

The Rich Man and Lazarus

One of the great stories told by Jesus is that of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Some see this story as a parable. Others see it as the retelling of a real life event. Regardless, the lessons that Jesus is trying to convey are still there.

Consider three powerful lessons to be learned from this story (Luke 16:19-31).

I. Greed will cost you your soul!

- A. This is the main point of the story in the context.
 - 1. The chapter begins with Jesus telling the parable of the unrighteous steward (Luke 16:1-12). The point of the parable was to condemn the Pharisees for being lovers of money (Luke 16:13-14).
 - 2. It is in that context that Jesus then tells the story of a rich man who lived in luxury every day (Luke 16:19). The rich man's story is contrasted with that of a poor man named Lazarus (Luke 16:20-21). Lazarus was a beggar who laid outside the rich man's gate, and just wanted the crumbs that fell from his table.
 - 3. The rich man appears to have been selfish and refused to show mercy on the beggar. This is why when he died he ended up in a place of torment.
- B. The main point of this story is not be greedy and selfish with our blessings. Instead, we are to be generous (Acts 20:35; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).

II. Several lessons about the afterlife.

- A. While life after death is not the main subject Jesus is trying to emphasize in the story, there are still several lessons to learn.
 - 1. Experiencing it is inevitable. Both the rich man and Lazarus had to experience this because they both died (Luke 16:22). The same will happen to us (Hebrews 9:27).
 - 2. We retain our identities. Both men retained their identities and continued to exist after death. The same will also be true of us.
 - 3. The righteous and the wicked will be separated (Luke 16:23-26). Both men were in two different places in Hades.
 - 4. Our eternal fates are sealed. The rich man died lost and could not go back to the earth and correct his mistakes or relive his life.
- B. Key points of application:
 - 1. Everyone will not be saved (Matthew 7:13-14).
 - 2. Hell is real (Matthew 5:29-30; 10:28; 23:15, 33).
 - 3. It matters how we live. Both men ended up where they did in the next life because of how they lived on the earth!

III. The Bible is enough !

- A. Abraham told the rich man this when he requested for Lazarus to return to his father's house to warn his brothers (Luke 16:27-31). Abraham said if they wouldn't listen to the writings of Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.
- B. The same principle holds true today! See 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Conclusion: Will you learn from the mistakes of the rich man?