



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

How the Story Ends!

Luke 16:19-31

Message #48 of 50 – S831

Sermon given on February 17, 2019



Sunday Morning Service

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How the Story Ends!

Luke 16:19-31

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 16**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- One of the mysteries of life is what happens after our story on this earth ends
- There are many opinions, theories, & doctrines about life after death
- Before becoming a Christian, I believed there was nothing after death
- You live and then you cease to live – become worm-food – was okay with that
- Some religions believe in reincarnation – keep coming back until you get life right
- Many, like Christianity, Judaism, and Islam believe in life after death – though they differ radically in their doctrines of eternal life
- Each has a concept of eternal life in Paradise with God – heaven
- That is the desired outcome of life – it is the undesired outcome of life that causes some to balk at the message of the gospel
- In this message, Jesus is going to warn us about that undesired outcome of life
- Let's pray and then get into the text for today
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **How the Story Ends!**
- In the first half of chapter 16, Jesus taught His disciples the importance of having the right attitude toward money and riches
- Cannot serve both God and 'mammon' or money
- If God is your master, then money will serve you to glorify God, bless others, and grow faith
- If God is not your master, you WILL serve money
- You cannot serve both, but you will serve one of them

- And it matters which one you serve – that is the context of our text for today
 - **Luke 16:19**
 - ‘purple’ dye was very expensive – only the very rich could afford it
 - The color of royalty – this guy was living like a king
 - ‘fared sumptuously’ = feasting every day – meanwhile
 - **Luke 16:20-21**
 - It is hard to imagine someone with a harder life than Lazarus
 - Can’t walk, sores all over, and he is starving
 - Outside the gate of the rich man – probably can smell the food
 - Jesus is telling this story in response to the Pharisees ‘deriding’ or ridiculing Him regarding His teaching on how they should relate to money and riches
 - In this story they would relate to the rich man, and they would despise Lazarus
 - In their minds, the rich man was rich because he had God’s approval and Lazarus was experiencing the consequences of God’s disapproval
 - This was the common belief – even the disciples struggled with it
 - Jesus is about to shatter the Pharisee’s self-righteous view of God
 - **Luke 16:22**
 - There is no word of Lazarus being buried – maybe thrown onto trash heap – angels came and carried him to Abraham’s bosom
 - Abraham was the father of the Jewish people – bosom = chest area – near the heart
 - Rich man buried – probably with great pomp/ceremony – no angels
 - Next comes the part that would have shocked them
 - **Luke 16:23**
 - The undesired outcome of your life story is to end up ‘in torment in Hades’
 - I’m not going to do an in-depth teaching on hell today
 - Hades and hell are not the same thing **Revelation 20:13-15**
- The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**
- The ‘lake of fire’ is hell – the place of eternal punishment

- Hades is where those who have rejected God wait for the final judgment – the White Throne Judgment in Revelation
- The rich man dies and wakes up in torment in Hades
- He looks around and sees Abraham and Lazarus
- **Luke 16:24**
- In the torment of the flames the rich man asks Abraham for mercy
- The very thing he denied Lazarus **Micah 6:8**
He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?
- ‘do justly’ = do what is right – ‘to love mercy’ = love helping people who can’t help themselves – ‘walk humbly’ – humble is not humble
- Abraham responds
- **Luke 16:25**
- There is a reality that how we use what God gives us in this lifetime, will determine how we spend eternity
- Jesus commented on this elsewhere **Luke 6:24**
But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.
- This doesn’t mean all rich people are going to hell – it is a warning about your attitude toward money and riches **1 Timothy 6:17-19**
Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.
- I said last week, there is nothing wrong with enjoying what God has given us and being comfortable – just don’t let it make you lazy, selfish, and blind to the needs of others
- Abraham continues
- **Luke 16:26**
- The rich man asked for mercy, and Abraham told him it was unavailable
- This teaches us that there is a separation between the righteous and the wicked in eternity
- The rich man wanted Lazarus to come over and put a drop of water on his tongue – not possible – **R. Kent Hughes**
While in this world, the rich man could have reached out to Lazarus at any time. But once in eternity the gulf was uncrossable.

- In life, Lazarus wanted the crumbs from the rich man's table, but the rich man was unwilling to give them
- This also teaches that once in eternity, our fate is determined
- Resigned to that fact, the rich man remembers his brothers
- **Luke 16:27-29**
- The rich man wants Abraham to send Lazarus back and warn his brothers - Turn to **Luke 24**
- Abraham says, they already have everything they need to believe
- 'Moses and the prophets' = what we call the Old Testament
- In Luke 24, we have the account of the resurrected Jesus appearing to two men on the road to Emmaus
- **Luke 24:25-26**
- He is asking, 'Why are you surprised by these things?'
- **Luke 24:27**
- Notice 'Moses and **all** the prophets'
- Jesus appears on every page of the Bible
- Abraham says to the rich man that his brothers have everything they need to believe - Turn back to **Luke 16**
- The Bible is all we need so that we can believe
- The rich man responds and says that is not enough
- **Luke 16:30**
- This is the arrogance of man – telling God what they need so that they will believe
- There is a huge difference between having what you need so that you **can** believe, and having what you want so that you **will** believe
- God gives what you need, not what you want
- The rich man is saying that if his brothers see a miracle, then they will believe – really?
- **Luke 16:31**
- Abraham is saying, if they won't believe the plain Word of God, then they won't believe as a result of a miracle
- This was proven literally after another man named Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus **John 12:9-11**

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from

the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

- Miracles do not produce faith **Romans 10:17**

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- The rich man lived a life of luxury while Lazarus lived a life of misery
- The rich man is not in the place of eternal torment because he was rich
- He is not there because he wasn't merciful to Lazarus –
- He is there because of how he treated God
- He disregarded the Scriptures and therefore disregarded God **Hebrews 11:6**

...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- The rich man proved that he didn't love God because he didn't love Lazarus, whom God put at his gate so that the rich man could share the abundance God had given him
- God gives us all that we have and then sovereignly creates opportunities for us to share what He has given us with those in need
- We cannot say we love God and then ignore the needs of others around us
- This text teaches us that how we live this life matters to God and for our eternity
- It also teaches us that there is life after death
- It teaches us that we must choose to love God in this life
- There is no second chance, there is no appeals court after death, there is no Purgatory where we can atone for our sins
- If you leave this life without choosing to love God by accepting His Son, your fate is set **1 John 5:11-12**

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

- Moses in the book of Deuteronomy says this is a choice
- Eternal life with God in Paradise/heaven or eternal death in torment
- You have everything you need to make that choice
- How will your story end? Someday, this chapter of your story will end
- How you live this life matters, and will determine how the next part of your story turns out
- **Pray!**