

# **GOD PROVIDES** **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

## **My heart decisions affect eternity** **Luke 16:19-31**

**Part 5**

**March 22nd 2015**

**By Dr. Mark Aitkenhead**

**“Scripture quotations taken from the Amplified Bible.”**

[www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)

### **Introduction**

While teaching His disciples, Jesus said, “No servant can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money” (Luke 16:12-13).

Some Pharisees—Jewish religious leaders—heard Him say this. They loved money and sneered at Jesus, who told 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.”

Jesus then told the story, which the Pharisees no doubt overheard, about a rich man who dressed in expensive purple cloth and fine linen, and a sick beggar named

Lazarus who begged near the rich man's gate. This story is found in Luke 16:19-31.

### **Luke 16:19-31**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**19** There was a certain rich man who [habitually] clothed himself in purple and fine linen and reveled *and* feasted *and* made merry in splendor every day.

**20** And at his gate there was [carelessly] dropped down *and* left a certain utterly destitute man named Lazarus, [reduced to begging alms and] covered with [ulcerated] sores.

**21** He [eagerly] desired to be satisfied with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs even came and licked his sores.

**22** And it occurred that the man [reduced to] begging died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

**23** And in Hades (the realm of the dead), being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.

**24** And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have pity *and* mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip 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 fully received [what is due you in] comforts *and* delights, and Lazarus in like manner the discomforts *and* distresses; 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 want to pass from this [place] to you may not be able, and no one may pass from there to us.

**27** And [the man] said, Then, father, I beseech you to send him to my father's house—

**28** For I have five brothers—so that he may give [solemn] testimony *and* warn them, lest they too come into this place of torment.

**29** But Abraham said, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear *and* listen to them.

**30** But he answered, No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent (change their minds for the better and heartily amend their ways, with abhorrence of their past sins).

**31** He said to him, If they do not hear *and* listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded *and* convinced *and* believe [even] if someone should rise from the dead.

The film clip we'll see now is adapted from this story and begins near the rich man's house. While you watch, reflect on why God gives us the resources we have, such as money and possessions.

Think about what our responsibility is, to God and other people, to use what he has given us in ways that reflect an eternal perspective.

After the film clip, I'll fill you in on "the rest of the story"—what happened to the rich man and Lazarus.

## **Play Film**

### **Key Message**

Each of us will die sometime—maybe soon, maybe many years from now. And what we just saw about the rich

man and Lazarus should encourage us and serve as a warning.

The Bible says there is a heaven (Paradise)—and a separate and eternal hell, a terrible place of torment.

We become followers of Jesus by faith, not by the good works we do (Ephesians 2:8- 9).

### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**8** For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment *and* made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God;

**9** Not because of works [not the fulfillment of the Law's demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]

Once we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, though, we have certain responsibilities. God tells everyone who follows Him to reach out in Jesus' name to poor and needy people.

Let's go back to Jesus' story and learn what happened to Lazarus and the rich man.

The Bible tells us that Lazarus found himself in heaven next to Abraham—the ancient Hebrew patriarch who founded the Israelites—God's chosen people.

Imagine what heaven was like for Lazarus!

Quite a change from lying in a stretcher with sores covering his body! He was in heaven for eternity, where there is no death and pain!

### **Revelation 21:4**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**4** God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be anguish (sorrow and mourning) nor grief nor pain any more, for the old conditions *and* the former order of things have passed away.

The rich man, however, went to hell where he suffered and pleaded for mercy – but it was too late. While on earth, the rich man pursued earthly wealth and its benefits. But he did not care about God and what the Scriptures said about helping people like Lazarus.

God gives us earthly resources—including time, money, and possessions—in order to meet our needs and the needs of other people.

God is our Provider. Everything we have ultimately comes from Him.

If we are faithful to Him—demonstrating our love for Him through obedience—He promises to provide for our needs.

And He challenges us to use our resources to benefit people in need.

Jesus condemned the rich man for his use of wealth, not for having wealth. Instead of helping hurting people like

Lazarus (who received bad things in life), the rich man (who received good things in life) spent his life serving his selfish desires.

Contrary to what our culture wants us to believe, the financial goal of Christians should never be focused on having easy, comfortable lives. In a way, as followers of Christ, we are called to be like “God’s hands and feet” among needy people, wisely sharing our resources—in our neighborhoods, in nursing homes and retirement centers, in homeless shelters, with families struggling to survive financially, with people who cannot afford proper medical care. . . .

### **1 John 3:17-20**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**17** But if anyone has this world’s goods (resources for sustaining life) and sees his brother *and* fellow believer in need, yet closes his heart of compassion against him, how can the love of God live *and* remain in him?

**18** Little children, let us not love [merely] in theory *or* in speech but in deed and in truth (in practice and in sincerity).

**19** By this we shall come to know (perceive, recognize, and understand) that we are of the Truth, and can reassure (quiet, conciliate, and pacify) our hearts in His presence,

**20** Whenever our hearts in [tormenting] self-accusation make us feel guilty *and* condemn us. [For [c]we are in God’s hands.] For He is above *and* greater than our consciences (our hearts), and He knows (perceives and understands) everything [nothing is hidden from Him].

### **James 2:15-17**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**15** If a brother or sister is poorly clad and lacks food for each day,

**16** And one of you says to him, Good-bye! Keep [yourself] warm and well fed, without giving him the necessities for the body, what good does that do?

**17** So also faith, if it does not have works (deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by itself is destitute of power (inoperative, dead).

### **Romans 15:1-2**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

We who are strong [in our convictions and of robust faith] ought to bear with the failings *and* the frailties *and* the tender scruples of the weak; [we ought to help carry the doubts and qualms of others] and not to please ourselves.

**2** Let each one of us make it a practice to please (make happy) his neighbor for his good *and* for his true welfare, to edify him [to strengthen him and build him up spiritually].

### **Luke 3:9-11**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**9** Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees, so that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.

**10** And the multitudes asked him, Then what shall we do?

**11** And he replied to them, He who has two tunics (undergarments), let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do it the same way.

### **Deuteronomy 15:11**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**11** For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, You shall open wide your hands to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor in your land.

### **Jeremiah 9:23-24**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**23** Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise *and* skillful person glory *and* boast in his wisdom *and* skill; let not the mighty *and* powerful person glory *and* boast in his strength *and* power; let not the person who is rich [in physical gratification and earthly wealth] glory *and* boast in his [temporal satisfactions and earthly] riches;

**24** But let him who glories glory in this: that he understands and knows Me [personally and practically, directly discerning and recognizing My character], that I am the Lord, Who practices loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

### **Deuteronomy 8:18**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**18** But you shall [earnestly] remember the Lord your God, for it is He Who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

### **Proverbs 19:17**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**17** He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and that which he has given He will repay to him.

It's important to pray and ask God to make us aware and sensitive to needy, hurting people.



Although it is both challenging and rewarding to lovingly help needy, hurting people, did you know that Jesus said (Matthew 25:34-40) that when we do this, we are actually doing it to Him!

### **Matthew 25:34-40**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**34** Then the King will say to those at His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father [you favored of God and appointed to eternal salvation], inherit (receive as your own) the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

**35** For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you brought Me together with yourselves *and* welcomed *and* entertained *and* lodged Me,

**36** I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me with help *and* ministering care, I was in prison and you came to see Me.

**37** Then the just *and* upright will answer Him, Lord, when did we see You hungry and gave You food, or thirsty and gave You something to drink?

**38** And when did we see You a stranger and welcomed *and* entertained You, or naked and clothed You?

**39** And when did we see You sick or in prison and came to visit You?

**40** And the King will reply to them, Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least [in the estimation of men] of these My brethren, you did it for Me.

Jesus touched people's lives with His love and truth. He healed them. Gave them food. Taught them the Scriptures. Held little children. Touched lepers.

How different our lives, and the lives of other people around us, might be if we ask God every day to enable us to demonstrate love to people in need. To encourage them. To share with them. To listen to them. To help them to overcome difficulties. To live out the love and truth of Jesus wherever we are.

God promises to give us the wisdom and power we need to do this—one person . . . one family . . . one neighborhood . . . at a time.

Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." —Luke 10:30-37

As Christians, we are to use our resources—including our time, money, and possessions—in eternal ways that guide people to Jesus Christ.

It is not wrong to be rich or poor. Poor people have coexisted with rich people since humankind's earliest days.

However, in the Bible—God's Word for us today—God says that earthly wealth is temporary. Rather than living as if this life is all there is, we are to please God—to live in obedience to His truth in the Bible.

That includes demonstrating His love so freely and with such joy that people around us are drawn to know the God we serve.

When people see our love expressed in sincere, practical ways to help meet their needs, they can't help but notice—and may be drawn to God, who is love.

Whatever your background, whatever your God-given gifts may be, wherever you are—you influence people by the way you live.

Think about the people whose lives you touch: friends, family members, coworkers, neighbors, and many others. What impact are you having? Do you reflect the love of Jesus?

When you leave this earth, you will leave a legacy of relationships—people who remember what you claimed to believe, who were influenced by you just as you influenced them.

What kind of legacy do you want to leave?

Related Scriptures

## **Matthew 6:19-21**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**19** Do not gather *and* heap up *and* store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust *and* worm consume *and* destroy, and where thieves break through and steal.

**20** But gather *and* heap up *and* store for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust *nor* worm consume *and* destroy, and where thieves do not break through and steal;

**21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

## **Matthew 28:19-20**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

**19** Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

**20** Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the [very] close *and* consummation of the age. *Amen (so let it be).*

## **Pastoral Challenge**

If people studied your calendar and use of money during the past year, what would they discover about

- Your priorities?
- Your view of possessions?
- Your commitment to reach out to people in need?
- Your desire to share the truth and love of Jesus with people who do not yet know Him personally?
- What needs to change?

Wrap Up and Close