

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Last time...in His continued response to the Pharisees regarding the Parable of the Unjust Steward, Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God and their disqualification from it

This time...still in His continued response to the Pharisees, Jesus tells a story to drive home why His teaching is so important, not to be derided

We will be in Luke 16 again

With **Ch 15:1-2** as the start and the context of Jesus teaching

1. Parable of the Lost (sheep, coin, sons) in Ch 15
2. Parable of the Unjust Steward (Ch 16:1-15)
 - which the covetous Pharisees derided because they believed
 - they were righteous before God, as “keepers” of the Law
 - their wealth was proof of God’s favor/blessing
3. The Kingdom of God, true riches (Ch 16:16-18)

we continue with the rich man and Lazarus...

- not a series of separate and distinct teachings but a continuous flow of a teaching
- a parable or a real life story?

v19 certain rich man:

clothed in purple – expensive over garment (Acts 16:14)

fine linen – linen from Egypt, an inner garment

fared sumptuously every day – ate very well and as much as he wanted every day,
had good and plenty

Implied is that he lives in a very fine house too, has a large estate

When Jesus testified of John the Baptist and taught regarding the kingdom of God (Matt 11:11-15),

v8 Whom did you go out (River Jordan) to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king’s houses

In the world’s eyes, the rich man is in need of nothing

In Jesus’ crosshairs regarding this rich man are the Pharisees, who are like him

- lost, like the elder son (Parable of the Lost Sons)
- unjust stewards of both riches and true riches
- attempting to enter the kingdom of God on their terms and their merit

v20-21 beggar named Lazarus:

If this teaching is a parable, it is the only parable in which Jesus uses proper names, people's names

Therefore, this may well not be a parable but a real story, as Jesus "gets real" with the Pharisees

In stark contrast to the unnamed rich man is Lazarus

- a beggar, perhaps homeless
- "thrown" at the rich man's gate (to his large estate)
- full of sores
 - of ill-health and unclean
 - licked by dogs (wild scavengers, not domesticated pets), adding to his misery
- hungry, even for just some crumbs, of which the rich man had good and plenty
- in need of much
 - care
 - food
 - compassion
 - mercy
- every day because...the rich man who could have had compassion on him instead ignored him

Ch 15:1-2 is the starting point and the context

- A real merciless rich man is likened to the Pharisees who are deriding Jesus' words
- A real beggar named Lazarus is likened to the publican and sinners who are hanging on Jesus' every word

v22-23a With v8-9 in mind

The wise steward uses the worldly riches entrusted to him to set himself up for eternity with true riches (heavenly)

The unwise stewards uses worldly riches on himself, now

Both the wise and the unwise stewards have "everlasting habitations"

The beggar died...the rich man also died:

After their appointed number of days, both Lazarus and the rich man went the way of all the earth – they died

The beggar died in his unattended and ignored misery, having received no care/food/compassion/mercy from the rich man

He was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom

The rich man died in his self-absorption.
No mention of being carried by angels
Cast/Thrown into hell and tormented

2 men, 2 deaths, 2 destinations...all very real vs fictitious

The abode of the dead, Hades (Gr)/Sheol (Heb), is a place partitioned into
2 very different spaces separated by a chasm

1. Abraham's Bosom, called Paradise by Jesus in Luke 23:43
2. Hell

Note: The doctrine that Jesus suffered in Hell is a false doctrine!

This being a real story of real men, the "after life" destinations are real as well

Before Jesus died, was buried, rose again, and ascended to the right hand of the Father:

The righteous (Gen 15:6, Hab 2:4) went to a place of comfort to await the Messiah and His victory over death..."Abraham's Bosom"
The unrighteous (unbelievers of what God had said) went to a place of torment to await judgment...hell

As Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, He led "captivity captive":

The righteous in Abraham's Bosom were led by the King to heaven to be with their Father, God the Father
The unrighteous were left in Hell, their "prisoner holding jail cell" until the time of judgment (Rev 20, the GWT then LoF, prison)

Since/After Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father (our days):

The righteous, who have faith in the Messiah and His finished work of paying for sins and conquering death, go to heaven

2 Cor 5:1-8

1 Cor 15:42-57

written to believers

2 Cor 12:2-4

caught up

The unrighteous unbelievers go to hell

"After Life" destinations:

Heaven, a very real place, inhabited by God and His children (John 1:12)
or

Hell, a very real place where fallen angels were cast in chains of darkness (2 Peter 2:4)...not intended for man (created after the image of God) but a chosen destination by most men (Matt 7:13-14)

v23b-24 seeth Abraham...and Lazarus...have mercy:

The rich man's experience, as related by the Maker of heaven and earth and hell, is very instructive for us who still have breath!

- he died an unjust steward (v10-12, 15b), deriding the Word of God
- he is (to this very day, btw) tormented in flame
 - a furnace where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth (Jesus in Matt 13:42, 50)
 - a fire that is never quenched (Jesus in Mark 9:43, 45)
 - a fire that does not consume...there is no end of the soul
 - a flame far worse than any flame known on earth
- he recognizes
 - Abraham, a 2nd real person identified by a personal name, and Lazarus, the miserable beggar that was at his gate every day
 - visual contact and recognition means, in hell, a retention of personality and existence
- he has not had a change of heart
 - he cries for mercy when he gave none, having only scorn for another crying for mercy
 - he wants Lazarus to serve him
 - he has worldly sorrow that accomplishes death (2 Cor 7:9-10)

The Pharisees thought like the rich man being tormented in hell... that they are children of Abraham, therefore pleasing to God

Matt 3:7-10 generation of vipers...children of the devil
evidence of repentance required
must be related to God vs related to Abraham
fruitless tree is thrown into the fire (of hell)

John 8:39-47 God the Father vs Abraham is the important relationship
children do as their father does
they do not as The Father does, they are not His children

The Pharisees, who claimed to keep the Law, had no mercy...be given no mercy

Matt 9:13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance

Matt 12:7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

Matt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

v25-26 Son, remember...beside all this:

Abraham responds to his physical (which is meaningless) descendent

1. Remember

Those in hell will have...memory, to torment them forever

- How they lived vs how God called them to live
- All the times they said No to the Word of God spoken to them
- All the opportunities they squandered to be wise stewards of riches and true riches

The realization that “now” (current state and habitation)

- is forever
- is too late to
 - say Yes to God and to be a faithful steward
 - to be given mercy when gave no mercy

2. Besides, there is a great gulf separating us

There are no “cross overs” between spaces allowed by God...
no amount of prayer, candles, indulgences can change
“everlasting habitations”

The destinations are fixed, regardless of the intensity of desire to
have mercy or get mercy

The rich man was not “blessed” with good worldly things because of his
self-righteousness (neither were the Pharisees)

Lazarus was not “cursed” with bad or hurtful worldly things because of his
unrighteousness (neither were the poor sinners)

The rich man was not condemned/tormented because he was rich (nor Pharisees)
Lazarus was not justified/comforted because he was poor (nor poor)

Both were rewarded for their stewardship of

- riches, things of the world, as given to them by the sovereign will of God...used for self glory or for God's glory
- true riches, the Good News of the Messiah, as offered to all by the sovereign will of God...believed or not believed

The unjust gets no relief (mercy) from the judgment of God once he has taken his last breath on earth

God's justice (rewards, Rev 22:12) for believing or not believing is forever

v27-28 send him to my father's house:

The rich man still wants Lazarus to serve him, by bearing witness of the truth he learned too late to his family back on earth's surface

To warn them of the realities of

- God's mercy, grace, and justice
- Life after death and the 2 "after life" destinations

v29-31 They have Moses and the prophets:

Abraham responds to his condemned relative (physical but not spiritual)

They...those on the surface of the earth...have the Word of God to

- invite them into the Kingdom of God (given if believe)
- warn them of the torment of hell (given if don't believe)

Let them hear them (ala Matt 11:15 + 7 other times in the Gospels)

The physically dead, regardless of their (chosen) "after life" destination, cannot return to the physically living

Note: Unless God so wills

- Samuel to Saul
- Moses and Elijah to Jesus + PJJ

The rich man refutes what Abraham said, and in so doing reveals the hearts of his family to be just like his – wicked

Then Abraham "puts the nail in the coffin" of the rich man's corrupted human reasoning

Seeing is NOT believing, a truth Abraham is personally qualified to proclaim

Righteousness was reckoned to Abraham by...faith, not sight
(Rom 4:9)

Righteousness has nothing to do with genealogy
(Rom 4:10)

Circumcision was a sign/seal given of his righteousness by faith
(Rom 4:11)

He is the father of all...that believe, circumcised or not
(Rom 4:11)

If only his physical descendants (the Jews) are saved from God's judgment, then faith and God's promise to Abraham are made void
(Rom 4:12-14)

Abraham's faith was evidenced by

- not staggering at the promise of God when he was past child-bearing
- believing God could do what He promised, obeying God's command to sacrifice his only beloved son

So, Abraham informs the rich man...and the Pharisees that think like him...
that even seeing someone raised from the dead will not "produce" faith

Cases in point for Jesus' audience:

- Past
 - Elijah and the widow's son (1 Kings 17)...
did not produce faith in Israel/NK
 - Elisha and son of the Shunamite woman (2 Kings 4, 8)..
did not produce faith in Israel/NK
 - The widow of Nain's son (Luke 7)...
even John the Baptist doubted if He were the One
 - Jairus' daughter (Luke 8)...
"Fear not, believe only" but they did not believe
- Future
 - Lazarus, the brother of M&M , NOT the Lazarus of this story (John 12:1-2, 9-11)
 - Jesus Himself (Matt 28:11-15)...body stolen, swooned
 - Dorcus (Acts 9)

Doubt and disobedience come not by the lack of evidence or revelation but by the unwillingness to believe the evidence and revelation already given

Miracles are evidence of the revealed Word of God, do not produce faith

Heb 11:6

Rom 10:17...NOT by experience or emotion or miracles
(Plagues #1 and #2 in Ex 7-8, 2 Thes 2:9)

The Gospel is sufficient to save whosoever believes
No additional signs are needed or warranted
The only sign needed: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

This story of a real rich man and a real beggar named Lazarus speaks of the real perils of unjust stewardship of riches and true riches

There is much error (false doctrine) in Christianity today

- There is no hell (Jesus Christ said the very opposite)
- Everybody goes to heaven (Universalism, Jesus Christ said the very opposite)
- The Prosperity Gospel (worldly riches coveted at the expense of true riches)
- Experience-based faith (always fails)
- Emotion-based faith (always fails)
- Lying signs and wonders (miracles that deceive)
- Tickling ears with fables/stories instead of preaching the Gospel and teaching the Word of God (because of an intolerance of sound doctrine)
- Warm-fuzzy motivational speeches that produce no change of heart rather than the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation
- Lukewarm devotion for Jesus, which turns His stomach
Rev 3:17 **Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked**

deception: in need of nothing when in reality in need of much

Why does it matter?

Because the “after life” destinations are very real...and are forever!

We have only until our last breath on earth to chose which destination we want forever
Once we die, our eternity is set, cannot be changed

Heaven – the reward of unending peace and comfort for the just/righteous/faithful
or

Hell – the reward of unending torment for the unjust/unrighteous/unfaithful

Now we must personally make a decision about the Kingdom of God

Matt 5:3-9 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
for they shall be filled.
Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children
of God.

Matt 6:24 and Luke 16:13

Matt 6:33

Life and death (eternal realities, far greater than physical realities) have been set before
us – choose life!

Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal, so focus on eternity!

Salvation (Luke 3:6) is nearer than when we first believed (Rom 13:11)!

Believer: Look up, for your redemption draws near! (Luke 21:28)

Unbeliever: you are but one heartbeat from hell unless you repent!

Time is short and urgent and fleeting/vaporous (1 Cor 7:29-31, James 4:14)

Unbeliever: Ch 9:23-26

Repent of your unbelief, believe the testimony of God

While you have breath, cry out to Jesus Christ for the mercy you so
desperately need!

Believer: Invite family, friends, enemies, and strangers into the Kingdom of
God while you still have breath

Share the very real horrors of hell with those who do not believe

Jude 21-23 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking
for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto
eternal life. And of some have compassion,
making a difference: And others save with
fear, pulling *them* out of the fire

What we believe about Jesus matters – for all eternity

Matt 7:21-27

Luke 13:23-30

Luke 6:46

Gal 3:22-29

How we hear (Luke 8:18, Luke 9:35) and what we hear (truth or lies) matters –
for all eternity

How we live our lives matters – for all eternity

1 Cor 3:10-15

Every person is personally responsible before God Almighty for their choices

- To believe Him or not
- To worship Him or mammon
- To love Him or to love Self

The wise man considers the end of the matter

The end of the matter is one of two everlasting habitations

Choose wisely!