

Discussion Guide

Preparation: Talk about the role of generosity in creating ripple effects.

Passage: Read the Parable of the Rich Man & Lazarus in Luke 16.

1. What do you think about the Pharisees' reaction to Jesus' teaching: *"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money?"* Luke 16:13
It says they sneered at Jesus, meaning they thought his teaching on wealth was absurd! They probably rolled their eyes at him, dismissing his teaching outright. Do people still respond that way to the Bible's teaching on money?
2. Why is money such a hot topic in the Church? Why, if you announce you are preaching on money the following Sunday, church attendance drops significantly? Does the Church talk too much about money or not enough?
3. What do you think about status purchasing? Can Christians own nice stuff? When is nice, too nice?
4. This parable begs the same question as the healing of the man born blind: *"Do we see what Jesus sees?"* How touching is it to realize that Jesus calls those who are invisible to us by name! We may refuse to see the suffering of others but God always sees! How can we keep our eyes open to the suffering around us?
5. The name *"Lazarus"* means *"the one whom God helps."* How do you account for the disparity between the man's name and his experience in life? Jesus claims, by naming this fictitious person, that God sees the plight of the poor but that's not how it appears in life.
6. From the story, talk about the power of money to corrupt us and the power of money to do good.
7. Talk about eternity and the justice of God. Does that bring you comfort or does it pacify you from helping the poor? I mean if God is going to take care of them in eternity, why bother helping them now? One day in eternity they will forget how bad their lives were and enjoy an eternity of joy! So why bother?
8. *"The rich man also died and was buried."* (vs. 22) This is a sobering reality Jesus interjects into the parable. What affect should this have on how we live, in particular, how we handle what God has given to us?
9. *In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'* (vs. 23-24)

Ripple Effect: Generosity

Luke 16:19-31

5/14/23

What do you think about the man's response to his eternal status?

10. *"In your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things."*

What do you think about God's perspective on our personal prosperity, that it has more to do with his grace and less to do with our actions?

11. What questions does this parable create in your mind? How do you know if you are doing enough with the wealth God has blessed you with? Can generosity be pushed to an unhealthy extreme? Have you ever seen someone go overboard when it came to self denial?

12. Share an example of someone you think practiced radical generosity and the effect he/she had on their community?

13. *"Those who are rich in this present world ... should do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."* 1 Timothy 6:17-19

What joy have you experienced in giving and/or serving? Which brings greater joy: serving or giving?

14. *"But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving."* 2 Corinthians 8:7

Talk about the *"grace of giving."* That's an interesting way to phrase biblical giving. What does it mean to you?