

The Other Side of the Story

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Opening:

This past Wednesday I played monopoly with my granddaughters Sky and Shea –

I was playing – Sky was building an empire - she cleaned my clock – Shea and I teamed up against the 13 old year robber baron ... but it was no use she controlled railroads, Public utilities and every real-estate lot including Boardwalk and Park Place – Do you know what it’s like to face row after row of hotels ... she put both of us in the poor house!

I mention this because this message called ... is about a rich man and a poor one

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care **John Maxwell** - author

Text: [Luke 16: 19-31](#) NLT Pay close attention to the contrast between the two main characters

¹⁹ Jesus said, “There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. ²⁰ At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. ²¹ As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores.

²² “Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

²⁴ “The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’

²⁵ “But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.’

²⁷ “Then the rich man said, ‘Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father’s home. ²⁸ For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don’t end up in this place of torment.’

²⁹ “But Abraham said, ‘Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.’

³⁰ “The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.’

³¹ “But Abraham said, ‘If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

I find this parable the most sobering of the 12 we have been studying throughout this series. Not because I doubt God’s saving grace – It causes me to examine my own life motives and actions.

This parable of Jesus’ has so many things in it!

- It teaches us about money – wealth and the proper and improper use of it
- It examines daily choices - that our deeds/actions or lack of them matter
- And the life we will live after this one- including a bird’s eye view into the dark side of eternity – a place of torment – a place you don’t want to avoid at all costs
- A temporary eternal holding place called Hades or Hell – that will eventually become a place of eternal separation from the presence of God called Gehenna (the thought of it is upsetting)

The first thing that jumps out at me as I read this parable is that only one of the two main characters is named by Jesus and it’s not the rich man it’s the poor one

Lazarus the diseased, poverty stricken man is named

The wealthy man is not - referred to as “a certain rich man.” You get an idea of who is more important in the eyes of God.

The Pharisees (authorities on the Law) **considered wealth as proof of a person’s righteousness – the greater the wealth the better the person!**

How could they have come up with such a generality? The Pharisees were the wealthy upper class most, not all were elitists

In this parable Jesus set the record straight - financial success does not equal right standing with God. Nor do good works, for that matter and yet Jesus drives home the point that the way we live down here is critical in determining our eternal destination.

Jesus made a statement that should have scared the pants off the Pharisees ... except they didn’t wear pants back then. What did those guys wear?

He said it was easier for a camel to pass through the _____ than for a rich man to get into heaven!

It's ironic that what people seem to want most and work so hard to get will not only leave them emotionally bankrupt but can easily come between them and God work in their life.

How? Distraction and misdirection.

The *if only* rub:

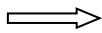
1. If I only had more money think of all the good things I could do!

Most of us have offered God a deal, if He'd just let you win the lottery – power ball, pick six, scratch offs or whatever other system you reached for or maybe thought about reaching for.

God I'll give you 20% !!!

Example: King Cullen courteously counter – a woman was cashing in a couple of winning scratch off games ahead of me – I commented “You won.” I said, “Yeah but I would have to win a million just to win back all the times I've lost.”

Have you noticed of how many used scratch offs are left lying on side walks of the place they were purchased ... You wonder how many desperate prayer may have been attached to those failed games?



It's easy to jump to the opposite conclusion about money and wealth But Jesus never taught that money was evil

The bible teaches us the **love of money**, not money itself is the root of evil.

¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. [1 Timothy 6:10 NKJ](#)

It's not possessing money that is the problem – It's when money takes possession of you

- Is it possible for the powerful medical lobby in the U.S. to be more concerned with profit than the health of American children?
- Would a company that genetically alters food really put profit above the health and welfare of its citizens?
- Do drug pushers really target children with the intention of creating drug addicts?
- Is it possible for people to be so heartless they'd kidnap women and children for human trafficking?

We all know the answers don't we?

How ugly can the love of money and lust for power get?

The prophet's Jeremiah wrote: ⁹ "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? [Jeremiah 17:9](#) (NLT)

Let me say it again: Jesus didn't teach that it was wrong to be rich. Take a second look at the parable .

The person comforting Lazarus is Abraham – one of the richest men in the Bible and here he is in this old testament, heavenly place, that Jesus referred to as Paradise.

When Jesus was being crucified he made a promise to the criminal on the cross beside him *Today you will be with me in Paradise.* Not heaven - not yet

This parable isn't just rich man poor man -the amount of money or lack of it – there's much more to it than that

Example Earlier I mentioned the game monopoly –

Monopoly isn't a nice little game – you have to be ruthless to win and 13 yr. old Skyler was – she wrapped things up in a little less than 3 hrs.

The game was built after a period of American History called the Gilded Age late 19th century The Gilded age, coined by Mark Twain - was marked by extravagance and poverty

- Party Favors at NY Delmonico's restaurant
- gold bracelets
- one hundred dollar bills rolled in hundred dollar bills – literally money to burn. Today's value \$2,500.

They reveled in decadence, while rest of the population tried to eke out an existence– just like the rich man of this parable

[Proverbs 4:23](#) (NLT)

²³ Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. And Jesus taught that what we do in this life will determine our destination for the next.

Eugene Peterson writes:

Eternity is not what begins when we die. Eternity is woven into every word and action of our daily lives. Both hell and heaven have their roots in what we're doing here and now, what the rich man was doing was giving his entire attention to himself. His life was complete self-indulgence. When he

died, the thin visible veil that separates everyday time from God's eternity was ripped away and he became fixed in the very situation in which he had lived for so many years. (UP)

How has God blessed you? – If it hasn't been with lots of money that might be the best blessing of all - He also blesses with talent, ability, friends, children, or a giving spirit.

Have you thanked Him? – And what are we doing with the blessings He's given you?

Are you using what you've been given to advance His Kingdom? (which always involves helping, serving, ministering to others and yes we also serve God with our money or more correctly His money that He is allowing you to manage.)

⇒ **Driving home from church** last week I was behind a car waiting for a green light – a young man, whose car suited him the sticker on the back of his car read: **Make money not friends** That's his goal

Abraham – Joseph – David – Boaz were wealthy but that wasn't their goal – Its what God blessed them with

Zacchaeus the N.T. rich tax collector did set out to be wealthy but when he encountered Jesus his heart was transformed – what was the first thing he did?

“Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” [Luke 19:8](#)

Contrast that with the Rich young ruler who asked Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life? Why was he asking that question? Because he had everything –but was still empty! [Luke 18:22, 23](#)

²²Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²³When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.

Do you see the difference? Think of the eternal consequences of that choice!

He traded his eternity for his wealth that didn't even give a sense of security

Last week Pastor Nick taught on the parable of the rich fool – who was blessed with the best harvest of his career, his storage barns can't hold it! What does he do with this bonanza? He hoards it

It wasn't enough to build additional barns – he decided the course of action would be to tear down the old barns and build super size ones. Jesus called him a fool.

The rich man in today's parable didn't end up in hell because of what he did but because of what he didn't do! JVM

He passed by the suffering, starving Lazarus every day he went out his front gate. He ignored the suffering He had zero compassion!

The Latin root of *compassion* is **compati** means to suffer with

That's what Jesus did for us – he came to earth as one of us – to endure life the challenges of life the way we do - his sacrificial death on the cross was the ultimate act of compassion.

God is passionate in His thoughts about you – shouldn't we share that passion with others?

[Chronicles 29:14](#) Everything comes from you and we have given you only what comes from your hand

God wants to richly bless and equip you to do good – including sharing the good news so we can help keep from ending up in a place of eternal separation.

Don't hold back from doing good when God gives you opportunity! That includes the money He has entrusted you with. Don't rob God, yourself or others.

What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you about what you haven't been doing or what you need to do for Him?