

*failed to see in the scriptures? Why do you think they missed it? What did the rich man think would convince his brothers to repent and turn to God?*

*Rich Man and Lazarus*  
Storyteller #7

*Luke 16:30-31 NLT - 30 "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.' 31 "But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even if someone rises from the dead.'"*  
*John 12:10-11 NLT - 10 Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, 11 for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.*

*There was another man named Lazarus in the Bible. This Lazarus was Jesus' friend, and he did return from the dead. How did the priests' response to Lazarus returning from the dead confirm what Abraham said to the rich man in the parable?*

*Romans 12:13 NLT - 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.*

*In Romans chapter 12 Paul urged all followers of Jesus to live as a holy sacrifice to God. What specifically did he say about generosity to those in need? Why do you think it is difficult for the affluent in our country, or any country, to see their need for Jesus and live lives of radical generosity?*

### **WRAP-UP**

*Jesus also rose from the dead. He offers us a message of Good News and Salvation. The challenge for most of us is to surrender our idols of prosperity and wealth and to humbly submit ourselves and personally engage in discipleship.*

### **MEMORY VERSE**

*In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" - Luke 18:25 NLT*

*Challenge – Read Chapter 12 in the book of Romans and ask God what He is calling you to do.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

How good is your vision? Some of us need help to see things clearly, and without that help we are practically blind. In this week's parable, there is a man who is blinded by his wealth. In fact, he is so dazzled by the luxury around him that he doesn't see the poor beggar dying right in front of him. This is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. As Jesus told this parable to His disciples, the Pharisee's listened and scoffed. They loved their money. So, the parable was both a warning and a condemnation. When we hear this parable, let's not miss the point. What do we need to learn from this story?

### **Ice Breaker**

*What would you say qualifies as a "luxury item"?*

### **Key Passage**

#### **Luke 16:19-31**

**Luke 16:24-26 NLT - 24 "The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.' 25 "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.'**

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

#### **1. What it is and isn't about.**

It is easy to become lost in the details of Jesus' teaching and miss the main point in a parable. In this case, we see a description of the afterlife. Was Jesus trying to show us what the afterlife will be like for us? Probably not. But there are some themes that are taught here and reinforced throughout the scriptures we should carefully consider.

Wealth or status is not a reliable indicator of our standing in God's sight.  
We sometimes labor under the false narrative that when God is happy with us, things will go well. And when He is not pleased with us, things will go poorly. But if you have read the book of Job, you know that is not always the case.

*Job 2:10 NIV - 10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.*

*John 16:33 NIV - 33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

*What is the difference between earning God's favor and receiving God's gift of grace? Have you known anyone who suffered greatly though they were living a godly life?*

We will all face a final judgment.

After both Lazarus and the rich man died, we see there is no way to change God's judgment.

*Hebrews 9:27 NLT - 27 And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment,*

*Luke 6:24 NIV - 24 "But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.*

*Luke 16:20, 26 NLT - 20 At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. ... 26 And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.'*

*As long as we live, we have an opportunity to repent and turn to Jesus for our salvation. The rich man could have repented of his selfish ways and extended mercy and generosity to Lazarus while they were alive. What was the only thing physically between them on earth (v.20)? How was the nature of their separation described after death (v.26)?*

## **2. The Poor and the Rich**

There are some interesting things to note in this parable that shed some light on the meaning. Jesus didn't normally name the characters in his

parables. They are called "a certain man" or "a widow", or "his son" but in this parable we know the name of the poor man and it is important. The name Lazarus means "God is Help" and his name embodies his fate. God doesn't love him because he is poor, but God loves him because he recognizes his need for God's help. This man has an unimpeded view of his need for a savior. There are few if any idols for the poor to cling to.

*Luke 18:25 NLT - 25 In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"*

*What did Jesus say about the rich entering the Kingdom of God? The rich man, who was not named, had many barriers to seeing his need for a savior. In fact, there is a fatal temptation to make our objects of wealth into idols, replacing the One we are meant to worship with useless imitations. How do the objects of wealth become our idols? What can we do to prevent that?*

Jesus used this parable to draw attention to a reversal of fates after death.

*Luke 16:22-23 NLT - 22 "Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and his soul went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.*

We can't afford to restrict our focus only on what can be gained in this lifetime and ignore eternity. No matter how successful we are, our eternal reward will overshadow it.

## **3. Miracles**

*Luke 16:27-29 NLT - 27 "Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home. 28 For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.' 29 "But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.'*

While Lazarus was destined to find God as his help, the rich man was destined for Hades. The word Hades is a Greek word that refers to the grave or the region of departed spirits of the lost.

*When the rich man realized his fate, he asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to his brothers to convince them to change their ways. What did Abraham indicate the brothers should read? What had the brothers*