

The Rich Man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31

by David Servant

The story of the rich man and Lazarus teaches us that people whose god is money are unsaved people, and that true faith is always manifested by obedience.

Scripture: Psalm 95:7, Proverbs 28:27, Matthew 6:24, Mark 8:36, Luke 16:13-30, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Hebrews 3:15, James 2:14

Topics: "Wealth And Idolatry", "Faith And Obedience"

Description

David Servant preaches on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, emphasizing the dangers of serving money as a god instead of God. The rich man's lack of compassion for Lazarus reveals his true allegiance to money, leading to his torment in hell. Jesus highlights the importance of turning from sins and having true faith, which is shown through obedience to God. The story serves as a reminder that wealth does not determine one's salvation, but rather the condition of the heart and the priority given to God over money.

Transcript

Jesus told this story of the rich man and Lazarus directly after He told the story we read yesterday of the shrewd money manager. Both stories teach us something about how God expects us to view and use money.

The final conclusion of yesterday's story was, "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Luke 16:13). The rich man in today's story was a perfect illustration of this truth. Money was obviously his god, not because he was wealthy but because of what he did with his money. He repeatedly ignored the pathetic plight of a diseased and starving beggar lying at his doorstep, who became too weak to even chase away the dogs that licked his open sores. The rich man could have easily provided food and shelter for Lazarus, yet he showed him no pity until Lazarus eventually died right on his doorstep. The rich man's actions proved that the love of money controlled his life, and not the love of God. The point of this story is not, "Rich people go to hell and poor people go to heaven." There are many wealthy people mentioned in the Bible as being godly and righteous.

The point of this story is that people whose god is money are unsaved people. The rich man's lack of compassion for Lazarus was a telling sin, but you can be sure it wasn't his only sin. In fact, in hell he knew that the greatest need of his living brothers was that they "turn from their sins" (Luke 16:30). If he would have had faith in God during his life, he, too, would have turned from his sins. True faith is always

manifested by obedience. But during his life, the rich man served money, not God.

Jesus obviously believed there was such a place as hell, and made it clear that it's a place of conscious torment. Although the rich man had left his body on earth, his spirit was very much alive, and he was able to see, hear, touch, taste and remember. He longed for some relief from the heat of hell's flames. But, because he had previously ignored the plight of Lazarus, now he was being justly repaid for that sin and all his sins. Praise God that those who believe in Jesus and repent on earth are forgiven of their sins because Jesus suffered the punishment they deserved! Aren't you glad you're one of them?

Q. Do you have to be wealthy to be guilty of the sin of loving money?

A. No, middle-class and even poor people can be guilty of that sin. However, wealthy people are probably more often guilty of it than others. Studies show that wealthy people generally give a smaller percentage of their money to charities than people with smaller incomes.

Q. Does what we've read today apply to kids?

A. It does if they are followers of Christ and have any money of their own, either earned or received as a gift. A portion of it should be used to help those who are less fortunate. One way to do that is to give to needy people that you know, or perhaps to sponsor a needy child in another country. Many churches give a portion of their income to the poor, and thus, by giving to their churches, people are also giving to the poor.

Application: We sometimes mistakenly think, like the rich man in hell, that if people witnessed a miracle they would turn from their sins. However, God is doing miracles every day for everyone, trying to get their attention. He uses snowflakes and stars, flowers and fruit, babies being born and water turning to ice, but people ignore His call. Beyond that, God is speaking to them through their consciences and His words in the Bible. Still they don't listen. The real problem isn't the lack of miracles, it's the hardness of people's hearts.

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