

## **“Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus”**

### **Introduction – Luke 16:19-31**

This is a very powerful parable to bring to light about the choices we make in this life. They do have eternal consequences. We recognize that we should not be selfish and unconcerned about the hurting world all around us. We are called to demonstrate the love of God to our fellow travelers in this life’s journey. As Jesus also taught in the parable of the sheep and goats:

### **Matthew 25:31-40 (NIV)**

**31** “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. **32** All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. **33** He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. **34** “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. **35** For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, **36** I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ **37** “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? **38** When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? **39** When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ **40** “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

### **I. THE RICH MAN**

#### **Luke 16:19,22-26 (NIV)**

**19** “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. **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. **23** In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. **24** 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.' **25** "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. **26** 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.'

The bible does not teach that money is bad. What it does teach is that the love of money is a huge problem.

### **I Timothy 6:3-10 (NIV)**

**3** If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, **4** he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions **5 AND CONSTANT FRICTION BETWEEN MEN OF CORRUPT MIND, WHO HAVE BEEN ROBBED OF THE TRUTH AND WHO THINK THAT GODLINESS IS A MEANS TO FINANCIAL GAIN.** **6** But godliness with contentment is great gain. **7** For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. **8** But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. **9** People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. **10 FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS A ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL. SOME PEOPLE, EAGER FOR MONEY, HAVE WANDERED FROM THE FAITH AND PIERCED THEMSELVES WITH MANY GRIEFS.**

We are called to use our blessings for good, taking care of our families and our world around us:

**James 2:14-19 (NIV)**

**14** What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? **15** Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. **16** If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? **17** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. **18** But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. **19** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

The rich man in this parable appears to have the attitude that we are warned against by James:

**James 5:1-6 (NIV)**

**1** Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. **2** Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. **3** Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. **4** Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. **5** You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. **6** You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

So we don't want to have the attitude of the rich man here in this parable!

**II. LAZARUS**

### **Luke 16:20-22 (NIV)**

**20** At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores **21** and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. **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.

Many times people come to conclusions about why some people are poor and think that they did it to themselves. God always blesses His people with financial success. This parable brings across this is not the case! Lazarus didn't do anything to be in this spot that he was in suffering in this world. In fact, if we find ourselves in less fortunate circumstances, we are assured that as we serve God faithfully there will be a great reward for having persevered:

### **Hebrews 11:36-40 (NIV)**

**36** Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. **37** They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— **38** the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. **39** These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. **40** God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

**YES, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN BY OUR OWN BAD CHOICES AND DECISIONS WE GET OURSELVES IN TROUBLE BUT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE HERE.**

Why is it you and I were born in the USA where we have lots of blessings and people in many parts of the world have shortages of food, water and the basic necessities of life?

We are called to do our part to reach out and help our friends, neighbors, people in need all over the world! This is why we have worldwide missions outreach along with local missions!

### **III. THE LESSONS**

#### **Luke 16:27-31 (NIV)**

**27** “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, **28** for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ **29** “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ **30** ““No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ **31** “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.’”

There are numerous truths that we can glean from this passage:

#### **1. DEATH IS CERTAIN FOR RICH AND POOR ALIKE**

Listen to these passages:

#### **James 4:13-15 (NIV)**

**13** Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.”

**14** Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. **15** Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

#### **Psalms 90:10,12 (NIV)**

**10** Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. **12** Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

### **Psalm 39:4-7 (NIV)**

**4** “Show me, O Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. **5** You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man’s life is but a breath. Selah **6** Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. **7** “But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.

We are called to recognize this and then to make the most of our days! To seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (reference Matthew 6:33). We are not to live in fear and worry but realize life is a gift from God and to make the most of it:

### **Ephesians 5:8-21 (NIV)**

**8** For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light **9** (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) **10** and find out what pleases the Lord. **11** Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. **13** But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, **14** for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” **15 BE VERY CAREFUL, THEN, HOW YOU LIVE—NOT AS UNWISE BUT AS WISE, 16 MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL.** **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. **18** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. **19** Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, **20** always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **21** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

## **2. WHAT WE DO IN THIS LIFE DOES DETERMINE OUR ETERNAL DESTINY**

The warnings are many:

### **Hebrews 3:12-18 (NIV)**

**12** See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. **13** But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. **14** We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. **15** As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." **16** Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? **17** And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? **18** And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed ?

### **THE WORD OF GOD DOES NOT TEACH UNIVERSALISM – THAT EVERYONE GOES TO HEAVEN.**

The whole reason Jesus came into this world was to save us from our sins which have separated us from God and each other!

Jesus said:

### **John 14:6 (NIV)**

**6** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Peter declared:

### **Acts 4:8-12 (NIV)**

**8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! **9** If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was

healed, **10** then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. **11** He is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. ’ **12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

John shared:

### **Revelation 20:11-15 (NIV)**

**11** Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. **13** The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. **14** Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. **15** If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

There are so many passages that bring across this essential truth!

### **3. THERE ARE NO SECOND CHANCES IN THE AFTER LIFE**

The rich man was not able to pray his way out! Or pay his way out. What was done, was done. Listen to these passages:

### **Hebrews 9:27 (NIV)**

**27** Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

### **Matthew 25:41-46 (NIV)**

**41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **42**

For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, **43** I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ **44** “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ **45** “He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ **46** “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

### **II Corinthians 6:2 (NIV)**

**2** For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

So as the rich man reasoned that if he couldn’t change his eternal destiny let him go back and warn his brothers!

## **4. THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR FOUNDATION OF TRUTH**

Everybody has the right to their own opinions. Yet, God calls us to be very conscious that He has given us His word which is:

### **Psalm 119:105 (NIV)**

**105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

### **Psalm 119:89 (NIV)**

**89** Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

### **Psalm 119:1-2, 9-11 (NIV)**

**1** Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. **2** Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart— **9** How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. **10** I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. **11** I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Jesus said:

**Matthew 24:35 (NIV)**

**35 HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PASS AWAY, BUT MY WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY.**

**John 5:36-43 (NIV)**

**36 “I HAVE TESTIMONY WEIGHTIER THAN THAT OF JOHN. FOR THE VERY WORK THAT THE FATHER HAS GIVEN ME TO FINISH, AND WHICH I AM DOING, ESTIFIES THAT THE FATHER HAS SENT ME. 37 AND THE FATHER WHO SENT ME HAS HIMSELF TESTIFIED CONCERNING ME. YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD HIS VOICE NOR SEEN HIS FORM, 38 NOR DOES HIS WORD DWELL IN YOU, FOR YOU DO NOT BELIEVE THE ONE HE SENT. 39 YOU DILIGENTLY STUDY THE SCRIPTURES BECAUSE YOU THINK THAT BY THEM YOU POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE. THESE ARE THE SCRIPTURES THAT TESTIFY ABOUT ME, 40 YET YOU REFUSE TO COME TO ME TO HAVE LIFE. 41 “I DO NOT ACCEPT PRAISE FROM MEN, 42 BUT I KNOW YOU. I KNOW THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE THE LOVE OF GOD IN YOUR HEARTS. 43 I HAVE COME IN MY FATHER’S NAME, AND YOU DO NOT ACCEPT ME; BUT IF SOMEONE ELSE COMES IN HIS OWN NAME, YOU WILL ACCEPT HIM.**

The writer of Hebrews brings across:

**Hebrews 4:12-13 (NIV)**

**12** For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. **13** Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

## Conclusion

So we have here a very graphic illustration of the realities of what we do in this life having eternal consequences! May we take to heart these truths and make the most of our days! As the apostle Paul shared with the Philippians:

### Philippians 2:12-16 (NIV)

**12** Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, **13** for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. **14** Do everything without complaining or arguing, **15 SO THAT YOU MAY BECOME BLAMELESS AND PURE, CHILDREN OF GOD WITHOUT FAULT IN A CROOKED AND DEPRAVED GENERATION, IN WHICH YOU SHINE LIKE STARS IN THE UNIVERSE** **16 AS YOU HOLD OUT THE WORD OF LIFE—IN ORDER THAT I MAY BOAST ON THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT I DID NOT RUN OR LABOR FOR NOTHING.**