

Jesus: A Life: Week 12

Rich Man, Poor Life.

Big Idea: The direction of our life reveals our eternal destination

Read the Bible:
Luke 16:19-31

STUDY

*** Before interacting with this guide, all leaders should study the referenced texts using the HEAR Method. It's also important to encourage your group members to read the text using the HEAR Method. ***

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

- **Why was this written?**
- **To whom was it originally written?**
- **How does it fit with the verses before and after it?**
- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.



Summary

This story is often portrayed as focusing on two characters. However, that is a little misguided. The story is about one person, one person who is never even named, the rich man.

In this teaching, Christ is out to prove a lesson to the Pharisees. He's frustrated with them because they don't even live by their own teachings. They are lovers of money. Jesus is clear you cannot serve God and money. To make his point clear he tells us the story of the rich man.

There was a rich man who feasted every day. Christ's point is that he had more than enough. He had all he could ever want. Yet, he made it a point to live in all the lavishness he could handle. In short, his life was about him. He lived for his comfort and his glory.

Anytime someone is consumed with themselves they don't have time for anyone else. This is the case for the rich man. A poor man named Lazarus was laid outside his gate. Even though the rich man had more than enough he did not seek to give anything to Lazarus who had nothing.

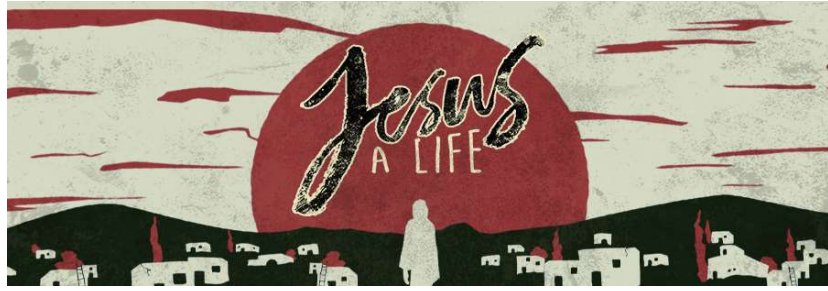
Ultimately, this man was so consumed with himself that he didn't have time for God. We know this because we are told that when he died, he was ushered into eternal damnation.

Self-consumed. Blind to others. Ignorant of God.

Notice the direction of the man's life. This is a progression into damnation. No one goes to hell in an instant. Jesus is showing us that it's a slow descent.

The point is clear for the pharisees listening in: you are the rich man.

What is the direction of your life?



Leading Your Group

Community Time

Start group by asking for Prayer requests and checking in on everyone.

Bible Study

***Have everyone in your group read assigned scripture before meeting. ***

Start Group by Reading Luke 16:19-31

Major Lessons – (These are the “Lesson Points” in Class)

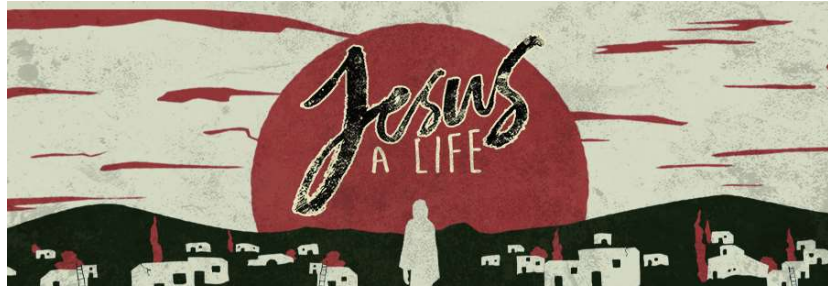
Point No. 1: The love of money can make us blind.

At least part of what Jesus is aiming to show the pharisees is that the love of money can make you blind to everything around you. Money, while a good tool, can take center stage in your life, and if it does it can serve to make you self-consumed. Money, when there is enough of it, can make you worry about what you want more than what really matters in life.

Discuss: How do you maintain a healthy view of money? How can you use money as a tool without letting it take center stage in your life?

Point No. 2: Saved people cannot be self-consumed.

The great threat revealed in this passage is just how damning self-consumption is. The troubling part of this passage is that the rich man did not do anything wrong! He didn't kill Lazarus. He didn't pick on him or kick him while he was down. The trouble was that he just didn't do anything at all.



The rich man was so self-consumed that he didn't notice those in need around him and he didn't notice God. Ultimately, Christ seems to be making a point that no one who is a disciple can live like this. It's impossible to follow Jesus and be consumed by what we see in the mirror.

Discuss: Why is self-consumption so dangerous?

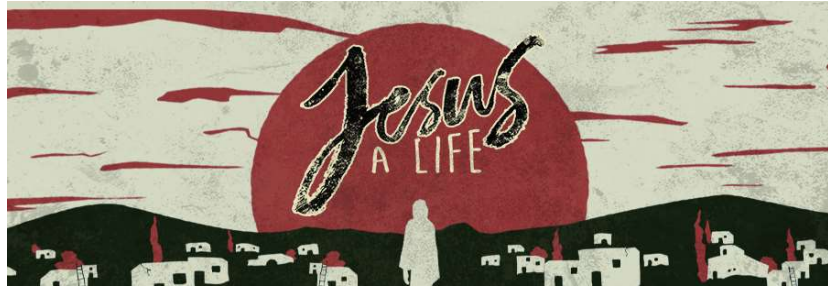
How do you know if you are self-consumed?

Point No. 3: How you respond to God now determines where you spend eternity.

Jesus is clear. There are no second chances. No do overs. We get the chance to follow Jesus now. If we deny him, we don't get a second chance later.

Therefore, we all need to make sure that we have responded to God appropriately. Have you surrendered your life to Christ?

Discuss: Who is in your life that you need to be praying for to respond to God?



Resources

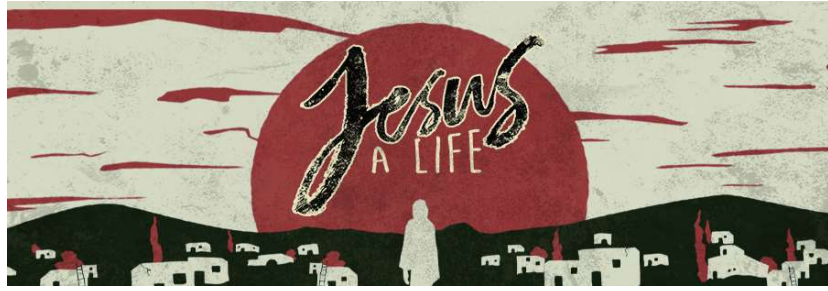
Expositor's Bible Commentary

6. *The rich man and Lazarus* (16:19–31)

The expositor's basic concern is not the nature and history of this story (cf. Notes) but its primary significance in its Lukan context. It is set in a series of encounters with the Pharisees (cf. 15:1–2; 16:14). Its meaning must be understood in that context. The Pharisees did not follow their own Scriptures, the "Law and the Prophets" (v. 16); so they were no better than the rich man's brothers who "have Moses and the Prophets" (v. 29). The Pharisees professed belief in a future life and in future judgment. However, they did not live in conformity with that belief but rather in the pursuit of wealth (v. 14), just like the rich man of the parable. Even Jesus' resurrection (possibly alluded to in v. 31) would not convince them. It is implicit in the account that one's attitude to God and his word is confirmed in this life and that it cannot be altered in the next one.

While the parable does contain a few doctrinal implications, the expositor must keep in mind that one cannot build an eschatology on it. To do that will result in an anachronism; for though Revelation 20:14 places the throwing of death and Hades into the lake of fire at the end of history (the "second death"), in this story the rich man is already in a torment of fire, in his body, while his brothers are still living. It should be understood as a story containing some limited eschatological ideas familiar to Jesus' audience. Thus understood, the story makes a powerful case for (1) the future reversal of the human condition (cf. 6:20–26), (2) the reality of future judgment based on one's decisions in this life, and (3) the futility of even a resurrection to persuade those who persist in rejecting God's revealed word.

19–20 This paragraph vividly pictures the earthly state of the two men and prepares the hearer and reader for the reversal in vv. 22–24. The latter is both striking and consistent with Luke's presentation of Jesus' teaching, but it is not in itself the main feature of the story. The fact that Jesus named the "beggar" (v. 20) while not naming the "rich man" (v. 19) may imply that one was ultimately more important. The naming of a character in the story need not lead to the conclusion some have drawn that Lazarus was a real person, though parables usually do not have named characters. Nor is there convincing evidence that this Lazarus is the same one



Jesus raised from the dead (John 11). Admittedly, the similarity is remarkable, since both stories deal with death and resurrection (cf. v. 30), and since in both instances resurrection does not convince unbelievers (see Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 635). Nevertheless, Lazarus was a common name, the Greek form (*Lazaros*) of the Hebrew Eleazar (*'el'āzār*, “[whom] God has helped”). It is probably used symbolically. Tradition has given the name of “Dives,” meaning “rich,” to the anonymous rich man (cf. Notes).

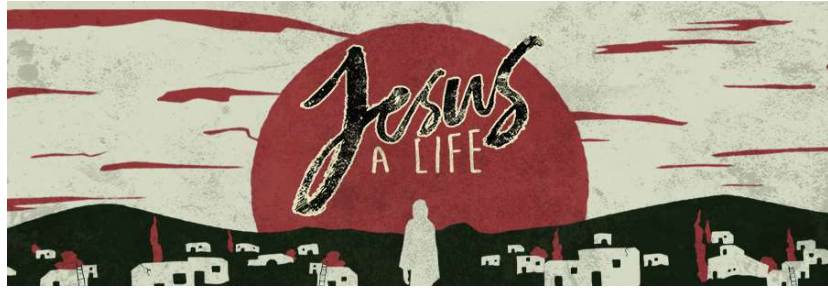
“Purple” (v. 19) was a dyed cloth worn by the wealthy. The Roman soldiers mocked Jesus by putting a purple robe on him in the Praetorium before the Crucifixion (Mark 15:17, 20). In a vivid contrast to the rich man, Jesus depicts Lazarus as neglected and subjected to insult even by “the dogs” (v. 21).

21–24 After his death, Lazarus is escorted by “the angels,” in contrast to the rich man who was merely “buried” (v. 22). Angelic activity is not foreign to the biblical scene (Heb 1:14), but here Jesus’ reference to the angels is probably simply an artistic touch.

“Abraham’s side” may picture reclining at a banquet, like the “feast in the kingdom of God” at which Abraham will be present (13:28–29). If so, it may contrast with vv. 20–21, where the rich man sits at the table while Lazarus longs for the scraps. Otherwise it might be a symbol of reunion with Abraham and the other patriarchs at death. Hell (v. 23) is “Hades” (NIV mg.). In early classical literature Hades was a term for the place of departed spirits. In the LXX it represents the Hebrew Sheol, the realm of the dead. It occurs ten times in the NT, two of them in Luke (cf. 10:15). In the NT Hades is never used of the destiny of the believer. Neither is it identified with Gehenna (*geenna*), which is usually connected with fiery judgment, as in Matthew 5:22, 29–30 (Luke only in 12:5, q.v.). Here (v. 23) Hades stands in contrast to the place and state of Lazarus’s blessing. The division between the two is absolute and final (v. 26). “Father Abraham” (v. 24) expresses the normal attitude a Jew, conscious of his heritage, would have (John 8:39).

25–26 Abraham’s response, “Son” (*teknon*, v. 25), like the identical term on the lips of the Prodigal Son’s father (15:31), conveys something of the compassion God himself shows even to those who spurn him. The possessive pronoun in “your good things” is similar in its force to the words “for himself” in 12:21. In a masterly summary Jesus contrasts the previous states of the rich man and Lazarus with the “now” and “here” of their situations after death. Verse 26 shows the utter and unchangeable finality of their decision.

27–31 This unchangeability comes from a hardness not only toward Christ but toward “Moses and the Prophets” (v. 29; cf. John 5:46). Not even a spectacular “sign,” like one returning from



the dead (vv. 27, 30), can change those whose hearts are set against God's word, as the response of many to the resurrection of Jesus was to show.

THE BIBLE PANORAMA

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

V 1–12: LEARNING FROM LIFE Jesus illustrates from the dishonest actions of a poor and self-seeking steward, not in order to counsel dishonesty, of course, but to point out that Christians should deal as shrewdly in God-honouring ways, as ungodly people deal selfishly for their own ends. The man discounts the debts of his master's debtors, in order to have their support, in case he is dismissed and without money. His actions increase his master's cash flow, by getting the money in. His master commends his shrewdness, but not his integrity! **V 13: SERVING WITH SINGLENESS** The option is clear: we either serve God or we serve Mammon. (Mammon stands for money and materialism.) **V 14–15: CONDEMNED BY COMPARISON** Jesus applies the teaching to the Pharisees who love money and deride Christ. He reminds them that God knows and sees the abominable state of their hearts. **V 16–18: LASTING THROUGH LIFE** Jesus teaches that not the smallest part of the law of God will ever fail. It will outlast creation itself. Taking the principle of permanence, He goes on to remind them of the permanence of marriage. Marriage, like all of God's moral law, is for the whole of life. **V 19–31: EXAMPLES FOR ETERNITY** Jesus describes the great gulf fixed between the man who is separate from God after death and the man who is with God after death. He refers to two men with different eternities to experience. Lazarus is the saved beggar and the other is the lost rich man. The lost man's fervency for warning others not to neglect their salvation is only greater in the case of Jesus, Himself, and of Paul. Jesus teaches that even if someone rises from the dead, people will not be convinced if they refuse to accept the Scriptures. How true that is today!