

...but God knows your heart.

1. What do the requests from the man in Hades reveal about him?

Request #1 - 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

Request #2 - "Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—²⁸ for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

2. What do Abraham's replies reveal about God's Kingdom?

Reply #1 - 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

Reply #2 - "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³¹... 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

3. Think Twice:

- a. Reject the idea (idol) that money is the source of your fulfillment, significance, identity, love and happiness.
- b. Acknowledge that only God can fill the emptiness of your soul and respond to His love.

Suggested Questions for Small Groups

1. Why would a rich man do nothing about the poor and suffering people who were asking him for material help? What is lacking in his heart?
2. Why would many of us conclude that money will give us our heart's desires: Power, Approval, Comfort and Control? What happens to your heart if you conclude that gaining money is the highest purpose in life?
3. "No servant can serve two masters". How would you characterize your own struggle with keeping the two resolves of "Think Twice" above?

Next Sunday, April 11, 2010: **Ten Commandments**

Part 1 - "Common Misunderstandings about the Ten" Deut. 11:1-23; Ps. 1

Why should we consider laws recorded over 3000 years ago to have any force in our world or on our behavior? Haven't we evolved morally? Can't we decide on our own what is the best way to live? Do we really need a list of "Do's and Don'ts" in order to flourish as individuals and as a society? But what if the claim of the Bible is true and these instructions, laws and requirements are the key to finding true satisfaction at the level of the soul?

GREAT PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

parable 1'parəbəl | noun

a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels.

ORIGIN Middle English : from Old French *parabole*, from an ecclesiastical Latin sense 'discourse, allegory' of Latin *parabola* 'comparison,' from Greek *parabolē*.

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke 16:10-15

"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³ No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

faithful in a very little... dishonest in a very little:

Jesus states that those who have proven to be faithful in little are entrusted with more. Those who are dishonest with little things, are also going to be dishonest with big things. His big point: If you can't be faithful stewards of the little bit of material wealth God has entrusted then God is not going to entrust to you the riches of heaven. **No servant can serve two masters:** This parable is probably addressed to Jesus' scoffers - the Pharisees of verse 14. They were able, just as we are able, to compartmentalize their lives into the secular and religious. If we think our secular 'love of money' does not affect our spiritual 'religion' (and vice versa) then we will not think our everyday financial decisions have an effect on our spiritual standing. But Jesus here says the two are connected. **No servant can serve two masters,...** **You cannot serve God and money:** Remarkable as it may seem, Jesus saw "money" as a great competitor of His for the hearts of people. The pursuit of money and all that it can bring to our lives can become more important than our pursuit of God. While there is nothing inherently evil with wealth, the "love of money" (1Tim. 6:10) makes it our "master" and we serve it. We serve it because we believe that it will bring us our heart's desires.

¹⁴ *The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him.*

¹⁵ *And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*

Luke 16:19-30

“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send

Pharisees, who were lovers of money: Luke tells us that even though the Pharisees were very religious and had very high moral scruples, they also loved (and therefore served) money. Can you be very moral, think you are pleasing God and yet be a person who loves money? Can you serve these two masters? Jesus says, no you cannot. One of the two will always be subservient to the other.

but God knows your hearts: Jesus tells the Pharisees that they might have the respect of people because of their scrupulous externalized behavior, but that they should ask themselves if God is pleased with them. God sees the motivational center of our heart desires - what ever rules there, is the master of our lives. Are the desires ruling our hearts ‘an abomination’ in the sight of God?

There was a rich man who was clothed in purple: There are two contrasting characters in this story. The first character is as rich, rich, rich. Purple cloth was extremely expensive. To feast sumptuously “every day” (even on the Sabbath?) was something only very rich people could do. How does a rich Israelite feel about himself, especially in comparison to those who are poor?

a poor man named Lazarus: The second character is the direct opposite of the first. Lazarus is poor, poor, poor. He is quite sick, tormented by sores; he is hungry and forced to be a beggar at the gate of the rich man. This is the only character in any parable with a name. Lazarus means: “the one whom God helps”. However, in his life on earth it does not appear that God helped him much at all. The dogs seem to be the only ones who helped him. The rich man saw him but neglected him.

rich man also died: Both of these men die, the poor man, Lazarus, is majestically carried by angels to the side of Abraham. There could be no better place for an Israelite to go in the afterlife than to a place of honor beside the father of the nation. The rich man goes in the opposite direction after he dies - he goes to Hades, depicted by Jesus as a place of torment, anguish and flame.

Father Abraham, have mercy on me: Now we begin to see the reversal of roles between these two characters. The rich man is now a beggar crying out for mercy. He makes a mercy request based upon his racial connection to Abraham. He expects to be heard and answered.

Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’

²⁵ *But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ ²⁷ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers —so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ ²⁹ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”*

send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue: Some things have not reversed in the rich man’s mind. He thinks Lazarus can and should serve his needs. Does he still feel superior to ‘poor’ Lazarus, even now that he is in Hades and Lazarus is being honored by Abraham?

Abraham said, ‘Child remember: Jesus has Abraham tell the rich man of this story that he needs to ‘remember’. This message clearly affirms that our lives on earth have a direct impact on our afterlife. Those who have received ‘good things’ have a moral responsibility to care for those who are poor and suffering. Moses and the prophets spoke of this moral responsibility (Deut. 24:10ff) but the rich man did not listen and proved unfaithful (v.11) with the stewardship of the wealth he had received. Abraham says, remember.

between us and you a great chasm has been fixed... none may cross: Not only can Lazarus (silent) not come to serve the rich man - no one can cross this great chasm in either direction.

Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house: The second request contains more of this man’s sense of entitlement and superiority. He wants Lazarus to be sent from the dead to his brothers as a warning. Is there an insinuation here that he feels he was not properly warned?

Abraham said... They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them: Abraham’s response is firm.

if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.: He is convinced that he would have responded if someone from the dead had come to him with a warning.

If they do not hear Moses... neither will they be convinced: But Jesus says, through the voice of Abraham in his parable, that people don’t repent, even when they witness a supernatural miracle. Just as the Pharisees had seen and heard testimony of many miracles done by Jesus and they had not responded with openness or repentance.