises of God do finally expire at death, forever lost, for those who passed not under mercy's arches during this brief walk on earth.
3. Psalm 103:8 "The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy."
 - a. Do you treasure God's mercy?
 - b. Psalm 106:1 "Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever."
- iii. He asks for Father Abraham to send Lazarus to help him with a drop of water
1. Yet, the rich man still somehow thinks to connect himself to Abraham, "Father", but no such love has ever existed in this man's soul for Abraham.
 2. Why does the rich man ask for Lazarus' help? Why just a drop of water?
 - a. Sproul "Talk about wretchedness! This wealthy man was not asking to have restored to him his palace and power. He was asking only that the miserable beggar, Lazarus, would dip his finger in water, and just touch the tip of his tongue. He was in such torment that he would have given everything or done anything he could, just to be at the gates of his own house, having dogs lick his wounds."²
- iv. The description of eternal suffering: "I am tormented in this flame"
1. Isaiah 33:14 - The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"
 2. The rich man seeks even a single drop of water to cool his blazing tongue. Lazarus longed for a single crumb, just a bit of trash from the rich man's table, to ease his aching hunger. Now, in Sheol, the rich man looks to Lazarus for help.
 3. The flame of God will either purify His people from their sins, or destroy His enemies forever. The fire of God will come upon one as blessing or as cursing, but it will come.
 - a. Acts 2: 1 – 4 "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

² Sproul, R. C. (1999). [*A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke*](#) (p. 317). Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.

- b. Hebrews 12:28,29 “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.”
 - v. Note he pleads for a single drop of water
 - 1. Revelation 22:1 “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.”
 - 2. One tiny drop of the river of life indeed cools all the fires of God’s wrath for His people. The potent grace of God toward His elect destroys all their sin in Christ. Each drop of Christ’s blood suffices beyond measure for His people. Had he spilt but the tiniest drop of His blood, we would be safe in His work; yet, He did not spare Himself in the least. We are abundantly washed and welcomed. All the sins of the Church are but the tiniest drop of darkness compared to the infinite brightness of His cleansing fire.
- b. Abraham replies: states the reversal v25
 - i. 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.’’
 - ii. Abraham first refuses the rich man’s request, citing the evidence from his brief life before death.
 - 1. For those outside Christ, their eternal state shall be determined by their thoughts, affections, words and deeds before death. Their record before death is all that is considered by God. Perfect justice comes upon those outside Christ. Terrifying!
 - 2. Calvin “The word *son* appears to be used ironically, as a sharp and piercing reproof to the *rich man*, who falsely boasted in his lifetime that he was one of the *sons* of Abraham....The pronoun *thy* is emphatic, as if Abraham had said: Thou wast created for an immortal life, and the Law of God raised thee on high to the contemplation of the heavenly life; but thou, forgetting so exalted a condition, didst choose to resemble a sow or a dog, and thou therefore receivest a reward which befits brutal pleasures.”³
 - 3. Bock “... in effect Abraham says that the rich man’s extravagant wealth and lack of compassion on earth has resulted in spiritual poverty and absence of mercy eternally. There is no mercy in the afterlife for those who fail to show compassion in this life.”⁴
- c. Abraham replies: no passage between heaven and hell v26
 - i. 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.’

³ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 189–190). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

⁴ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1372). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

- ii. Next, even though the prior explanation was more than enough, Abraham goes on telling of the structural impossibility of help. Not only has the rich man earned a perfect justice than cannot be undone, he is in a full-proof prison out of which there is not passage. Neither mercy nor escape are possible.
- iii. Henry “The most daring sinner in hell cannot force his way out of that prison, cannot get over that great gulf. *They cannot pass to us that would come thence*. It is not to be expected, for the door of mercy is shut, the bridge is drawn; there is no coming out upon parole or bail, no, not for one hour. In this world, blessed be God, there is no gulf fixed between a state of nature and grace, but we may pass from the one to thee other, from sin to God; but if we die in our sins, if we throw ourselves into the pit of destruction, there is no coming out. It is a pit *in which there is no water, and out of which there is no redemption*. The decree and counsel of God have fixed this gulf, which all the world cannot unfix. This abandons this miserable creature to despair; it is now too late for any change of his condition, or any the least relief: it might have been prevented *in time*, but it cannot now be remedied *to eternity*. The state of damned sinners is fixed by an irreversible and unalterable sentence. A stone is rolled to the door of the pit, which cannot be rolled back.”⁵
- iv. Are we appropriately apprehended by the reality of hell for those outside Christ? Are we appropriately examining our own souls upon life’s short journey to judgment?
 - 1. Calvin: great gulf fixed “ [these words show] the permanency of the future state, and denote, that the boundaries which separate the reprobate from the elect can never be broken through. And thus we are reminded to return early to the path, while there is yet time, lest we rush headlong into that abyss, from which it will be impossible to rise.”⁶
 - 2. 2 Peter 1:5-11 “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11

⁵ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1885). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁶ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 190–191). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

- VI. The rich man pleads with Abraham to send Lazarus to his family v27-29 - future
 - a. The request v27,28
 - i. 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.'
 - b. Abraham replies: the sufficiency of Scripture v29
 - i. 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'
- VII. The rich man pleads with Abraham to send message to his family from the dead v30,31 - future
 - a. The request v30
 - i. 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'
 - b. Abraham replies: spiritual blindness is comprehensive v31
 - i. 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.' "
- VIII. Questions to know, love and obey Christ our Lord