

Parables of Jesus part 4. “Rich Man and Lazarus”

How would Jesus have reacted if he had seen such socioeconomic discrepancies in his day?

Luke 16:14-15

The parables of Jesus are meant for us to look in the mirror.

Luke 16:19-21

Jesus’ audience would have been steeped in the belief that riches were a blessing for obedience, while suffering was a punishment for sin.

*“Such people most often think of themselves pious and without greed. Virtue turns into vice.”
-Martin Luther*

Lazarus is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew name Eleazar, which means “God helps.”

Luke 16:22-26

Luke 7:44

“What the parables attack is a particular kind of wealth, a wealth that does not see poverty and suffering... even though it is not explicit, the issue here is the willingness and ability to see a person in need and respond. The rich man’s wealth and self-centeredness do not allow him to see Lazarus... The ability to see is a mark of Christian discipleship.” Klyne Snodgrass, NT professor, North Park Seminary

“Abraham’s side” “close to the presence of God”

“Sheol” “the abode of the dead”

“Jesus uses the language and the imagery of important strands of conventional Jewish folklore. Thus, these verses should not be pressed as if they were meant to teach in detail doctrine on the last days or the life to come.” Craig Blomberg, Distinguished NT professor, Denver Seminary

The interesting and intriguing aspect of this parable story, is the lack of any reference to anyone’s faith. On the surface this seems to be damnation by socioeconomic bracket.

Luke 16:27-31

Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Micah 6:8

James 2:14-17

1 John 3:17

Faith and Repentance

It is impossible to be rich and Christian without simultaneously living generously with what we have with others.

If real and personal sacrifice on behalf of others is not in our lives, maybe we should take a good look in the mirror and see the rich man staring back at us!

1 John 3:18-19

Moment of Reflection