

## Parables of Luke – part 1

**By way of introduction** – Parables: Fabulous works of art; no story teller better than Jesus!

--The word “parable” means “to lay alongside” – a parable takes a life situation in the material world that was known and understood and lays it alongside a reality in the non-material world that is unknown in order to explain that unknown reality.

--Parables use a common situation to make a powerful spiritual point.

--An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

--Central theme is always the King and His Kingdom – if our interpretation diverges then we have missed it.

--Common sense is critical – the interpretation must have made sense to original hearers or we have missed it.

--We are going to see that some of our modern interpretations of these parables have missed it or at least have fallen somewhere short of the full picture.

--These parables we are calling the “Parables of Luke” because they are unique to Luke, that is, not recorded in the other gospels.

**Lk. 16:19-31** This is a chapter that is unique to Luke and parables that Jesus told.

--Many ways we could title this, including: “The Reluctant witness from Hell”; “The great reversal”; “How to think you’re going to heaven and end up in hell”; etc.

This is a very important parable because most people in western culture or who have been exposed to Christianity think they are going to heaven.

--The typical American knows that Jesus died on the cross and rose again whether truly believe it or not.

--Their association with the gospel convinces them that they are going to Heaven.

--Do you plan to go to heaven? What’s your plan? Can we agree if that what God requires from us to go to heaven differs from what we have, or can produce, we’re not going?

--**Sincerity is not a trump card** that gets you in any more than being sincerely sorry for a crime will get you out of jail or believing sincerely that a certain road leads to a destination when, in fact, it doesn’t.

--90% of Americans believe in God – Most of them also think they are going to heaven.

--Hell will be populated mostly by people who are shocked to find themselves there.

--Hell will be populated by mostly religious people; most of the world (the vast majority) are religious, steeped in does and don’ts,

--The world is dominated by religious people; therefore, it stands to reason that hell will be dominated by religious people.

--Jesus spoke on this issue: **Mt. 7:21-23; Jn. 8:21-24**

This parable is the story of a religiously approved man who is shocked to find himself in torment.

--In that culture they believed confidently that your condition in this life pictured your future condition in the next life – if you’re rich in this life, you will be rich in the next life.

--It was a complete shock to hear of a rich man in torment and another shocker to hear that the poor man was in paradise.

Imagine everything in your life being as bad as it possibly could be--Take everything bad that has ever happened in your life and how you felt in the worst of it, all the pain, disappointments

and failures, hatred, bitterness, fear, anxiety, and experience all at once, including all the hopelessness that came with it.

--Make that feeling and experience a permanent fixture for your life with no hope of relief.

--No matter what you thought at the time of those bad experiences, those troubles eventually waned and you got better and hope returned)

--Unlike most of life's experiences, this trouble isn't going to get better or change or let up—Imagine things never changing or getting better and you will never feel better forever.

--The most profound torture, torment, suffering mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally— at the same time there is no relief from it ever, and never will the torment be dulled--that is hell.

--Hell is the place of the most profound suffering, compounded infinitely by the fact that it lasts forever—it will never, ever change.

--This is a story of a man who went to that place: [Luke 16:19-21](#)

### **1. The rich man is a blessed and godly man in the eyes of that culture.**

--The Pharisees along with the friends of Job were the first promoters of a prosperity gospel: "If you walk with the Lord, you will be rich, healthy, and have everything you want."

--It is a hellish doctrine and those who promote it and subscribe to it are in danger of Hell itself.

--What happens to you in this life may have no relationship to how you are actually living or what God thinks of you.

--According to this false doctrine, the poor and the sick are cursed by God, certainly will not be in heaven since God has already marked them for hell while on earth.

We are all believers in the prosperity gospel: when something bad happens, what's the first thing we think? "I must have done something wrong"; when something bad happens to others, what's the first thing we think? "They must have done something wrong."

--The conclusions of the people of Jesus' day were very natural and human centered.

--This parable is aimed directly at the most highly respected people in the culture of that day: the Pharisees (we see them as hypocrites and evil people but we need to understand that they were not at all seen that way by the culture of that day.)

--[Lk. 16:14-15](#)

--[Lk. 18:25-26](#) – They had no concept that the rich weren't going to heaven.

--The Pharisees and those who followed their doctrine were this rich man.

--This is the story of man who thought he was going to heaven but ended up in hell.

--This will be the most common experience of those who go to hell.

### **2. This is a story of extreme contrasts**

--A poor man becomes rich forever and a rich man becomes poor forever.

--Poor man who suffers in this life and is blessed in the next and rich man who has bountiful blessings but suffers in the next life.

--Starts with the poor man on the outside and rich man on the inside and ends the opposite way.

--Poor man with immense need, rich man with no needs; then poor man ends with no needs and the rich man lives with needs for eternity.

--A poor man who desires everything but has nothing and a rich man who desires nothing because he has everything; then the opposite.

--A poor man humiliated, and rich man exalted; poor man exalted, rich man humiliated.

--A poor man who seeks help and receives none; then there's a rich man who seeks help and receives none.

### **3. This story breaks into three parts: Life, Death, Life after Death. John 12:37-**

**1. Life – V.19** – this is extreme wealth – he was always decked out in the most expensive clothing.

--Everything was handmade, so the average person may only own 4 or 5 sets of clothing in their entire life!

--The purple came from a type of ocean snail called a Murex and each snail gave only a tiny amount of dye—to accumulate enough to dye clothing was very expensive. (Remember Lydia, seller of purple dye, in Acts—very lucrative business and very high-end market).

--The rich man indulged in a lavish, ostentatious, luxurious life style every day!

--The culture would label him blessed by God and certain to go to heaven—Heaven had marked him as its own, in their minds.

--Their prosperity gospel said that if you sinned, you didn't have this stuff, so he must be perfect.

--**V. 20** – this is the other extreme – the word for poor in the Greek here means to have literally nothing to your name.

--Extreme poverty and extreme illness; “**laid at the gate**” literally means to be dumped there – It implies he had no way to get himself there or away from there—he is disabled in some way.

--Extreme hunger – V.21 – We've heard this before from the woman whose daughter was demon possessed—we interpret it like westerners, and that's not good!

--These weren't crumbs but chunks of molded bread—in a wealthy home they would keep the old bread to wipe their hands on. They did not use utensils for the most part in this culture, they ate with their hands. They also did not use napkins because cloth was very expensive and only used for clothing and there was no paper of any kind except to write on. Between courses, they would wipe their hands with stale bread and throw it on the ground, the dogs would eat it all up.

--The rich man is not even bringing those pieces out to Lazarus for food...Why? Because they believed in form of Karma; “if I feed him, I'm messing with the curse that God has placed on him...who am I to mess with the things of God.”

--Karma like the prosperity gospel is demonic in its origin and, thus, counter to what the Bible teaches.