

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

March 24, 2019

The One Where Jesus Doubles Down

LUKE

Luke 16:19-31

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

²² The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁹ Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' ³⁰ 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 listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" **Luke 16: 22-25; 29-31**

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

In this passage, Jesus makes a point about the spiritual and moral implications which accompany wealth -- a common thread throughout scripture. Social segregation exists just as strongly today as it did during biblical times. Whether we like it or not, most of us live, work, and play within a certain segment of the social strata of our communities.

The rich man, dressed in purple and seemingly wanting for not, is representative of the type of person we commonly choose for leadership positions within our institutions. This in and of itself is not a bad thing, but we must be aware that wealth without generosity can ruin your soul and lead to a spiritual death. **Discuss the contrasts we see in this passage between the rich man's wealth and Lazarus' poverty. How do you think the rich man's wealth isolated him, both physically and emotionally? How are we living lives isolated from our neighbors?**

Pope Francis, when asked what to do when we encounter someone in need, responded that a good practice is to give money to those who need it, not worrying about how it is spent, because giving is simply what we are called to do. He also emphasized that the form of giving actually matters -- a name, a touch -- that these things preserve dignity. **What has been your experience with the homeless or marginalized within our community? What are some ways we can turn interruptions of homelessness and poverty into creative opportunities for giving? How can this change the way we see people?**

Lazarus, who was pitied even by the dogs as they licked his wounds, relied on mercy for survival. The rich man, in contrast, relied on his own power and resources. As followers of Christ, we can agree that death is all we can now know in this life, and the rest is faith. **How could this have made the rich man even more oblivious to his own mortality?** Lent is an appropriate time to embrace the good news that the way to the cross is the way to resurrection. **How can the truth that Jesus ultimately came to raise the dead give you hope, and change the way you live?**

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the hope you give us in Christ Jesus, and that our faith can be strong enough to know that we can place all our hope in You and your resurrecting power. Walk with us this Lent and strengthen us to practice more faithful, creative, and generous giving. Amen.