



Behind Enemy Lines Training Saints

Written by an Inmate

Heat Warning

Lazarus and the Rich Man

Brother Eric 6/19/25

Man, it's hot! It's not technically even summer yet, right? And already we're baking in the dorms (except F!!). It's miserable when you're just lying there, not even moving, and you're sweating! When you get out of the shower and you're sweating again immediately! The hotter it gets the more it consumes our thoughts. The hotter it gets the more desperate we become to cool off, even if just a little. It's that kind of desperation that God wants us to have for righteousness. He wants us to thirst for it as a man would thirst for water in the desert. That doesn't come naturally for us since we're corrupted by sin, but the more we walk in the path of righteousness, the easier it becomes with the help of His Holy Spirit.

I'm not some "fire and brimstone" preacher (not even a preacher at all ... I even kind of hate getting up here in front of people), but God warns us repeatedly throughout the Bible of the consequences of sin without repentance. In the gospels, Jesus often does so in His preaching (like losing your right hand or eye rather than being thrown into the eternal fire), in His parables (like the parable of the weeds/sower, sheep vs. goats, the 10 virgins, the man without the wedding feast garment, etc.), and in the discourses with His disciples. One such occurrence is when He tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16: 19-31**. There Jesus tells us of the desperation and anguish of the rich man as he experiences the fires of Hades.

As hard as it is to think about, it is incredibly important to understand that when we are "saved," we are saved from the very wrath of God and fires of hell that He originally created for Satan and his angels but to which we will be sent should we not hear and heed His warnings about sin. Thankfully, in God's love and grace, He made it so simple to avoid – all He requires is true, living faith; a faith that changes us from the inside with the help of His Spirit.

So, let's take a look at the story (which may be another parable, but there is some debate over what's literal or figurative ... either way, what's important are the lessons we are taught by it) starting in **Luke 16, verse 19**:

The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹ "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. ^a The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

As hot as it is here and as miserable as it can make us, it's nothing compared to fire. And regular, earthly fire is nothing compared to the fires in Hades/hell and the suffering, desperation, and regret that will be there.

Jesus begins this story by describing two very different people. The rich man would have to be extremely rich to afford purple clothing and feast every day. Purple dye was so rare and time consuming to make that it would cost the equivalent of tens of thousands of dollars at least. And then there is Lazarus laid at the gate of this rich man's mansion, covered in sores and hoping to get a few table scraps. Back in those days (and maybe even today to some degree) people would look at them and see God's favor and His judgement. So, clearly Lazarus must have been an evil sinner, and the rich man must have been good and righteous, right? Jesus tells us the opposite. As Pastor Stephen Davey put it, "[e]vidently, Lazarus had nothing but God, and the rich man had everything but God." Our outward circumstances, what people see when they look at us, have nothing to do with where we'll end up when we die. God looks at the heart (**1 Samuel 16:17**).

The rich man recognizes and calls Lazarus by name, so he clearly knew him. And yet he didn't help him. He had all that money, but what good did it do him in the end? He ended up trusting in his riches rather than God. I'm sure he regrets that now that it's too late. Continuing from **Luke 16, verse 25**:

²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' ²⁷ And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' ²⁹ But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Thank God we're given the gospel. The rich man learned the truth too late. Once our life on earth is over, our eternal destiny is fixed. We make the choices that affect it here and now. Every day we can believe and trust in God, or we can go our own way.

Jesus tells us that even miracles will not convince unbelievers without trusting in the Word of God. Jesus performed a lot of miracles while He was here. He even resurrected another man named Lazarus. Even then, the Pharisees and other religious leaders didn't believe. Even after His own death and resurrection, they didn't repent and didn't believe. So don't wait until it's too late. Paul tells us in **Romans 10:13** that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." And in **Romans 3:22** he tells us "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ [is] for all who believe." All we need to do to end up like Lazarus rather than the rich man is to believe ... to have faith in who Jesus is and what He did for us on the cross.



Let us pray ...

Heavenly Father, Lord God Almighty, thank You for all Your great mercies. We know that we, in ourselves, deserve eternal punishment. But we thank You so much that you took it upon Yourself to pay the price for our sins, so we can spend eternity with You in heaven. I pray that these men here heed Your message of hope and redemption for those who are lost and take the path of Lazarus rather than the rich man.

(And we pray for a cold front and/or A/C in the dorms soon.)

In Jesus' holy name we pray.
Amen.