

Just before the story of the rich man and Lazarus, St. Luke writes, the Pharisees were lovers of money. Jesus says, **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.** The story is a warning to the Pharisees and no less, to you, to people you love, for all who hear.

Still to this day, we highly esteem the rich. We admire power. Don't we presume if some has much stuff, luxuries, and wealth that he is, what do you call him, 'blessed.' But this is a warped view unless you know the heart; that you not measure God's goodness, His favor, His blessing in things of this world. Which of your things and home will not belong to someone you don't know or in the landfill. Eventually all of it. Even your family keepsakes and gr.grandma's china, if not trashed, will be sold for a dollar at a thrift store. God helps us to see true treasures, true wealth, what true blessings are.

But, of course, we don't admire the rich man. His heart was wicked. At first glance the story of the beggar Lazarus and rich man might seem to be a tale of vindication. All things work out in the end. But that's not true; it doesn't happen that way. Nor does poverty, suffering earn favor with God. The difference between Lazarus and rich man isn't their wallets, their deeds (the poor man did no good works), but their hearts.

Our Lord sums up the lesson: **If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.** The rich man's real problem isn't that he's rich, he lacks faith. **If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets. If they do not *hear*.** The rich man didn't hear the Word of God. **Hear**, not the audible sound, but **hear** conveys -you confess, adhere to, live by it. You aren't 'hearing' your parents if you don't obey them, live by their words.

You know, even there at the bottom of the lectern, Romans 10, **Faith comes from hearing.** Faith gift given by hearing Moses, the prophet whom all points to Jesus. For while it seems as though hungry Lazarus has nothing besides the mercy of canines, in truth, he has riches the world can scarcely imagine. He has Moses and the prophets.

Jesus is warning us all, to live Christian, to hear, live by His Word. But of course we don't think of ourselves as the rich man. Yet, all of you are rich, I know, you don't feel rich. It's quite a perspective the poorest

American has more luxuries than 99.9% of anyone ever born since Adam. But all of you here, among top 5% wealthiest in the world. And rich, your life filled with more leisure time, even retirement, only a dream to any's who ever lived, before our modern 1<sup>st</sup> world countries. Your way of life comes with many pitfalls, temptations, distractions that can corrupt, weaken, destroy faith. Look around, you see this. Jesus is warning you, keep hearing His word. And that is why God calls you to gather in a place to hear His word and receive the very wealth, treasures of heaven.

Repent of thinking that God has to prove Himself to you, prove His love for you, in your life by success and good things, by money and goods. Repent of daydreaming if only you had more money you could do so much, and for your family, do more for the church. We lie to ourselves, with all the Lord has placed into our hands we could do some much more with it, if only we trust in God more than what our work and bank accounts provide.

Proof of God's love and power, is not found in miracles and stuff from Amazon, that fills your life, stuff of creation, in any of your achievements, or your good health, your account, or in your children and very extraordinary grandchildren, your family accomplishments. Proof of God's love, His power is found in God's Word for you, the promises for you. Proof of His love for you to hear Moses and the Prophets, hear the Christ, receive His eternal gifts, the only treasures worth anything, that you never perish, His proof He does all things, gives all things, works all things, to daily care for you, that you would spend eternity with Him. Eternal gifts He gives here.

O that God in His abundant grace and wisdom would make us like that holy beggar, helpless, weak, dependent, trusting in no one but Him, satisfied with no other food and drinking other than what comes from His Altar and soothe our wounds with His healing balm; clothed with only the clothing of His righteous He proved as we worship a man and God who rises from the dead. For of such, you beggars all, you poor, wounded, sick, dregs, failures, drunks and outcasts, sinners all, receive, bask now and forever in the treasures of His kingdom.