BATES HILL CHURCH

Pastor Robby Black

The Man at Your Gate

SERMON NOTES | Luke 16:19-31 (NKJV)

Who has God placed close to me that I have learned to walk past?

The scene: A rich man enjoys fine clothes and daily feasts while Lazarus lies at his gate, hungry and covered in sores. Their lives are close together, but their experiences are painfully different. Jesus makes us examine what we do with the suffering we can see.

1. I Can See Your Pain and Still Refuse to Get Involved.

Luke 16:19-21 | Supporting Scripture: James 2:15-17

The passage does not say the rich man caused Lazarus's suffering. It shows Lazarus in need outside while the rich man enjoys plenty inside. We cannot measure our love only by the harm we have avoided. We also need to consider the help we have withheld.

We may know someone is grieving, lonely, or overwhelmed and keep waiting for someone else to respond. We cannot fix every problem, but we can listen, check on someone, share what we have, or help them find support. Having limits does not mean we have nothing to offer.

Remember: Our lives can keep moving while somebody close to us is falling apart.

Reflect: Who have I kept meaning to call or visit? What has kept me from taking that first step?

2. I Need to Ask Whether My Comfort Matters More to Me Than You Do.

Luke 16:19-21 | Supporting Scripture: 1 John 3:17-18

Wealth alone does not make a person wicked, and poverty alone does not make a person righteous. The contrast in this story exposes a heart that can remain comfortable beside another person's suffering. First John challenges us to show love through our actions when we see a need and have the means to help.

This reaches into our church and our homes. Do we make room for people whose needs interrupt our plans? Do we welcome someone beyond a handshake? Are we patient with strangers but unavailable to our own family? Love requires us to see people as more than an interruption.

Reflect: Whose need have I treated as an inconvenience? Does someone at home need more of my attention?

Hear the Word. Respond in Love.

THE MAN AT YOUR GATE | CONTINUED

3. I Don't Need Another Sign Before I Obey What God Has Already Said.

Luke 16:22-31 | Supporting Scripture: James 1:22

Both men die, and their circumstances change completely. Lazarus is comforted, while the rich man is in torment. His earthly comfort offered no lasting security. Jesus speaks seriously about judgment and a separation that cannot be crossed.

The rich man asks that Lazarus warn his five brothers. Abraham answers that they have Moses and the prophets: they must listen to God's Word. They already have God's teaching about love, justice, and mercy. A more dramatic warning will not replace a willing response to what God has said.

We can ask God for direction while overlooking a responsibility He has already made clear. We do not need another sign before we love our neighbor, care for someone in need, or bear one another's burdens. We can act on what we already understand.

Remember: Some of us are waiting for a great assignment while walking past a clear responsibility.

Reflect: What clear step of obedience have I delayed? What can I do this week with what God has already given me?

The Gospel Behind Our Response

Ephesians 2:8-10

Helping people does not purchase salvation. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again. Good works are the fruit of His saving work in us. The mercy we receive from Jesus should shape the mercy we show to others.

My Response This Week

Who is God bringing to mind?

What specific act of love will I take, and when will I do it?

Prayer: Lord, forgive me for the people I have overlooked. Open my eyes to the needs near me. Help me give my time, attention, and resources with love. Let the mercy You have shown me become mercy I show to others. Amen.