



Sermon, September 28: The Gospel of Luke 16:19-31.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates a profound reversal of fortune: the rich man, who lived in luxury, and Lazarus, who suffered in poverty, experience opposite fates after death. Lazarus is comforted, while the rich man is tormented. This shift reflects divine justice, where the afflicted are finally comforted, and those who ignore their suffering face the consequences. *In verses 24 and 25*, we read a conversation between Abraham and the Rich man. Abraham emphasizes the irreversibility of their conditions by describing a great chasm that is put between their realms. This symbolizes the finality of one's eternal state. Importantly, the rich man is not tormented for his wealth, but for his failure to show compassion and use his resources to help Lazarus, who lay in need at his doorstep.

Are we the Rich Man? Some of us live comfortably while others suffer just outside our gates (literal or metaphorical). We don't always see it, but comfort, busy schedules, or apathy may insulate us. The Rich Man was not evil by action; however, he was guilty of neglect, of inaction.

Are we Lazarus? Maybe some of us are. Some are suffering quietly, unseen by the world. It is sad to admit, but even within our own church, there are both Lazaruses and rich men; those who suffer in silence and those who, perhaps unknowingly, live in comfort while overlooking the needs around them. Despite our blindness and brokenness, I believe and trust that God sees us all.

God's gaze does not miss the unseen. In the Kingdom of God, there is healing for the wounded and honor for the overlooked. And even now, God's grace and mercy reach into our blindness, offering us the chance to see, to repent, and to love as Jesus does. However, no one wants to live like Lazarus. His life was full of suffering. It's okay to not want that kind of life.

Are we the five brothers?

This is where many of us may fall. The Rich Man begged for Lazarus to be sent to warn his brothers, but Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets." In other words, they have the Word of God. If they do not listen to them, even if someone comes from the dead, they will not listen.

We, too, have the Scriptures. We have heard the Gospel. We are still listening to the Gospel. Are we going to listen before it is too late? No one wants to suffer like Lazarus. No one should want to live selfishly like the Rich Man. Jesus calls us to live with eyes wide open, hearts tender, and hands ready to serve.

Who are we? We are the ones **who are still living, still able to choose, still able to listen to Moses and the Prophets through the Word**, and more than that, we can listen to **Jesus Christ**, the One who rose from the dead. It is not too late to live differently. It is not too late to see the "Lazarus around us. It is not too late to use whatever God has given us: money, time, energy, words, and skills to bring comfort, healing, and love in Jesus' name. We don't have to be Lazarus to be saved. We don't have to be rich to be guilty.

But we surely **do have to care**, because love **is never passive**. ***"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."* 1. John 3:18.**
Amen.

Vicar Lotegeluaki