

Title: MONEY MATTERS AND MORE, LUKE 16:19 – 31
(Chatham, NJ; 09/25/16, AM) [D – Twin-Point, Topical]

Theme: Although this story revisits money issues, it also teaches us that after death there will be no opportunity for repentance.

Purpose: To present the congregation with more warnings about idolizing money, but also to warn us about the need for change now since we'll have no opportunity for it when we die.

Introduction:

1. The Pharisees had mocked Jesus' teaching on money, 16:14-15.
2. They loved money for its status and power: Jesus challenges them by saying, "What is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."
3. James 4:4 takes up a similar theme: ". . . friendship with the world is enmity with God."
4. This plays a big role in helping us understand our relationship to money: is money an idol or a tool that can be used for good?
5. That is the context of this story of the Rich Man and Lazarus.
6. It is narrated using stereotypes: an ultra-rich guy and a devastatingly poor man.
7. Lazarus doesn't represent all poor people, and the rich man doesn't represent all rich.
8. This gives the story its power but if misunderstood can also create wrong conclusions: as Ambrose said, "Not all poverty is holy, or all riches criminal."
9. Leviticus 19:15 – not to be partial to the poor in court or defer to the rich
10. Furthermore there is more to this story than the dynamic of rich versus poor.

I. The Money Dilemma – Holy or Criminal

A. Used wisely, it can do a lot of good

1. Paul tells the wealthy to be rich in good deeds, 1 Tim. 6:18
2. A while back I suggested that the Good Samaritan had to have money or he couldn't have paid for the injured man's care.
3. I also noted that James and John's father had hired servants; he was an entrepreneur who had enough resources to hire others.
4. In a free market economy that is how money gets redistributed fairly: you work and others pay for your labor as a fair exchange.
5. Some in Acts sold property to help others; it wasn't mandated, but they helped out of the compassion of Christ in their hearts.

B. Used unwisely, it becomes an idol

1. Israel forgot God because of all the good things he had given them, Deut. 6:10-12 & 8:7-14
2. The "love of money" in 1 Timothy 6:9-10 can be a dangerous trap
3. We must not assume the images of this are only the robber barons of the 18th century or the nasty, evil, and rotten big corporations of today
4. When we vilify these, we lose the perspective that any of us is prone to the love of money: amount of money makes no difference.
5. Those who value riches often make it their life's mission to amass lots of it.
6. But those who are jealous of the rich because they have too much are as much in the grip of the love of money as anyone else.
7. Riches and the love of money can consume us.
8. The rich man is not portrayed as one who has committed crimes against Lazarus or as one who has made himself rich off the poor.
9. His offence is that he has apparently just ignored Lazarus; his money and wealth consumed his life.
10. How much of your conscious efforts are spent in the pursuit of things that money can buy? How much does that dictate your contentment or lack thereof? **(6-8)**

II. Other Lessons in this Story

- A. God reverses worldly values
 - 1. Wealth is not a barometer of God's blessings
 - 2. Though the rich man seems blessed, in the next life he is condemned
 - 3. See Luke 1:51-53, God sends the rich away empty but feeds the hungry
 - 4. Consistent with previous statements about what God finds valuable and what he considers an abomination: a reversal of how the world thinks
 - 5. The poor man is comforted with Abraham; the rich man is in torment

- B. No chance for repentance after death
 - 1. The rich man asks for a small drop of water
 - 2. Neither Lazarus nor Abraham can bridge the "chasm" between them
 - 3. The rich man knows there is no hope left for him
 - 4. He hopes his brothers can do better

- C. A Resurrection does nothing to change some people
 - 1. The rich man wants Lazarus to go to his brothers because he thinks they will listen to someone who has risen from the dead
 - 2. Abraham disagrees
 - 3. They have Moses and the prophets – Deut. 14:28-29, provisions made for the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow
 - 4. The regulations for numerous feasts state that these same groups be included
 - 5. Mistreatment of the poor is a common theme in the prophets
 - 6. Why aren't they listening to Moses and the prophets?
 - 7. Remember that the rich man's only offence was that he ignored Lazarus; basically he ignored Moses and the prophets
 - 8. Lazarus coming back from the dead will make no difference.

Conclusions:

- 1. Godliness with contentment is great gain, 1 Timothy 6:6-8.
- 2. Work for food that endures to eternal life, Jn. 6:27.
- 3. Put your energy there where it will gain the biggest reward.
- 4. Finally, when you give your testimony about the Gospel to others, remember that some people will never be moved by the Resurrection.
- 5. The Gospel is proclaimed, however, because we know that many will.
- 6. Accept it today.