

## Notes And Helps to Instructors

Thank you for volunteering to lead a group through the treasures of God's word! You may feel overwhelmed or inadequate, but you can do this! The leader notes are designed to help you grow in knowledge and love for Christ and for you to help pass what you have received to your group. Here are some suggestions to help equip you to grow in your teaching and leading ability.

- These lessons could simply be read, and a group would receive something but that is not how they are designed. The notes are designed to grow you as a leader so you might tailor the lesson for the needs of your group. Some groups may not have much of a knowledge base in the bible, so the concepts must be brought down to their level. Other groups may have a large knowledge base and you may challenge them with more information. The key is to know your group. If you begin leading a group in one way and find that it is not connecting, it is alright to modify and bring down or raise up the level of information.
- The more preparation you do the stronger you will be as a leader. Let the study material be a joy for you! Let it feed you as you prepare! The more you are fed the more you have to give to your group.
- There is no set time on how long a lesson may take. Lessons could be slowed down and take several weeks to finish. Perhaps in leading a group, one question captivates the group and leads to a fruitful conversation. If that happens, that is good! You are in no hurry. If you can finish the material in a week, then great! But if it takes several, that is great as well! The important thing is that they receive deeply from the gospel of Jesus.
- Pray about your lesson! Pray as you prepare! Pray as you teach! Remember we do not teach or exercise our gifts in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is the one who opens the heart and mind. Pray for the Spirit to move in your heart and the heart of the group.

May our merciful Triune God bless your study and your group that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

In Christ,

Prison Discipleship Ministry

## Lessons in Luke -- Lesson 10 – Jesus, the Rich Man, and Lazarus

### Introduction:

Simeon prophesied over baby Jesus that He would raise up many weak persons and bring down many proud persons (Luke 2:33-35). This week we study Luke 16:19-31.

### Read this passage at least five times then answer the questions as best you can:

<sup>19</sup> "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, <sup>21</sup> "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

<sup>22</sup> "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. <sup>23</sup> "And being in torments in Hades (hell), he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

<sup>24</sup> "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.'

<sup>25</sup> "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. <sup>26</sup> '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.'

<sup>27</sup> "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, <sup>28</sup> 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

<sup>29</sup> "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

<sup>30</sup> "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

<sup>31</sup> "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.'" (Luke 16:19-31 NKJ)

### Comparing the Rich Man and Lazarus

The Rich Man is described first as obviously as rich. In the Old Testament, wealth was often seen as a sign of God's favor. Consider the story of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus in Mark 10:17-22. That man believed that he was right with God in every way and wanted Jesus to confirm that he was as righteous as he thought he was. So, it is often with those with wealth that they often find it hard to live in repentant faith. Their money can get them out of most problems. Seldom do they find themselves desperate. So, it is hard for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:23-27). Second, notice this rich man was clothed in linen. He was well dressed and able to purchase fine things, such as soft clothes. Consider how long it took to make clothes in the ancient world. All thread had to be spun by hand, all fabric had to be made by hand, every stitch had to be made by hand. The clothes were expensive. Consider the story of Samson and his riddle at his wedding. His bet was for 30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothing (Judges 14:12). So, this man being described in his clothes says this man has wealth and comfort. Third, "he fared sumptuously," in other words, he ate well. In the ancient world, most people lived hand to mouth. That is why in the Lord's Prayer Jesus tells us to pray for our "daily bread." In the ancient world that was the reality for most. Most ate not to starve that day. But this man had rich food and had it extravagantly. Fourth, he dressed

and ate this way every day, meaning that his wealth and comfort were in no danger of becoming less. He was truly one of the ultra-wealthy who could not spend themselves out of wealth. And lastly, he lived in a gated complex. This meant that he was well protected as well as his wealth. This man feared for nothing, wanted for nothing, and saw himself as blessed of the lord.

Lazarus on the other hand is described in very different terms. First, Lazarus is described as a beggar. He had no means to support himself. He lived completely upon the kindness and generosity of compassion of others. He had to rely completely on God for every part of his wellbeing. Second, he was covered in sores. This means he was constantly in pain. But it also meant that he was considered unclean. No priest nor anyone would even touch him without becoming unclean as well. Third, continuing the picture of how unclean he was, dogs, who were unclean animals, came and licked his sores. So not only was he unclean from his affliction, but he was also unclean by the dogs licking him. He is pictured as the most wretched and those who people would consider outcasts from God. He would have been seen as someone who has God's curse upon him, someone who's sin has cut them off from God's love. Fourth, Lazarus did not even have the strength to walk on his own. Every day he lay at the gate to beg. Someone had to carry him and place him there. And fifth, his place was at the rich man's gate. This is someone the rich man would see every day of his life.

## **How They Both Died**

The fact is that money cannot stop death. It may delay it a bit, but the time will come for all. Not surprisingly, Lazarus died. But what is surprising to us and to those who would have heard this story is that the beggar is carried by angels. This unclean man, the angels themselves pick up and carry to Abraham's bosom. Abraham is the father of the Christian faith. We are called children of Abraham. So here, heaven, the place where we who place our trust in Christ spend eternity in the presence of Christ is described as Abraham's bosom. Bosom speaks to a place of intimate comfort, protection, blessing, goodness, etc. Just as a mother loves, cares for, protects, and provides for her child by holding it to her bosom, so here, heaven is described as that intimate place for those who believe. And it is there Lazarus, the supposed outcast, the unclean curse ridden, forsaken by God beggar went. He was not cast off from God, but he was a man of faith who loved his Lord, and his Lord loved him.

The rich man in time died as well. But as it seemed surprising to us and especially to those who would have heard this story, the rich man is described as being tormented in Hades. The luxury that the man enjoyed in his life has ended. He is now tasting for eternity the pain that Lazarus experienced in his brief life. And the comfort that Lazarus never experienced on earth, is not his for all eternity.

Notice that the rich man is conscious in his torment as he notices Lazarus. And so, he cried out to Abraham to have mercy on him and send him one drop of water on his finger to his tongue. Lazarus dreamed of eating the scraps of the rich man's table, now the rich man is begging for the smallest of scraps, a drop of water for his tongue. But Abraham refused for two reasons. First, he reminds the rich man that he has already received his

good things. As his earthly life was all he lived for, so when his earthly life was over, he had nothing else. And likewise, Lazarus, who had nothing and only lived for the eternal as he had nothing earthly to hold him, so now receives all that he has built up by faith. Namely, the presence and love of his Lord for all eternity. Second, Abraham reminds him that there is a great gulf between them so that one may never get to the other. Meaning those in Christ can never be lost. But also, those outside of him cannot escape their torment in hell.

So, upon realizing there was no hope for him, he asked Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brothers who were destined to the same place of torment as he. But Abraham refuses saying, “they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” But the rich man persists, “No Father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead they will repent.” But Abraham says no. If they won’t hear Moses and the prophets, meaning, if they won’t listen to the Word of God as written in the Old Testament, they won’t believe even if someone rises from the dead.

### **Jesus tells us this account. Does Jesus believe in hell?**

Jesus absolutely believes in hell. Jesus speaks about hell more than anyone else in the bible.

### **What is hell like?**

Hell is a place of horrible torment. Here in this passage, it is described as a fire, conscience torment, pain, and seeing the mercy of God to others, but God’s mercy is denied you. Now is the time for you to receive God’s justice. But Jesus does not only reference hell, he describes it in great detail. He says it is a place of eternal torment (Luke 16:23), of unquenchable fire (Mark 9:43), where the worm does not die (Mark 9:48), where people will gnash their teeth in anguish and regret (Matt. 13:42), and from which there is no return, even to warn loved ones (Luke 16:19–31). He calls hell a place of “outer darkness” (Matt. 25:30), comparing it to “Gehenna” (Matt. 10:28), which was a trash dump outside the walls of Jerusalem where rubbish was burned, and maggots abounded. Jesus talks about hell more than he talks about heaven and describes it more vividly. There’s no denying that Jesus knew, believed, and warned about the absolute reality of hell.

### **Does the rich man get a second chance to make the right decision about heaven and hell?**

No, the rich man, nor does anyone else, ever get a second chance to make the right decision about heaven and hell. We are given this life to repent and trust in Christ, or to live in and for ourselves alone. If we decide we do not want Jesus in our earthly life, he will obey our wishes and not be with us in our eternal life.

### **Does poverty get Lazarus into heaven? Do riches send the rich man to hell? Re-read Luke 7:50. What saves a person?**

We are not saved because of poverty, nor are we damned because of riches. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in the work of Christ alone. All poverty or riches do is bring out what is already in the heart. A poor man could in his poverty, see his earthly need as paralleling his spiritual need. Luke 6:20, “Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” And James 2:5, “Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” These passages help us see how poverty can point someone to Christ. But poverty could manifest itself in anger, hatred, and jealousy towards God and drive him further away from faith in Christ and into one’s own sinful heart.

Likewise, when one has wealth, it could bring out of the heart thanksgiving and faith in Christ. They know they do not deserve these blessings and so they seek to share the blessings they have with others and give thanks to their lord for the provision he has provided. They see themselves as living with the joy to bless others as they have been blessed. But riches also can make a man depend on himself and not on God because they they think their own wealth, power, intelligence, and earthly means, get themselves out of trouble. So why do they need faith in Christ? This world has been good to them, why do they need Jesus?

Faith alone saves. All wealth, whether having or not having it does is bring out what is already in the heart. From a heart of faith flows love and thanksgiving to God and others and a life of repentance. From a heart of unbelief comes anger and apathy towards God and others.

**How many brothers does the rich man have? What is their spiritual state? What does the rich man want Father Abraham to do for his brothers? Why does Abraham refuse?**

The rich man has five brothers, and they all have the same spiritual state as he. They are destined to hell just like him if they do not repent and trust in Christ. The rich man asked for Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers. But Abraham refused and said they have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. Moses and the prophets are another way of saying the whole bible. If they won’t read, hear, and believe the Bible, then they will not believe even if someone rises from the dead. And sure enough, someone has risen from the dead! Christ has risen from the dead and people still do not believe. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom 10:17). If they will not hear the Bible and believe, they won’t believe by a sign or miracle, clever argument, or any other means. The scriptures, which tell us the words of Christ, are the means God uses to create and grows us in faith.

**Based on what Jesus says here, what is wrong with this: “Hell won’t be such a bad place. I’ll be there with my friends.”**

Why do you assume you will have friends in hell. You are reading your definition of hell into the future. Hell is God’s place of punish. Hell is full of the wrath of God and absent of the mercy and kindness of God. The Bible says that the earth right now is full of the mercy of God. Having friends in this world is a sign of God’s mercy to us.

**“Moses and the Prophets” (verse 31) is another way of saying “the Bible.” What responsibility does every man have to read and obey the Bible?**

Everyone is responsible to come to terms with what the Bible says. It is literally a matter of eternal weight. No one can say on the last day they were ignorant. God has made His revelation clear to all (Rom 1:18-24). Especially in America, where we are awash with Bibles; we can pull the Bible up on our phone; if we can't read, someone can read it to us online. We have no excuse to not hear the words of the Bible. And so, we all have the responsibility to hear Jesus' words and repent and place our trust in Him. If we refuse, Jesus will respect our wishes and not extend us His person of mercy and grace to us for all eternity.

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