Frisco First Baptist Church

THE PARABLES OF JESUS
THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS
LUKE 16:19-31
11/22/2026

MAIN POINT

A godly mind-set should move us to serve the needy and proclaim the gospel to the lost.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

C. S. Lewis once said, "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."

> **What did Lewis mean by this? Do you tend to think of the people around you this way? Why or why not?**
>
> **What keeps us from maintaining an eternal mind set about ourselves? About the people around us?**

We too easily fall into the trap of making money our god. Jesus, however, made clear that it is impossible to serve God and money. In one of His most jarring parables, Jesus illustrates the reality of both heaven and hell and the foolishness of letting wealth and possessions distract us from focusing our lives on the gospel of Jesus Christ and helping others do the same.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 16:19-31.

The account of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable that includes many topics, including wealth, poverty, economic disparity, social justice, and the nature of heaven and hell. At its core, the parable is about God's judgment and His revelation of truth.

Why do you think Jesus is telling this parable to the Pharisees? What is it about the Pharisees and about Jesus that motivated Him to tell this parable? Refer back to Luke 16:14 for guidance.

> **What words would you use to describe Lazarus? On the other hand, what words would you use to describe the rich man?**

What is suggested by the fact that Lazarus was left at the rich man's gate each day?

How might you be more mindful of the needy people around you?

Jesus had previously told parables that warned about the dangers of loving wealth because the Pharisees "loved money." This parable continues in a similar direction as the rich man's wealth had blinded him to the needs of Lazarus. The rich man's selfish attitude toward his wealth had kept him from seeing his need for God, and the result was that he found himself in eternal torment when he died. Lazarus, however, found himself in eternal glory.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 16:22-26 AGAIN.

Why did the rich man beg for mercy?

Did the rich man receive mercy? What does that tell us about God's mercy and grace?

The rich man was not given a second chance to repent. That chance had long since passed, reminding us that our time is limited. This should motivate us to both prioritize our relationship with Christ and share Christ with our non-Christian friends and family.

What is the basis of judgment for these two men? Why did Lazarus go to heaven and the rich man to hell?

The rich man's selfish orientation toward money and unconcern for a fellow human being revealed a lack of a relationship with God. The man trusted in himself. Similarly, the poor man's joyful place in eternity did not come because of his earthly poverty. He must have known God and benefited from that relationship that came about by grace through faith.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 16:27-31 AGAIN.

Why did the rich man insist that Abraham send Lazarus to his brothers? What does Abraham's answer tell us about God's perspective on this situation?

According to Abraham's word to the rich man in hell, how can people learn instructions and warnings about life, repentance, and restoration?

What does this tell us about the importance of God's Word in evangelism?

The final section of the account (vv. 27-31) illustrates the importance of trusting Christ before it is too late, and the sufficiency of Scripture to communicate the gospel. The conversation between the rich man and Abraham revealed the crucial nature of repentance. If we do not have a relationship with God, we need to turn to Him in repentance and reflect that change of heart in the way we live.

What does your use of the resources God has given you communicate about your heart? How might your relationship with your possessions and wealth need to change in light of Christ's kingdom?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How does the reality of a future day of judgment motivate you to live in the present? How might an awareness of this reality the way you relate to the people in your life?

What would you say to someone who says it is rude to talk about hell? How does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus speak to such a claim?

What are some practical ways we as individuals and as a group might serve the needy around us? How might doing so provide us opportunities to share the gospel?

PRAYER

Thank God for revealing Himself to us and inviting us into an eternal relationship with Him through His Son. Ask God to give us a passion for His glory, so we might find joy in serving the needy and sharing the gospel with the lost people around us.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 16:19-31

16:19. With no transition statement, Luke introduced the parable of the poor man and Lazarus. Parallel to the rich landowner in verse 1, the central character of this parable is a rich man enjoying the most luxurious life possible. His dress and his food set him apart from Jesus' disciples and from the ordinary Jewish citizen. Here was the man the Pharisees wanted to be.

16:20-21. Lazarus, the other character in the story, represents the opposite side of the social ladder. He owned nothing, but Jesus honored him with a name, while the rich man remained anonymous. Lazarus was clothed with sores. He lived not in a gated mansion but on the street beside the rich man's gate, who he depended to live on. He himself seemed to offer nourishment for the wild dogs that licked his sores. The rich man had the opportunity to do all Jesus had commanded. He could invite the sick to his banquet table. He could show his generosity in using his material resources for kingdom purposes. He could restore a lost man who was basically dead to life and join in heaven's joy. He did not have far to search for this lost sheep. He could even sell all his possessions in his dedication to kingdom living. But not this man. He ignored Lazarus and went about his luxurious life.

16:22-23. Inevitably, the poor Lazarus died, perhaps from his illness, perhaps from malnutrition. The self-righteous and self-centered rich man certainly had some responsibility in his death. One day death also visited the rich man. Dying is the only thing the two men hold in common in the story. The difference Jesus emphasized was what happened after death. Lazarus died and went with the angels to heaven. Not only was he in heaven; he was positioned right next to Abraham, the father of Jewish faith (Gen. 12–17). Nothing better could happen to a Jew after death. The rich man went where his master—money—took him, to Hades, the place of torment. From there somehow, he could see Abraham—and what a shocking discovery. There beside Abraham, he saw Lazarus, the one he had been unable to see all those years at his gate.

16:24. The rich man was tormented even more than poor Lazarus had been as the dogs licked his sores and the rich man ignored him. In desperation he called to Abraham for help. He addressed him as father, indicating that he considered himself to be of the seed of Abraham and thus deserving of help from Abraham and from the God of Abraham. He cried for mercy, even when mercy meant having poor, unclean, filthy Lazarus come to his rescue, although he had never helped Lazarus. A fingertip of cool water would mean a lot in the horrible flaming torment he suffered.

16:25. Abraham could communicate from his eternal abode to that of the rich man. He continued the family terminology, acknowledging the man as a son of Abraham. The rich man needed a history lesson. In life he had enjoyed all the luxuries. Lazarus, on the other hand, enjoyed no luxuries, only bad things. Now the situation was reversed. Lazarus received the comfort he had begged for all those years. But the rich man had slipped from the comfortable life to pure agony. Yes, those expecting to be first were last, and those who expected to be last were now first, right beside Abraham. This verse is an application of the principle in 13:30. The rich man had been “first” in this life, having enjoyed many good things, but was now “last,” referring to his agony in the afterlife. By contrast, Lazarus had been “last” during his earthly existence (vv. 20-21), but now was “first” (eternally comforted).

16:26. An eternal reality needed explaining. Abraham might be able to communicate with the man in torment, but he could not come to him. A great chasm separated them. There is no description of the chasm, no location geographically—just the reality: You cannot get there from here. You are where you are going to stay, just as we are. Torment is your eternal reward, just as heavenly comfort belongs to Lazarus forever.

16:27-29. Not being able to improve his own lot, the rich man finally showed concern for the eternal destiny of his five brothers. The phrase “Moses and the prophets” is another way of referring to the entire Old Testament. Abraham pointed him to the Pharisees’ favorite source of authority. They already had the books of Moses—the Law and the Prophets, which is the rest of Scripture. They give them all the information they need. They need to listen to them. Such a warning implies that the rich man had the same authorities his brothers did, but they refused to listen to them. Obeying Scripture should lead them away from torment and to the eternal kingdom.

16:30-31. The irony here is that Luke, writing from a time after Jesus’ resurrection, knew that very few people would be persuaded to repent even through witnessing the

miracle of someone rising from the dead (Lazarus or Jesus). They must listen with “ears to hear” to the message of salvation in the Scriptures.

1. C. S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory (HarperOne, New York: 2001) 45-46.