

Heart Roots  
(A selfish life is a rootless life.)  
Luke 16.19-31

*There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. Luke 16.19-21*

This story isn't about Paradise and Hades.

This story isn't about the afterlife.

This story isn't about money.

This story is about the roots of the heart.

How do you use your opportunities?

*The rich man and Lazarus* is not a parable; it is a teaching illustration. The Pharisees scoffed at and ridiculed the parable of *The Dishonest Manager*: “The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him” Luke 15.14a. Knowing that their hearts were not right about the law or using the opportunities of life Jesus gives them some sharp and thorny wisdom. To them it was all about the show and the comforts of life. Then Jesus gives them this illustration.

It is not the parable of Lazarus and the rich man—it is the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

**What do you need to know?** This story is not about Paradise (the world of the resurrected righteous) or Hades, (the world of the resurrected unrighteous.) The resurrection had not happened yet and still hasn't.

The story isn't about the afterlife. Angels might guide us to heaven to await the resurrection, but the idea of seeing and communicating with the resurrected unrighteous in torment does not make sense.

The story isn't about money. All rich people do not go to the lake of fire, and all poor folk will not go to the new creation. It is not how much, or little one has; it is about what you do with what you do have.

**What do you need to do?** So, what is the point? The point is, where do the roots of your heart go. This ties directly into the first two parables Jesus teaches on Perean road. Do you remember the Good Samaritan and the Rich fool? Was the rich man in today's story good to his neighbor Lazarus? Was the rich man's heart rooted in service and love to the poor and destitute, or was it rooted in love for his riches? Could he afford to feed Lazarus and give him some medical care? Jesus' point is not only that he could have, but he should have.

The majority of Christians around the world are poor, and many are dirt poor; even they are expected to treat those poorer than themselves with dignity, respect, and love. God gives us his bounty to care for ourselves and others. “They will know we are Christians by our love.”