

There are two men, one fabulously wealthy
the other poor, paralyzed, covered with sores, starving.
Both die.

The wealthy man goes to the place of torment

The poor man to Abraham's side

That tells us the parable isn't about poverty's virtue and the
evil of wealth.

Abraham was the wealthiest of men.

What's it about?

Pharisees teach that God rewards righteousness with
material prosperity.

Poverty is punishment for sin.

The Pharisees love money(16:14)

And the money, when attained, provided assurance of
God's pleasure.

The Pharisees added regulations to scripture

Which externalized God's law...

Limiting steps taken on the Sabbath,

Identifying who to shun,

Who to socialise with

Places you go

homes you avoid

By keeping these regulations they believed it was
impossible to violate God's law.

And they carefully kept them.

So they believed themselves good, righteous

And their wealth confirmed that belief.

But

God's law requires perfection.

Holiness in thought, word and deed.

“Be perfect therefore as your father in heaven is perfect”(Matt5:48)

And that’s impossible

Jesus said: “from the human heart...”come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, [22]coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. [23]All these evil things come from within, and...defile a person.”(Mark7:21-23)

The human heart is the source of evil

You might conform externally...

You may not steal...but you covet.

You don’t commit adultery, but you lust

You don’t murder, but you have malicious thoughts

God’s law demands perfection inside and out.

The purpose: reveal your sin.

So you’ll forsake yourself, any reliance on your own goodness

And turn to God who promises mercy to all who repent.

But by externalizing the law, The Pharisaic made it doable

And their theology of wealth confirmed their blamelessness.

Jesus warns:

“You’re those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts.”(Luke16:15)

Our culture fosters a similar species of self-righteousness

The basic assumption is

We’re all very good people and if there’s a heaven surely we’re going there

Unless you're a child abuser,
hunt endangered species,
or you're hitler,
Otherwise, you're fine.

If in doubt,

Buy local

Use reusable bags

Give to charity

Wear a ribbon on your lapel

Volunteer

Our culture assumes the basic goodness of humanity
And so the average person is hardened against the Gospel.

Why repent, I'm not perfect, but I'm pretty good.

God's holiness

His coming judgment

Disbelieved, ignored, forgotten...

Jesus uses this parable to unveil the true condition of your
soul

It's designed to shock.

Today, the "rich man" might be a doctor, volunteering stem
epidemics in a developing nation

The poor man might be in prison for poaching.

v.23,

The rich man dies.

His circumstances have dramatically changed.

**"in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and
saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side."(Luke16:23)**

When you die, your body rots

But you will go to one of two places....

the place of torment.

Or Abraham's side...

Jesus' purpose is to warn, so he dwells on the place torment

What is this "torment"?

Daniel 12:

"those who sleep...shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to **shame and everlasting contempt.**"(Daniel12:2)

When you've done an evil thing, and know it, you feel shame.

Shame can be intense

I paid for a friend to have an abortion

I'd never felt shame like it before, nor since.

Nathan the prophet confronted David for his adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband Uriah, David wrote:

"I know my transgressions...my sin is **ever** before me."(Psalm51:3)

What do you do with your shame?

Justify yourself...

Redefine evil as good, or at least, "understandable"

Suppress it?

try to forget?

Divert yourself with entertainment?

overwhelm shame with good works?.

That's a broad road

many take it.

There's only one way to be rid of shame.

David writes:

“[7]Purge me with hyssop, and I’ll be clean; wash me, and I’ll be whiter than snow. [9]Hide your face from my sins...blot out all my iniquities.”(Ps51)

God alone removes your guilt
and the shame flowing from it.

David acknowledges his sin

No dissembling, no justifying, no excuses

Entrusts himself to God whose property is always to have
mercy

God forgives all who repent.

He does so Through the death of his Son.

On his cross, Christ, took my guilt to himself, and bore my
shame

For the abortion

For David’s adultery and murder

His blood is greater than any sin.

But unless you confess, repent, you cannot be forgiven

In the place torment...

God’s holiness pierces every suppression, excuse,
justification.

You live with every thought, word, deed...forever
without relief.

Shame, Everlasting contempt...

The fire’s never quenched, the worm never dies.

That’s torment.

Some say hell is separation from God.

2Thess1:

“when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven...[8]in
flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who don’t know God

and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
[9]They'll suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, **away from the presence of the Lord**(2Thessalonians1:7-10)

But in Rev.14 everyone following the beast...

That is, Anyone refusing to repent

“...will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and...will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and **in the presence of the Lamb.**”(Revelation14:9-10)

Is the Lord present or absent in hell?

Consider the cross.

At noon, darkness fell over Jerusalem.

It's passover, a full moon. Solar eclipses are impossible.

The darkness marked the coming of God's wrath

On the cross, the Son became sin.

The Father, punished sin in Christ, for all who believe.

Jesus endured in three hours the everlasting wrath of a Holy God.

The Father was present as Thrice Holy Judge.

It was the will of the lord to crush him(Isa53:10)

But he was absent too.

'My God my God why've you foresaken me?'

His father's kindness, fellowship, compassion
absent...

In hell, God is present as judge

But his lovingkindness, his merciful countenance

Absent

Forever.

Here, those who reject God, enjoy his blessings

rain, sun, love, food, wine...

While maintaining enmity against him
suppressing their guilt , refusing to repent
There God's blessings are removed,
all justifications undone
shame and everlasting contempt.

And so we read:

[24]...‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me...’

by descent, the rich man is Abraham's offspring.

If it were possible to be justified
by ethnicity

Or heritage,

Because of your family's faith.

Jews would be.

He's a Jew...but he's in torment.

Observe

He doesn't object to his sentence: there are no cries for
fairness

In life, he never sought mercy.

That's for sinners, like Lazarus.

But now he knows his guilt.

He wants mercy.

This isn't repentance.

After death, the desires of your heart are fully actualized.

Jesus describes hell as a place of **wailing and gnashing of
teeth(Luke13:28)**...

That is, anguish and anger.

“The mind that is set on the flesh (that is, the unconverted
person) is hostile to God, it does not submit to god...”(Rom8:7)

If you are not with me, Jesus says, you're against me(Matt12:30).

In hell that enmity is set permanently, hardened

Conversely, in heaven, sin is removed

Your re-born heart unimpeded

You cannot sin in heaven because your heart is consumed with love for Christ

You cannot repent in hell because your heart is consumed with hatred for Christ

The man doesn't say: Have mercy and take me to be with you. I want fellowship with God

He doesn't want that.

He hates God with an everlasting hatred.

He wants relief...

God's comfort...without God.

“24send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I'm in anguish in this flame.”

....just a drop. Not a cup or a bucket

Think of Lazarus, peering through the gate as the rich man feasted.

Lusting not for a plate, or a place

But for the crumbs under the table

But now the rich man, peers into heaven, and lusts for just a drop of water.

“Send lazarus”

In life the rich man knew Lazarus

Passed him daily at the gate.

Considered him, worthless, beneath his station

That's not changed.

His pride,
self-regard,
contempt
solidified.

Hardened unrepentance...

“[25]But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he’s comforted here, and you’re in anguish.’”

Jesus taught earlier that sons and daughters of this world...use their resources to secure their future in this world.

And they shrewdly attain their heart’s desire.

They seek heaven here.

God provides.

Notice the open hostility so many successful, famous, powerful people nurture against Christianity?

why does God allow them fame and fortune?

Or consider the charlatan prosperity preachers on TBN amassing fortunes on the backs of widows.

Why does God allow it?

God gives his enemies their hearts’ desire.

They despise God and love the world.

They get the world and are forsaken by God.

This life is the only taste of heaven they’ll ever have.

But for you who confess your sins and turn to Christ the pain, suffering, turmoil of this life is the only hell you’ll ever experience.

And so it is with Lazarus.

God’s giving Lazarus his heart’s desire.

Abraham won't send him to hell
God gave the rich man his heart's desire
He enjoyed it. Now it's gone.

And there is no more.

[26]And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who'd pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us."

Rob Bell wrote a book entitled "love wins"
Suggesting that God's love is inconsistent with an
everlasting hell.

Eventually, everyone will cross over to heaven.

But

Jesus never alleviates the fear of hell,
Never presents even a sliver of hope to those who die
unrepentant

There is none.

And to say otherwise encourages a false hope.

Jesus' parable is explicit: the only time for repentance is
here and now.

Jesus came to save sinners.

He promises forgiveness and eternal life to all who repent
and trust him

but the offer expires when you do.

"It's appointed for man to die once, and after that comes
judgment"(Heb9:27)

And judgement is final

The chasm is fixed

No one is able to pass over...

Now

The rich man has one final plea

[27]...‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—[28]for I’ve five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’

This seems a selfless gesture.

But the Pharisees see themselves as unique,
a superior religious/social class.

In the parable, the brothers...are fellow Pharisees.

The man isn’t interested in anyone else...but he wants to rescue those of his own stature.

And send Lazarus to do it.

The idea: If my brothers see a great miracle, a wonderful sign they’ll listen

This isn’t merely a request,

It’s an accusation...a common one

I’m here because God hasn’t provided sufficient information.

My ignorance is God’s fault.

The Pharisees were always asking Jesus for signs.

He performed innumerable miracles.

But how did they respond?

His miracles are empowered by Satan.

the mind, the intellect is driven by your heart.

If you’re heart is hard...you’ll explain away the evidence,
every miracle, every sign

Romans 1...

Everyone knows that God exists and we owe him
obedience and worship

But everyone wants to be a god
So we suppress the truth.
We either deny God's existence
Or twist his character into our image
The heart must change
And
no miracle,
No spectacle
persuasive talk
emotional appeal
special music
Will pierce the heart.

There's only one sword sharp enough

**[29]Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets;
let them hear them.'**

Moses and the Prophets.

They have the scriptures.

There is yet no New Testament.

Jesus, through Abraham, says, the *Old Testament* is
sufficient

The Gospel's there.

The Old Testament teaches

1. That God's holy and those who approach him must be
holy(Lev10)
2. that sin leads to death, both of body and soul(Gen3, Da12)
3. That God requires perfect obedience to his law(Dt6:25)
4. That no one is able to do that... "No one is good, not even
one..."(Ps14:3)
5. But God forgives all who repent(Isa55:7)

6. That he provides a substitute for repentant sinners foreshadowed in the sacrificial system...

revealed in Isaiah 53...the One who will bear the iniquity of the people.

7. The gospel is proclaimed throughout:
the seed of the woman who'll crush the serpent's head(Gen3)

Abraham's offspring, who'll be a light to all nations(Gen12)

David's offspring who'll reign forever(1Sam7,Psalm110)

The righteous branch of Jeremiah,

Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God (Isaiah9).

The Shepherd in (Ezekiel13)

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it's they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.(John5:39-40)

The scriptures are clear and sufficient for salvation

Every word breathed out by God.

[30]...'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

The rich man's argument is so familiar

The bible's not enough.

No one's interested.

You can't preach through scripture and persuade anyone to believe.

a famous pastor recently said: preach the resurrection, not the scriptures.

The bible isn't the foundation of Christianity and it turns unchurched people off. .

But Jesus says

[31]‘If they don’t hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Those who reject or twist scripture, don't do so because the bible's insufficient...

But because the hardened heart bends the mind against the truth.

And a mind so governed will explain away every miracle.

A year later Jesus' friend Lazarus dies.

After 4 days, Jesus raises him.

Lazarus is walking around

Everyone knows it, even the Pharisees.

Their response?

Let's kill Lazarus.

Miracles, signs, wonders

Don't create faith,
they only confirm it.

no light show, no puppet show, no persuasive argument...

“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”(Romans10:17)

The mechanism by which God produces faith in the heart of the sinner, is the word.

Jesus, risen from the dead, meets two on the road to Emmaus

They've heard of the resurrection, but don't believe it.

Jesus doesn't say: here I am!

Instead, beginning with Moses and all of the prophets, he shows them why the Christ must suffer and be raised.

He uses the scriptures to produce faith

Then he reveals himself.

Peter, who saw Jesus transfigured,

Recounts the experience

Then writes: "but we have the more sure word...the scriptures.

How disastrous it is when a church obscures the bible

Ignores the bible

Twists scripture to avoid giving offense or bringing conviction.

How disastrous that the Pharisees had so shielded themselves from hearing the word

How do you avoid hell? Repent, believe the scriptures...which reveal Christ and his Gospel,

Jesus Christ lived for you

Died for you

Rose for you. He promises forgiveness to all who come to him

He loves you, he will receive you.