

week 16: *the one with the invisible man*

Scripture to Read: Luke 16:19-31

19 “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ 27 And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ 29 But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Summary of the Text

Jesus tells a story about a rich man and beggar to warn us about the wicked handling of people and wealth—and to make a sharp point about the nature of unbelief.

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation

He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’” –Luke 16:31

Questions for Personal Study and/or Group Discussion

- Why do you think Jesus keeps returning to the subject of money in his teaching and parables? What is it about money that is so closely linked with spiritual things?
- Discuss the rich man in the parable. What was his attitude toward riches? Toward people?
- Jesus clearly says that no man can serve two masters. What specific challenges does this teaching place in front of you?
- What does the parable suggest to us about the world to come and eternal destinations?
- Do you believe that hell is real? If not, why?
- Why won't people believe even if they received testimony from someone who rose from the grave? How should this parable inform our approach to evangelism?
- What applications can you make to your life if you see yourself as one of the “five brothers”?
- A common strategy in American churches is to target influential and accomplished men and women for kingdom work. Do Jesus' stories suggest that we think differently about such a strategy? Why or why not?

Thoughts worth thinking

“If you have eyes only for the rich man, you will be blind to Lazarus” [Eugene H. Peterson, *Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 118].

“The rich man believes that if Lazarus returns from the dead he will be a sign confirming what the OT says and therefore his brothers will repent. As seen by the context and the content of the parable, such repentance would need to include a change of heart and a change in behavior, involving the use of the brothers' wealth and possessions for the care and well-being of those who are destitute and impoverished like Lazarus. But the refusal to repent and the corresponding refusal to believe the gospel is not primarily due to

lack of evidence but to a hardened heart (cf. Mark 8:17; John 11:37–40; Heb. 3:7–11, 15; 4:7). Luke will later point out that Moses and the Prophets all testify to Jesus as the true Messiah (Luke 24:27).” [notes from *ESV Study Bible*].

Tips for Parents with Young Children

Monday: Read Luke 16:19-31. Have your children draw a picture of one of the scenes from this story. Let your child explain what is going on in the picture.

Tuesday: Talk about where you and your family see poor and needy people. Discuss what those people need, and how Christians can help them. Explain that often people need much more than just a handout, but deeper help in making good decisions and making changes in their lives. Pray that needy people would not be invisible to us. Pray for our Deacons’ Mercy Committee [William McKinley is the chairman]. They help needy people inside and outside our church. They need wisdom and compassion.

Wednesday: Review what your children learned in Wednesday Night Connection. Spend some time together praying for FPC, its leaders, and your friends at church.

Thursday: Teach your children about heaven and hell. Show them some of the things Jesus says about them in the parable. Explain that our choices reveal what we really love. You either trust and love Christ, or you hate God and live in opposition to him, serving yourself. While we are alive we can cross over from spiritual death to spiritual life. In John 5:24 Jesus said, “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

Friday: Ask your children what they would like to do (e.g. read a story, pray, sing worship songs, go for a nature walk to enjoy God’s creation, etc.), and then do that with them.

Saturday: Read a Bible story to your children, or have them read a story to you if they are old enough. Pray that Phillip would have boldness in preaching the Word of God tomorrow. Also, pray for the Sunday School teachers and for the musicians and choir members who serve us each Sunday.

Sunday: Before you leave for church, explain to your children that their ministry at church is to welcome new children, help their Sunday School teacher, serve others, and worship God in the service. After church, discuss with your children what they learned and what you learned.