

Sermon Discussion – 16 June 2024

Read Luke 16:19-31

Getting Started *Sharing from personal experience*

Jesus begins the story with “*There was a rich man...*” When you hear those words, what do you think of? Do you ever think of yourself as “rich?” Why or why not? What about entitled or privileged or blessed? What responsibilities, if any, go with these categories?

Observation *Discovering the context*

Review Leviticus 25, Exodus 23:11 & Deuteronomy 14:28-29.

- If the Jewish people followed God’s laws, what would that have meant for the poor among them like Lazarus?
- Read Luke 16:14-15. Why does Jesus tell the story of “The Rich Man and Lazarus”? How does this detail form the way you read the parable?

Interpretation *Discovering the meaning*

1. Jesus seasons his parable teaching with images of contrast. They provide a vivid explanation of the differences between multiple kingdoms: earthly kingdom, Hades and God’s Kingdom. Sharp distinctions between joy and sorrow, hope and torment, or success and failure heighten this reality that the choice to surrender your life to Christ is a matter of the heart. Make a list of all the contrast images you find in the passage. Share this list with your group.
2. Read v. 19-22. What does Jesus want us to know about the way these two men lived?
3. There was a common belief in Jesus’ day that if you were poor or sick, you had done something to deserve punishment from God or to be cursed by God. Do you think this belief still exists today? Why or why not?
4. How do you reconcile the idea of a loving God with the concept of eternal punishment in hell? Do you find C.S. Lewis’s perspective on hell (as a freely chosen false identity going on forever) helpful or challenging?
5. How do the different beliefs about what happens after death (naturalism, universalism, reincarnation, purgatory) compare to your current beliefs? Has this sermon challenged you to reconsider any of these views?

Application *Putting knowledge into practice*

- Is there something spiritually in your own life that you need to handle before you die?
- Are there people in your circle of influence who you know will not be in heaven when they die? What is your responsibility to them?