

## "Are You Rich or Poor?"

Pentecost 19

1)

Luke 16:19-31

2)

October 20, 2019

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and forever. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Are you rich? Or are you poor? You may or may not know that there are online quizzes that you can take. The questions on the quiz are probably the ones you are thinking they are –

1. How many rooms (not just bedrooms) are in your house?
2. How much money do you make?
3. What type of job do you have?

Are you rich or are you poor? In this parable, this is the question that we ask when we hear Jesus' parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus. We do not simply want to think of that question in a mere thought of how God has blessed us with earthly possessions. We want to think of how we are rich spiritually through our faith in Jesus Christ.

### **The rich man and the poor man**

- Names
  - o The rich name is nameless
  - o The poor man has a name – Lazarus
- The rich man lived in luxury
  - o Purple clothes and fine linen
  - o Lived like a king
  - o In today's world – he would have a big mansion with many rooms
    - Many servants
    - Financial advisers with a great deal of wealth
  - o We would summarize the rich man as living the good life
- The poor man, Lazarus, lived a difficult life
  - o A beggar
  - o Everything was given to him – even the scraps from the table

- He had no government medical care
  - He had the dogs licking his sores
- Would you rather be the rich man or the poor man?
  - I think it's safe to say that most, if not all, of us would want to be like the rich man. After all, who wouldn't want what we consider to be a "good" life and "easy" life
  - There is an innate desire inside of us that always seeks after and longs for more
  - We want to be able to take care of ourselves and our family. And, if we can have more, we want to have more and better things.

**22 “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried.**

It was inevitable. It's something that will happen to every single one of us. And it happened to both the rich man and Lazarus. Each of them died. We can only imagine what the rich man's funeral would have been like – perhaps as lush and extravagant and luxurious as the rest of his life. Maybe they had a great big party. At the funeral itself, we can imagine how the people there would have stood up, one after another, and said warm and glowing things about his life.

But for poor Lazarus, we're told that the angels carried him to Abraham's side. Would you rather be the rich man or poor man? The rich man had all sorts of "stuff." He had everything money and possessions can buy. But there was one truth and one thing that was missing from his life.

The poor man was carried to Abraham's side in heaven. Can you picture what that would be like? The bible describes heaven in such awesome terms. It's a place where there is no more mourning or tears, crying or pain. (Revelation 21) Maybe we think not just about Abraham, but about all the people we might see there. Maybe we think about the reunion we'll have in heaven with all our loved ones. Every one of us wants to go to heaven when we die.

This is the thing that the rich man did not get to experience. He had everything in life – but was missing the most important thing. He was missing out on having a relationship with his Lord. He did not have saving faith in Jesus.

The rich man’s identity was placed in all his stuff – in all the luxury and wealth that he accumulated throughout life. The Bible tells us –

**Whoever believes in me will have eternal life.  
Whoever does not believe will perish (forever in hell).**

Our lesson tells us –

**<sup>23</sup> In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’**

If you’ve ever burned yourself, if even just a finger or hand, you know how excruciatingly painful it can be. It’s difficult for us to quantify (or qualify?) just how painful it was for this rich man. We’re simply told he was in “**torment.**” He was in agony. The bible describes hell as an unquenchable fire.

The rich man took care of everything in his life to the point he was very meticulous about it. But, he did not tend to his spiritual life like he needed to.

Would you want to be like the rich man or poor man? When we look at the reality that hell exists and see how the rich man got there, it stirs up in us the harsh reality. We see how we have been blessed with earthly possessions. But the greater thing we need to remember is that none of these things will restore our relationship with God.

God’s will and desire is that no one perish. God wants all to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim 2) God wants all of us to be carried up to heaven by the angels, much like this poor man was.

Think of who Jesus was for you and me and all the world. Jesus is our identity. Jesus paid for everyone of my sins, my

failures, for every time I placed my hope and my trust in the wrong thing.

Am I rich or poor? We want to be able to say, “I am spiritually rich...”

- b/c of what God has done for me in Jesus
- b/c God sent Jesus to take away my every sin
- b/c God still comes to me through the means of grace, Word and Sacrament
- b/c Jesus has assured me that he is preparing a room for me in the mansions of heaven and will return to take me to be with him.

Am I rich or poor? Dear friends, we know the answer to that question. But how many in our lives simply do not know Jesus.

**<sup>27</sup>“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, <sup>28</sup>for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’**

**<sup>29</sup>“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’**

**<sup>30</sup>“ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’**

**<sup>31</sup>“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”**

The rich man was so concerned about his family – “Go and warn my brothers.” You know Jesus, the God-man, who has taken away your every sin. You know that you are rich spiritually b/c Jesus has taken away your every sin. Who can you share Jesus with today? Better yet, who can you share the riches of your inheritance of heaven with today? Amen.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Phil.4:7)

<sup>19</sup> “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. <sup>20</sup> At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores <sup>21</sup> and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

<sup>22</sup> “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

<sup>25</sup> “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

<sup>27</sup> “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

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