Two Men and the Afterlife

Zanesville, OH | December 16, 2018 | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Luke 16:19-31

**Intro**:

* Jesus told a story in Luke 16 that has resonated with millions since the day it was taught. Two men lived very different lives on earth and both experienced the same conclusion: **Death.** What can we learn from this story which Jesus told?

**Lessons from Luke 16:19-31**

1. **The Afterlife is REAL!**
   1. **Hades is a real place.** All men, after death, will go to this place and depending on their decisions and actions they will end up in one of two places within the Hadean realm:
      1. **Torment** (Lk. 16:23-24) - This is the place where the rich man is in after passing from the earth. He is pictured in agony here without any form of relief.
      2. **Abraham’s Bosom/ Paradise** (Lk. 16:22, 25)- This is the place where Lazarus was taken to after his death. Abraham himself says that Lazarus is comforted in this place.
   2. **There are no second chances in the afterlife.**
      1. The rich man is clearly pictured in a desperate state looking for comfort and relief from his agonizing situation.
      2. I imagine he wishes he could go back and make some changes, but it is too late. This life is all that we have to make the changes we need to and to take advantage of all the second chances we may have (2 Pet. 3:9).
2. **Lessons from Lazarus**
   1. **Lazarus did not steal.**
      1. Even though Lazarus was poor he didn’t seek to steal or commit wrong, so he could get what he needed to survive and relieve himself. It is often a temptation for one in a condition such as Lazarus to steal and commit wrong (Prov. 30:9) to get what they need but Lazarus refrained.
   2. **Lazarus did not envy.** 
      1. Lazarus did not envy or covet the rich man’s possessions or the life he lived (Ex. 20:7; Prov. 23:17). His only desire was to be fed with the crumbs that fell from his table. What a great example of not being envious. In this, we also see great self-control and trust in God exercised.
   3. **Lazarus was faithful.**
      1. The previous two points are not things that Lazarus practiced by chance. These are merely a microcosm of the kind of man he was and the kind of life he lived.
      2. He did not envy, and he did not steal. Even though he might have been inclined to do such things, this shows us he held fast to God and His commandments despite being in a difficult situation (Jam. 2:5; Rev. 2:9).
      3. The fact that he is with Abraham is indicative that he lived a faithful life since Abraham is called the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:11, 16).
      4. The rich man knew his brothers were going to end up in Torment if they didn’t make some changes (Lk. 16:27-28). The fact that they were going there shows us Lazarus lived a different life. He didn’t get to Paradise by chance!
3. **Lessons from the Rich Man**
   1. **He was rich but more importantly he was poor.** 
      1. The rich man had everything one could hope for in life as far as physical needs and comfort go (Lk. 16:19, 22). He was well clothed, well fed and well off!
      2. Yet even though he lacked nothing physically, he lacked everything when it came to faithfulness to God (Rev. 3:17). He was woefully inadequate spiritually.
      3. The fact that he knows Lazarus (Lk. 16:20, 23-24) implies he had knowledge of him while they were still alive (sat outside his gate) yet he chose not to help him.
      4. He was certainly more than capable of helping Lazarus since he had an abundance of blessings and resources, but he chose not to and in so doing he neglected the Law of Moses (See: Lev. 25:35-37; Deut. 15:7-8). In other words, he forsook God’s law by not showing love to his neighbor and by extension showing love to God.
   2. **He finds God’s word to be insufficient.**
      1. Being in Torment, we understand he has failed to listen to God. He is clearly separated from that which brings comfort and relief. Such implies failure to listen to God’s word (Jn. 12:48).
      2. He pleads with Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers (Lk. 16:27-28) but when Abraham tells him they have Moses and the prophets (Lk. 16:29), he says NO (Lk. 16:30)!
      3. The attitude and words of the rich man indicates that he finds God’s word to be insufficient to save his brothers. Abraham corrects him promptly by saying if they don’t listen to that then they won’t listen to anything (Lk. 16:31).

**The Crossroads of Life:**

1. Do we take advantage of all the opportunities to make our lives right with God?
2. Do we love God and trust God enough even when we are in difficult situations?
3. Is God’s word enough for my life, for my paths and for my salvation?