

Introduction to Luke 16 (Please read before the scripture)

This parable of the rich man and Lazarus is one in a series of lengthy parables Jesus shared with a large traveling crowd.

These crowds included Jesus' disciples, tax collectors and sinners, Pharisees, lawyers, and scribes.

The parables primarily concern well-off or rich men.

They are about the father who throws a lavish feast for his younger son when he returns home penniless;

the owner of a hundred sheep who recovers the one that strayed from the flock;

the rich man who accuses his slave manager of squandering his property

and a rich man who has no compassion for a poor man named Lazarus, which is our Gospel text for this week.

Luke's Jesus offers significant advice for men with wealth and social position:

they should not take the VIP seats at feasts;

they should invite the poor, dis-eased, and marginalized to their lavish feasts rather than their elite friends

they should consider selling all their possessions and redistribute the proceeds to the poor; and

they are commended for giving half their possessions to the poor and making restitution to those they defrauded

Jesus is concerned with the poor, sick, and marginalized - attempting to raise the consciousness of the rich about poverty, compassion, and social inequality.

Luke 16:19-31 The Rich Man and Lazarus

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.

20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

24 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.'

25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

30 "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

31 "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Introduction to Jeremiah 32 (Please read before the scripture)

After a rocky month with Jeremiah, we have finally come to a hopeful moment. God tells Jeremiah to buy some property from a relative. The prophet does it all legally, with witnesses and a sealed deed put in a jar for safekeeping. He buys it through “right of redemption”: the owner sells it to a relative, so it stays in the family.

Earlier in Jeremiah, we are brought a vision of disaster: the earth was devoid of plants and animals; the sky was dark; quakes shook the earth; cities lay in ruins; and once-fruitful land had become a desert. Now God is saying that “houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.” Renewal of earth and community is coming, as God also promises in the immediately preceding chapter. The people left God and ignored God’s warnings and disregarded reminders that they could still return. Once they experienced the desolation of life outside the covenant, they finally repented. Though the people took a long time to do so, God in eternal love accepts them back and pledges the renewal of their lives and the reestablishment of the covenant between them.

Jeremiah 32:1-3, 6-15 Jeremiah Buys a Field

- 1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.
- 2 The army of the king of Babylon was then besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace of Judah.
- 3 Now Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him there, saying, “Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, ‘This is what the Lord says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it.
- ...6 Jeremiah said, “The word of the Lord came to me: 7 Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, ‘Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.’
- 8 “Then, just as the Lord had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, ‘Buy my field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Since it is your right to redeem it and possess it, buy it for yourself.’
- “I knew that this was the word of the Lord; so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out for him seventeen shekels of silver. I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales. I took the deed of purchase—the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy— and I gave this deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed and of all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard.
- 13 “In their presence I gave Baruch these instructions: ‘This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time. For this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.’