

Managing Money to Love Part 7

Luke 16:19-31; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 3-24-19

Four Questions (John 14:6)

There are four fundamental life questions that we all have to answer:

- What will you do with your **GUILT** (Shame)?
- What will you choose as your ultimate **GOOD** (Happiness)?
- What will you pursue as your life **GOAL** (End game)?
- In regard to all three, what will be your **GUIDE** (Authority)?

This passage has something to say about all of these.

Read Luke 16:19-31 and pray.

The Doctrine of Hell

This passage fits into the larger context of the doctrine of hell in the Bible.

Most people who reject Christianity have a great aversion to the doctrine of hell in the Bible.

We all struggle with this doctrine, but not all for the same reason:

- Some of us struggle with the doctrine of hell because we don't think anyone deserves it.
- Most of us struggle with the doctrine of hell because we believe that people like us don't deserve it! (While the Hitlers and Ted Bundys and other mass murderers do deserve it.)
- Many of us struggle because we can't bear the idea of people suffering unjustly forever. (the question though is: Is God being unjust?)
- Even those who accept it as true and right struggle with it because we should struggle with the idea of people being separated from the God who created them and receiving the just consequences of their sin. (Even the Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem.)

'[This parable] scares me to death!' – RC Sproul

(Scary movies have nothing on the truth revealed in the Bible.)

But, whether we realize it or not:

- To tell people the truth about a just judgment to come is not 'mean,' it's love!

- We struggle with the doctrine of hell because we don't understand it.

(If we did we would worship in light of it like the angels and saints in Revelation.)

- We struggle with the doctrine of hell because we don't see it as essential to: (Tim Keller)
 - Understanding ourselves (our sin and what it deserves especially).
 - Loving others (especially not taking revenge).
 - See the depth of God's love for us (understanding the cross of Christ).

If we struggle with the doctrine of hell, what do we want God to do? (C.S. Lewis)

- Provide an escape? (He has in Christ.)
- Forgive? (He will if people ask.)
- Leave people alone? (That's what hell is.)

Hopefully as we work through this passage we can talk more about these things and see it more from God's perspective.

Series Question

But the immediate context of this passage on hell is in a discussion of the love of money.

Series and Chapter 16 of Luke Question:

Do you/I manage to love money or manage money to love?

This familiar story is actually set in the context of the danger of loving money and how it prevents us from loving God and loving others.

'One more' illustration (rich man taking the money out of the beggar's cup)

Context:

- being good managers of God's money
- making friends with mammon for the eternal dwellings
- giving up (control) of our own possessions
- being forgiven for squandering God's possessions/money

- no faith, no works
- faith without works is dead
- faith works through love
- love is meeting needs

Today, we will focus on the first few verses of the passage that set the stage for what is to come in the story:

¹⁹“Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. ²⁰And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, ²¹and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. – Luke 16:19-21

Our focus today will be on two things:

1. The difference between the experience of the two men.
2. The indifference of one man to the other.

And then we will conclude with some implications and applications.

The Difference

1. Rich man is rich/Poor man is poor (beggar).

¹⁹“Now there was a rich man, (and there was a certain rich [abundant, more than you need] man)

²⁰ And a poor man named Lazarus (and a certain poor man [originally, begging person or beggar; someone dependent on others for support; having less than you need] named Lazarus [God helps])

‘a rich man’ – any rich man

2. Rich man is unnamed/Poor man is named.

¹⁹“Now there was a rich man, (and there was a certain rich [abundant, more than you need] man)

²⁰ And a poor man named Lazarus (and a certain poor man [originally, begging person or beggar; someone dependent on others for support; having less than you need] named Lazarus [God helps])

- Dives (Latin for ‘rich man’) (unnamed)

- Lazarus (God helps)

What does the poor man get a name but the rich man doesn't?

Because he was significant and the rich man wasn't?

Is this a true story?

3. Rich man is dressed in purple cloth and fine linen/Poor man is covered with sores.

and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, (and he was dressing himself in purple cloth and fine linen)

covered with sores, (having been covered with sores/ulcers/abscesses)

- Dressed in purple and fine linen (clothed in the best of clothes)
- Habitually ... every day
- Covered with sores (clothed with suffering – the worst of ‘clothes’)

‘purple and fine linen’ – the best clothes (‘the clothes make the man’)

‘covered with sores’ – in pain (picture of misery)

4. Rich man is seated at a banquet table in his mansion/Poor man has been thrown at the gate of the mansion.

²¹ and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man's table; (and desiring/longing to be filled [eat one's fill, be satisfied] with what is falling from the table [dinner or dining room table] of the rich man)

was laid at his gate, (had been thrown facing his gate [esp. of a large gate at the entrance of temples and palaces, like the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem] or gateway to a courtyard)

The rich man is laying at his banquet table while the poor man is laying at his gate.

- Rich man's gate
- Rich man's table

‘laid at his gate’ – crippled? Put there in hopes of getting help from the rich man?

The poor man was laid at the rich man's gate and the rich man was laid (reclining) at his rich table.

5. Rich man is joyously living every day/Poor man is longing to be filled with what falls from the rich man's table.

joyously living in splendor every day. (splendidly [brilliantly, greatly, radiantly shining like the sun] rejoicing, enjoying oneself throughout [the] day)

²¹ and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man's table; (and desiring/longing to be filled [eat one's fill, be satisfied] with what is falling from the table [dinner or dining room table] of the rich man)

'with whatever was falling from the rich man's table' (undefined)

Dogs were licking (negative image; pariah dogs were wild, dangerous and unclean – making the poor man ceremonially unclean)

'joyously living in splendor' – the happy pagan (picture of happiness)

'habitually ... every day' – this was the sum total of his life; consumed with his pleasures

'longing to eat the crumbs' – but not being satisfied

'even the dogs were licking his sores' – dogs, wild and dangerous and unwanted – were eating off the poor man? But he could not eat off the rich man?

The poor man was like a dog longing for food from the rich man's table while the rich man indifferent to the needs of the poor man who was being the food of dogs. (longing and licking)

The Indifference

1. The rich man has no significant contact with the poor man, though we can assume that he passed him as he went in and out of his gate.

No contact

2. The rich man evidently makes no significant provision for the poor man, though he may have known his name.

No provision

3. The dogs give Lazarus more attention than the rich man.

besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. (and even the dogs [unclean animals] were coming to lick his sores)

Dogs were licking (negative image; pariah dogs were wild, dangerous and unclean – making the poor man ceremonially unclean)

4. The rich man is feasting while the poor man is starving.

- Feasting while starving

Implications and Applications

1. This is not a blanket condemnation of the rich or a blanket affirmation of the poor.

There is nothing said about the faith of the rich man or of Lazarus – you might get the idea that faith had nothing to do with it! But we should not think 1. That all rich people go to hell and all poor people go to heaven. 2. That failing to feed the poor is the unpardonable sin. 3. That those who feed the poor go to heaven and those who don't go to hell.

2. This is an attack on the false narrative that rich people are in God's favor and poor people are cursed by God.

A shocking reversal of popular expectations:

Rich people are blessed by God and go to heaven, right!?

Poor people are cursed by God and go to hell, right!?

Rich man would have been considered blessed by God/Poor man was unclean, being licked by unclean dogs, cursed by God.

The poor man's suffering reminds us of Job. Job was thought to be suffering for good reason. Did the rich man assume the same of the poor man, Lazarus?

- Would have been considered cursed by God (unclean) (sores – Ex 9:10-11; Dt 28:35; Rv 16:2)

3. This does highlight the unique Judeo-Christian heritage of concern for the poor.

'In Greco-Roman culture, the well-to-do weren't expected to support and help the poor. The Greek and Latin verbs for 'doing good, being beneficent' never have 'the poor' as their object, nor do they mean 'almsgiving'. The Greek word *philanthrôpia* doesn't have the sense of our modern philanthropy. One is *philanthrôpos* towards one's own people, family, and guests – not towards the poor. And *eleêmosynê* (from which 'alms' is derived), in the sense of showing pity or mercy for someone else, never has the poor as its primary object. Ancient Greek moralists didn't admonish people to concern themselves about the fate of the poor. And while generosity was praised as a virtue, the poor were never singled out as its object; it was always directed to humans in general, provided that they deserved it.

‘When Greeks did speak about the joy of giving to others, it has nothing to do with altruism, but only with the desired effects of giving: namely honour, prestige, fame, status. Honour is the driving motive behind Greek beneficence, and for that reason the Greek word *philotimia* (literally, ‘the love of honour’) could develop the meaning of ‘generosity, beneficence’, not directed towards the poor but to fellow humans in general, especially those from whom one could reasonably expect a gift in return. These were the ‘worthy ones’ because they acknowledged and respected the principle of reciprocity (*quid pro quo*), one of the pillars of ancient social life, which was simply stated by the poet Hesiod around 700 BCE: ‘Give to him who gives, but do not give to him who does not give (in return).’ Even though some ancient moralists occasionally said that in the best form of beneficence one does not expect anything in return from the beneficiary, the pervasive view was that a donor should be reimbursed one way or another, preferably with a gift greater than the donor himself had given.

‘Religion was not much help to the poor: they simply weren’t the favourites of the gods. There was a Zeus *Xenios* (for strangers) and a Zeus *Hiketêsios* (for supplicants), but there was no Zeus *Ptôchios* (for the poor), nor any other god with an epithet indicating concern for the needy. It was rather the rich who were seen as the favourites of the divine world, their wealth being the visible proof of that favour. The poor could not pray for help from the gods *because* they were poor, for their poverty was a disadvantage in their contact with the gods. This was the implication of the common belief that the poor were morally inferior to the rich. They were often regarded as more readily inclined to do evil; for that reason, their poverty was commonly seen as their own fault. No wonder that they were not seen as people deserving help, and that no organised charity developed in Ancient Greece or Rome. In such societies, giving alms to the poor could not be seen as a virtue, as care for them was often regarded as a mere waste of resources.

‘While care for the poor, let alone organised charity, was a non-item in Greco-Roman antiquity, it is a central concern in the Jewish Bible. Caring for the poor is seen as a major duty and virtue not only in the Torah of Moses, but also in the Prophets and other biblical writings. Most significantly, God is seen as the protector of the poor and the rescuer of the needy. They are his favourites and the objects of his mercy, regarded as humble before God and therefore often as pious and righteous.

‘However, a line from a letter written by an emperor should be remembered. In 362 CE, Julian the Apostate, the last pagan emperor of the Roman Empire, wrote in a letter to a priest in Asia Minor that lots of corn should be distributed to the inhabitants of Galatia; one-fifth of it should be given to the poor, and the rest to strangers and beggars. Notably, he then adds: ‘For it is a shame that, when no Jew ever has to beg and the impious Galilaeans [Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well, everyone can see that our people lack aid from us.’

‘So in spite of any relativising observations, it remains an indisputable fact that organised charity in the sense of a communal obligation towards the needy, which was by and large unknown in Greco-Roman culture, was created by the Jews and adopted by the Christians. And one can hardly deny that these developments were inspired by the sincere conviction that humankind should imitate God’s special concern for the most vulnerable among humans – the poor. -Pieter van der Horst, *How the Poor Became Blessed*

4. This is an illustration of why God hates money-loving: because it keeps us from loving God and people.

In the apocryphal book of Sirach 12:7, "Give to the good man, but do not help the sinner."

‘The Book of the All-Virtuous Wisdom of Yeshua ben Sira,^[1] commonly called the Wisdom of Sirach /'sairæk/ or simply Sirach, and also known as the Book of Ecclesiasticus /ɪˌkliːziːˈæstɪkəs/ (abbreviated Ecclus.)^[2] or Ben Sira,^[3] is a work of ethical teachings, from approximately 200 to 175 BCE, written by the Jewish scribe Ben Sira of Jerusalem, on the inspiration of his father Joshua son of Sirach, sometimes called Jesus son of Sirach or Yeshua ben Eliezer ben Sira. – Wikipedia

- Selfish control of possessions/money
- Not managing well
- Not making friends with the mammon of unrighteous
- Loving money/possessions not loving God and men
- Evidence of no saving faith

The Call to Faith, Hope and Love

- Resting in Jesus.
- Hoping in God.
- Pursuing love.