

The Gospel of Luke

Three Requests from Hell

Luke 16:19-31

1. **Two Antithetical Lives** (vs.19-21)

Jesus has clearly taught that trusting in the wealth of this world is foolishness (Luke 12:19ff). He now uses this parable (cf. Luke 10:30; 15:11) in order to continue denouncing the sinful love of money (cf. Luke 16:16-18).

A. The Rich Man's Opulence

This man's immense wealth was on display for all to see as he extravagantly enjoyed it to the extent of his abilities (cf. Luke 12:19).

B. Lazarus' Destitution

From being clothed with sores and desiring to eat table scraps, destitution defined nearly every aspect of Lazarus' life.

2. **A Common End** (v.22)

All men die (Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Heb. 9:27). God is sovereign over the details of life (Matt 10:29-31) including the number of our days (Ps. 139:16).

3. **An Absolute Reversal** (vs.23-26)

The Jews understood wealth to be a sign of God's blessing and favor while poverty and infirmity were indications of sin and God's disfavor (cf. John 9:1-2). The fate of these two men chafes with that popular narrative.

A. Lazarus' Comfort

Jesus describes believer's blessed rest as a wedding banquet (Matt. 22:2), paradise (Luke 23:43), and a place where there is no corruption (Matt. 6:20), pain or sorrow (Rev. 21:4; cf. Isa. 53:4-5).

B. The Rich Man's Torment

The torment for the condemned is described as a fiery furnace (Matt. 13:42), outer darkness (Matt. 25:30), and eternal destruction (1 Thess. 1:9). These descriptions aid in apprehending what is incomprehensible in its fullness.

4. **Three Requests from Hell and Answers from Heaven** (vs.24-31)

A. A Request for Personal Relief (vs.24-26)

While the rich man refused to Lazarus when they were living, it is impossible for anyone to even slightly alleviate his torment (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 14:10-11).

B. A Plea for a Merciful Warning (vs.27-29)

What the rich man had known and rejected in life is now of no benefit though he is convinced of in death (Heb. 9:27).

C. An Insistence for A Miraculous Message (vs.30-31)

The Pharisees regularly explained away Jesus' miracles in order to deny His authority to instruct them (Matt. 9:34) while at the same time requesting for signs in order that they might believe (Luke 11:29). They would even reject the undeniable miracle of resurrection (John 11:43-44; 12:9-10), twice (Matt. 28:11-15). No miracle result in faith from someone who refuses to believe God's Word.