

## **THE PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**O God, the strength of all who trust in You, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Your aid mercifully accept our prayer, and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Your aid, grant us the help of Your grace, so that keeping Your commandments we may please You in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

## **THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 16:19-31

page

*(The Gospel records Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus.)*

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

30 "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

31 "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

## **THE SERMON 'The Beggar – What is Real Treasure on this Earth?' Luke 16**

INTRO - In the early 90's a book came out called, 'The Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper.' Christian authors wrote to call men to be men of God and make a difference for their homes, their churches, their communities. In the chapter on men being committed to their families, Chapter 4, the writer uses sociological studies to tell men that on average in America in the early 90's children watched between 4-6 hours of TV a day, and on average spent less than 1 minute a day in real conversation with their dads. Now, that is not the goal of most dads, especially Christian Fathers. One thing that gets in the way can be work. Without even realizing it, dads

can let work get in the way of doing what they would say is one of their main priorities in life.

I. Jesus talks in today's lesson about something that gets in the way. He talks about how possessions can get in the way of a person's relationship with God.

A. The Pharisees were Jewish believers who wanted to love God and obey his commandments more than anything. . . but something go in the way.

1. Last week, at the beginning of Luke 16, Jesus told a story about being faithful with little things, including finances.

2. Look at the reaction of the Pharisees to this parable in verse 14. **The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.**

3. Jesus responded in two ways,

A. **V. 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.**

B. And, secondly . . . he tells this parable.

4. In this parable The man who was rich ends up in hell.

A. He Did not take care of poor Lazarus when he had a chance.

B. Secondly, He acts like his brothers did not know of hell, nor really even him.

C. His relationship with others and with God was severely lacking . . . Yet, in this life had lived in luxury every day.

5. His wealth got in the way of his relationship with God and others. . . and Jesus tells this parable to the Pharisees, these very religious people. Jesus is saying to the Pharisees - **YOUR WEALTH HAS GOTTEN IN THE WAY OF WHAT YOU SAY IS REALLY IMPORTANT.**

B. How can wealth do that?

1. Have you ever Paid more attention to House and yard, than God's Word?

2. Have you ever Paid more attention to keeping the car up than the needy?

3. Have you ever Paid more attention to the stock market than you kids' grades?

4. These may be extreme examples, or not so extreme, but possessions have always found a way to get between us and God, and between us and what we want to do for the Lord.

5. Maybe we Really don't want to let it happen, but - neither did the Pharisees.

II. So what is the message of Jesus to those seeking to live as His disciples.

A. First, Jesus is here to shake the Pharisees and to shake us to awake.

1. Remember, he not only told this parable, he said, **God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.**

2. Look around you, we are well off, and our possessions take time to care for.

3. Are your valuables getting in the way of what is most valuable, our relationship with God, and with others?

B. Secondly, Jesus offers us real wealth, something valuable that lasts, the love and forgiveness, and eternal life of God.

1. First, this treasure comes at a great cost.

2. Secondly, the treasure of a relationship with God is eternal, compared to the possessions of this world and this life.

A. This week O.J. Simpson was forced to give over his possessions to his father in law. It was found his Rolex was a fake. What wealth do we have that might be fake?

B. What is really treasure in this life?

1. Real treasure is Faith- knowing God and growing in our relationship with Him.

2. We do that today in worship through confession, hearing God's Word, Through the Lord's Supper, Through Bible Study.

C. What is really treasure in this life? Real treasure is love - Caring about the poor man on the street, our kids, our brother or sister who has turned from God, the kid on the wrong track, those who have never heard of Jesus dying on the cross.

III. Thankfully, Jesus came, not primarily as a law giver, but a Savior.

A. Jesus suffered on the cross and died, to forgive us our failure in faith and love

B. Jesus rose to empower us to live for Him and others.

CONCLUSION - So, if instead of looking at time spent with TV, or time with dad, let's say a study was done to look at time spent taking care of our temporal possessions, or time spent with our Lord, and loving others. Would it be 4-6 hours a day compared to less than a minute? What is in your faith bank? Faith and love are real treasure on earth. That is Jesus' call today to discipleship.