

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 Jesus is trying to convey are still there.

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

Greed will cost you your soul!

- This is the main point of the story in the context. The chapter begins with Jesus telling the parable of the unrighteous steward (Luke 16:1-12). The parable's point was to condemn the Pharisees for being lovers of money (Luke 16:13-14).
- 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 laid outside the rich man's gate, who just wanted the crumbs that fell from his table. 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.
- The main point of this story is not to be greedy and selfish with our blessings. Instead we are to be generous (Acts 20:35; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Matthew 25:31-46).

There are lessons about the afterlife.

- While life after death is not the main subject Jesus is trying to emphasize in the story, there are still several lessons to learn.
- The afterlife is real! 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).
- We retain our identities. Both men kept their identities and continued to exist after death. The same will also be true of us.
- The righteous and the wicked will be separated (Luke 16:23-26). Both men were in two different places in hades.
- 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.
It matters how we live. Both men ended up where they did in the next life because of how they lived on the earth!

The Bible is enough!

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

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

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