

No Help From Abraham – Parable of the Rich Man

Matthew Vander Els • 2021-08-14 • foundedintruth.com

MAIN VERSES

Welcome to Founded in Truth

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home. Shabbat Shalom, everybody.

A New Series on Hold

Guys, I am so excited, or at least I was so excited to get started on a new sermon series. And I pulled out the books, have literally spent months, probably over a year to be honest, just kind of putting it together and planning it out. And I finally sat down and began writing out my outline, trying to navigate the art of the sermon, if you will, and mapping it out and how the presentation is going to go. And I was so excited. I got over halfway done. And God saw fit to throw a wrench in it, at least for me delivering it this week.

And so instead, Luke... Luke. Y'all notice we've been doing a lot of messages that are kind of based in Luke over the past few months. That was not intentional, just so you know. And so I'm super excited about it. Luke's awesome, and I've really enjoyed kind of diving back into Luke. It's good stuff. Luke was a genius in how he wrote both of his accounts, if you will. And what's so neat about Luke is his gospel account was the only one to actually get approved to have a sequel, the book of Acts. And so I thought that was neat. So I'd like to believe that for whatever reason, the Holy Spirit prompted this message today for someone here, and I pray it is a blessing and edifying.

The Parables of Yeshua

And so with that being said, today we're going to dive into the parables of Yeshua, and specifically the one recorded in Luke known as the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

And what's so interesting about how Yeshua chose to communicate about the kingdom of God is when he spoke about the kingdom of God, it was always in parables. It was never really direct when he spoke to the public. It was never clear. It was never upfront. He was never black and white when speaking to the public in parables. It was always something you had to work for just a little bit.

And we as people, we love black and white, don't we? Especially when it comes to if we need to do something, a lifestyle we're supposed to live. Just give us the black and white commandments so that it's easy for us, and maybe it's because we're lazy. I don't know. It's just easier for us not to think about it and just say, okay, that's what I need to do. That's what I need to do. That's what I need to do. It'd be great, wouldn't it?

The Bible Isn't a Checklist

Many times we want the Bible itself to be this black and white document, guide to life, checklist, so we can get a clear answer depending on what we're searching for or what we're trying to achieve or what experience we're going through or what we're trying to learn. And sometimes the Bible is very clear on specific topics and specific things, but other times it is not clear. Other times, the Bible almost intentionally makes something not black and white as if it wants us to struggle to figure it out. And I believe that's on purpose. I believe the Bible is an invitation for us to actually meditate on something.

We read in the Scriptures that we're supposed to meditate on His Word day and night. You don't meditate on a checklist. You don't marinate on a checklist, right? You marinate—what is this and how can it apply in my life? When we walk out to that world out there, it's not a black and white world. It's very dynamic. Every generation faces something different.

And what's so absolutely incredible about what the biblical authors did, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is that the contents of this narrative that points us to Yeshua evolves and fits in every generation. It's not stuck in time. And I'm so appreciative of that.

Proverbs and Divine Wisdom

[Proverbs 26](#) has a magnificent, brilliant, and beautiful example of exactly what I'm speaking about here. One of my favorite examples—we were actually discussing this at the men's

fellowship the other night. Guys, men's fellowship meets every second Tuesday of the month—we go and eat Empire pizza, consume a lot of calories, and we talk about life, talk about Yeshua, talk about the Bible, just authentic fellowship with one another.

And so here in the book of Proverbs, we have a decree in the Bible. There is a decree given to us, inspired by the Holy Spirit, written down by the author here, of how to deal with a fool in the world. Of course, you can't call him a fool, right? It'll let you go to hell. Okay.

Now, we meet people every single day in the world that are just absolute trolls. We encounter these people every day. Sometimes we are these people. These people want nothing else but to feel entitled and superior to you. They think that they are so much more important and they just want to be right. And they sometimes use perverted logic and emotion to make themselves feel superior. Sometimes they use the same tactic to make themselves out to be the victim so that they can have some type of ammunition to fire back in some type of conversation, if you will, wanting to be right all the time.

Dealing with Fools

Anyone ever done that? Tell themselves that they're being attacked so that they can feel justified retaliating towards another person, people group, or opinion? We never do that. Oh, you fool. You're not stupid, but you sure are acting that way, right?

And so Proverbs gives us some guidance on how to handle someone like that. And it's found in [Proverbs 26](#), verse 5. Here we go. Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him. I like answering a fool. Makes me feel superior and right, right? I can stomp him. Black and white answer. Very easy scripture. Don't respond to a fool that's trying to manipulate you or anyone else, or you will find yourself mirroring them. How many people have done that? Okay, let's take it home.

How about that post on Facebook where someone said that thing, which was foolish, and you respond feeling attacked, using that passion of a wounded victim to attempt to obliterate their view and opinion and show that you're right and they're wrong, and at the end of it, because of course it wasn't just one comment you posted. No, after four and a half hours and 167 responses later, you find yourself realizing that you look just as much like an emotional, unstable, immature, whiny child as they do.

Don't Get on Their Level

Well, the Bible tells you not to respond. Don't answer them. Don't get on their level. If you step under the lamppost with them, you will be painted with the same light they are, right? Is that good wisdom? That's some good wisdom. We don't always like it. Because we love swinging that hammer or swinging that sword. That's good wisdom. All right, let's keep going. It's a good piece of advice. Let's keep reading.

Let's go to the very next verse. Verse 6. [Proverbs 26](#), verse 6. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes. Okay, well, the very next verse says you absolutely need to answer that person. You absolutely need to be that keyboard warrior and destroy that troll because if you don't, they will keep going and going and going and they may infect other people with their ideas. They may be polluting the world with their foolish nonsense. You can't stand by. You're not supposed to stand by. Get on there and answer them. Show them who's right. Show them they're wrong. Show them they're being a fool.

Marcus Aurelius and Justice

It's a second century stoic philosopher and emperor, Marcus Aurelius. And he's the one who coined the quote or the phrase that says, you can commit injustice by doing nothing. If you just stand by and allow people to overtake the world like this, you have committed injustice. So yeah, you need to answer. You need to go after them. You need to take them out or else they'll think that they are entitled to continue spreading this. Answer the fool.

Why Two Opposite Verses?

Why does the Bible tell us to do two different things that are completely opposite right next to each other, one verse apart? Many objectors to our faith, many people who object to our scriptures being divinely inspired and valid use this verse to say, oh, look, there's a contradiction in the Bible. No, it's not a contradiction. What a foolish thing to say.

No, the author here is attempting to get you to stop and think. Stop and think. Because a checklist isn't going to work in every situation in that world. Meditate on these things when you walk out there and cultivate the kind of wisdom it takes to properly handle each response. Sometimes you use verse five. Other times you use verse six. Now learn and wisely discern when you should and when you should not. That's a powerful example in our scriptures.

The Invitation to Grow

And if I can be honest, we're not comfortable with examples like that because that requires work. That requires growing and understanding how we're actually supposed to navigate this world reflecting the kingdom ethics. The point here is for you as the reader to carry both of these responses with you and cultivate that divine wisdom.

Someone said something stupid on social media. Is it worth whatever cost it will be for you to jump into the arena with all of your associates and family watching you and with all of their associates and family watching them, or is it wise to bring no more attention to what they're saying? Would it be better if you didn't put a spotlight on them and let them drown in their own delusional reality? Or maybe you are the fool in the scenario that is about to say something so foolish. Think about it before you passionately justify creating a hill you'll die on that in five years you won't even think about anymore.

you will still be reaping the consequences in your relationships and your reputation. And of course, this isn't just social media. I feel like that's something that everyone can relate to in person. All the same, anyone struggle with that entire scenario? Okay.

Community Study of Scripture

The usage of unclear mandates and advisements are common in the Bible. It was written to be a community library that was meditated upon. The Bible was written to be read out loud. Long bits of the Bible read out loud to communities. Why? So that they as a community could join together in the discussion and meditation of it. That's how wisdom is cultivated. That's the history in Judaism and Christianity. You have so many different sects in Judaism, so many denominations in Christianity. Because they've come together as a community and they've attempted to discern the words and take action and implement them, all drawing different bits of wisdom and different traditions from it of how they interpret the scriptures. In Judaism, you have different halakha, different interpretations of the Torah and the commandments and how to keep them that changes from which community you go to. And the communities don't look at other communities and be like, no, you're absolutely wrong. No, this is our community. This is our tradition. This is the wisdom that we gain from the scriptures. And this is what we're doing as a community. That's why you can go to different Jewish communities and keeping Shabbat is slightly different. Because in the command to keep Shabbat, the Sabbath in the Bible, there's not a whole lot of details to keep all the specifics of it. If we can be honest, maybe I'm not allowed to say that. There's not a whole lot there. How do we do it? Let's talk about it as a community. What is the intention here? I love it.

The Torah is not detailed on specifically how to keep every aspect of the Shabbat and many other commandments. So we come to this incredible, radical, controversial rabbi from Nazareth named Yeshua. And he decides when he gives a command, he's not going to be vague. When Yeshua gives a command, he gives it straightforward and it's black and white. And it's us who want to make it vague. Love thy neighbor. That's not clear enough. What does it mean to love our neighbor? I mean, there has to be some boundaries there. It has to be said. What does it mean to love our neighbor? Oh, you die for them. You're willing more than to lay down your life for your neighbor. Like that much? I mean, can we, what if I don't think they deserve it? Oh, I know the internal narrative that we all play when we come to this verse.

Love Thy Enemy

All right, fine. Love your enemy. How much do I love my enemy? What's Yeshua say in fewer words? Follow me and find out how much I love my enemy. And on the way to Jerusalem, that's when he really, especially in Luke, started to tell these parables, kind of getting the message out, getting people thinking on what is being inaugurated right here and what is going to be inaugurated through his death and resurrection through the parables. And he's going to Jerusalem to display his love for his enemy. And that's you, by the way, BT dubs, the slave and minion of sin and death. He loves you enough to die for you, freeing you from the chains that held you. That's why we pray for our enemies. That's why we give them blessings, or at least we're commanded to. That's why we reciprocate not the lack of love that they show us, but we reciprocate the love of Yeshua that he's shown us. That's the example. But on his way to Jerusalem, Yeshua begins to speak about the kingdom, everyone he comes to, his kingdom. And instead of using very direct language, he starts to speak in parables. And according to Matthew, Jesus responds to the question of his disciples. They ask him, they're like, listen, Yeshua, why do you keep talking in parables? I mean, what do you mean? Why do you? And in [Matthew 13](#), he says, "You know what? To you, it's been given the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them, it has not been given secrets." Is that a parable? What? Essentially, Yeshua seems to be looking for who is going to meditate on it enough to get the punchline. Who's going to get the punchline? When you tell a joke, parables are not jokes, but they're similar in this aspect. The punchline comes at the end, right? Same with parables. Some people get the punchline, some people don't.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

And so let's jump into the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Turn with me to Luke chapter 16, verses 19 through 31. And we're going to read the entire set of scriptures, if you will, 19 through 31. And then we're going to go back through and review and try to see if we can find some wisdom or maybe a message that we don't want to hear in it.

Starting in verse 19, there was a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. But a poor man named Lazarus covered with sores said, He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table. But instead, the dogs would come and lick his sores. One day, the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus by his side. Father Abraham, he called out, have mercy on me. And hey, can you send Lazarus to come dip Abraham? The tip of his finger of water, cool my tongue for me, because I'm in agony over here. This is awful in the flame. "Son," Abraham said, "remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things? But now he is comforted here while you are in agony. Besides all this, a great chasm has now been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot, neither can those from there cross over to us." "Father," he said, "then I ask you, can you send him, Lazarus, to my father's house? Because I have five brothers to warn them so that they won't come to this place of torment." But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets. Perhaps they should listen." "No, no, Father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they'll repent." But he told them, "If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead."

How we doing? Yeah. Rich man bad, poor man good, right? Let's kind of sum it up. Some have interpreted this parable as being about rich people being bad. And sure, poor people are rewarded. And that kind of riffs off the Sermon on the Mount just a little bit. I think there's a bigger message here, of course. Others base their entire opinion on the afterlife based on this one parable, which is actually a really interesting discussion for another time. So let's dive in and see what we can explore here. Because remember, the parables are supposed to be hard. If you're reading the parables of Yeshua and you get to the end of them and you're like, man, that was so good. That was like some Joel Osteen. That was really motivating and just made me feel this was fantastic. Just good. You have read it wrong. You have read it wrong. They were meant to speak the truths about the kingdom of God. And those truths are not typically comfortable.

Reading the Details Carefully

So [Luke 16](#), verse 19. There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, not lemons, linen, feasting lavishly every day. The parable begins with there was a person, or in the Greek it's just some person, some person. There was a some person that was rich. Doesn't even name them. Some person was wealthy and he dressed in purple and linen, feasting daily, splendidly. Again, when a character is not named, there is no way to identify a singular person. Duh, Matt. What I mean is in the first century, it's likely when this was heard, a person followed by this lifestyle, the audience would have understood that this is not just one-off person. This is a broadly painted brush of everyone who would engage in this type of hedonistic lifestyle. And so an audience just like you and I would probably distance ourselves from having any association with them. In other words, if this is a parable about me, that's definitely not me because I don't dress in purple. Can't be me. I don't do that. Most of us don't have that type of extraordinary wealth, and we certainly don't display it in such a manner described here.

See, his purple clothing and his fine linen, what's neat about these words, specifically these words put in this parable, is these are the same materials used in the construction of the tabernacle in Exodus, in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament. Not only that, these are the same materials used to create the clothing for the priests to wear and the high priest's. What's different? The priests wear this as they manage the temple and they minister to the people and they serve the people and they serve God. But this man, this man isn't working in the temple, is he? He's feasting at his table. He's not serving God, nor is he serving his neighbor. The image portrayed here is the culmination of the idea of self-serving idolatry.

The Greek word here for he dressed has the tense that reinforces that this was not a special occasion. Regular use, daily. This was his daily routine. This is who he was every day. Not only are his clothes something that would be over the top for daily dining, he's feasting, feasting. In the Hebrew Bible, this Greek word is equivalent to the word simcha. Like semkator, celebration, rejoicing. It's the same word that's used in [Deuteronomy 16](#) when it's used to describe the festival of Shavuot.

It says, Rejoice before the Lord your God as you come to this feast. It's appropriate to wear the clothing. It's appropriate to eat that food and do it at the table with your sons and daughters and servants and maidservants and Levites, the poor, the widows, the orphans. Everybody is welcome to sit down at the table of the Lord and rejoice. But the rich man is not celebrating a sacred feast unto the Lord. And he's certainly not, as far as we know, celebrating with strangers and widows and orphans. Even this portrayal would have been negative in Roman culture. In Roman culture, the wealthy were expected to give back to the poor. They were expected to be patrons in the patron-client relationship. The wealthy would have ministries and programs

where they would hand out lunches every single day to the poor. And of course, this was to entice political favor and power. They wanted to be known publicly, known for what they do, which Yeshua condemns. But all the same, even the Romans would look at this scenario and say, that's not very honorable at all. It's not how it's done. Instantly, we're left with a portrayal of someone living in their own world that orbits around only them.

A Poor Man at the Gate

So who's introduced next? Verse 20. But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was lying at his gate. He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. When we talk about the dogs coming to lick his sores—oh, that's really nice of them. That's how they clean sores. And yes, according to tradition, dogs come and they can clean sores. My father cut his finger open on the saw out in the garage. Dad, what are you doing? Why are you letting Katie, our little dog, lick your thing? He cleans it. I don't think he got an infection, but I sure did expect it. The dogs are licking the sores, but the context here is these aren't nice little groomed poodles or nice little breed dogs. These are scavengers of the city feeding off the man. This is a type of irony. The dogs are providing care he cannot provide himself. And so they come and they feed off his sores.

So now some of your translations, specifically the NIV, and I'm going to hate the NIV just a little bit here because I love the NIV. It's a highly respected translation, and I love how they constantly are auditing their translation based on new data that comes out and new manuscripts that are found. But the NIV starts this sentence out with, "...at the gate a poor man was." In the Greek, it's not so. It starts out a poor man. And Luke intentionally does that. He intentionally starts it out with a poor man because he wants to set the foundation of the parable. He's contrasting the very prior verse. A rich man. And the next verse is a poor man. And so it's just a nerdy thing—he's trying to contrast those two characters. There's something about the contrast between these two characters that reveals how the kingdom is exposed.

Why Lazarus Has No Story

This man is in such a bad state, Lazarus, that all he longs for is a scrap from the table. He's in great pain. He's suffering open sores that he himself cannot bandage. Now, notice there's no background of Lazarus here. And here's what's neat—nerd card—in John's gospel, we also hear about a man named Lazarus, right? And what happened with that Lazarus? He rose from the dead. So there are some scholars that try to connect those two gospel accounts as if they're

riffing off each other or trying to make a connection. I thought it was interesting. I don't think so, but I thought it's neat, right?

But there's no background of Lazarus here. There are no details on why Lazarus is the way he is, right? There's nothing for us to grab hold onto that would keep our sympathy from flowing out. In America, we are taught to examine people through the lens of our economics. What I mean by that, and this just comes natural to us as Western Americans, why is he lying there on the ground on the sidewalk naked and with all those sores on him? Why? Why can't he raise himself up? Why can't he get up and get a job? I mean, seriously, if we saw this in the States, we would probably naturally create a story about that person. Oh, he must be a drunk person, which is why he's lying out on the sidewalk. He's lazy, trying to live off the government. That's why he's there. He's obviously a drug addict. How easily we paint a story about other people so we don't have to give sympathy. How easily? No one else. No one else does that or has ever done that in their life—looked at another person and created a narrative about why they think they are the way they are.

Yeshua knows this about us. Here's the situation, and I'm not giving you anything to grab onto. Lazarus. All he wants is a scrap of food. So smart. No other descriptions are found in the story. You're supposed to be sympathetic towards Lazarus. The fact that Yeshua tells a parable naming a character is very unique here in the New Testament. It creates empathy—an extra level of empathy for the character.

Only Two Names in All the Parables

See, the parables are meant to be a bit generic in their telling because, of course, the specific details don't really matter compared to the bigger point. But there are only two characters in all of the parables throughout the four gospel accounts in all of Yeshua's parables that are ever named. Two characters in all four gospel accounts. One is Lazarus and one is the father, Abraham. Both are found in this parable here in Luke. That's significant.

Verse 22. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side or Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried in Hades or Sheol. The imagery here is striking. Lazarus is with Abraham. Some translations use the phrase "Lazarus was with Abraham's bosom," of course. And the connotation here is both intimacy and feasting. The word used here connotes parental love, security. Lazarus is finally getting the security and the love that he lacked his whole life, or at least at the end of his life, by none other than Abraham himself. Abraham, the father, father Abraham, right? Father Abraham. But the imagery here is

him leaning on Abraham's bosom as well. And it's the same kind of imagery that takes place in John when John writes about himself or the disciple that Yeshua loved reclining on the bosom of Yeshua at the feast of the Last Supper. So you can see that crossover imagery. It's just really neat. It helps drive the image there. Okay.

From Suffering to Abraham's Bosom

We have verses like [Matthew 8:11](#), where Yeshua speaks about many will come from the east and the west and they will eat with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. All of that describes this. The rich man finds himself humbled very quickly. He's in agony as he sits in the underworld, Hades, along with Lazarus and Abraham. He's in torment. But he looks up, sees Abraham. Father, he yells out. Father Abraham, hey, I'm your son. I'm your son, Father Abraham. He cries out for help. Did you notice what he requested? Abraham, hey, send Lazarus. Send Lazarus out here, over here, and have him dip his finger in the water to cool my tongue.

Such a dramatic scene. The rich man who had all this stuff, he had resources, he had access to material goods, but he did nothing to help Lazarus sitting at the gate. Lazarus, who only yearned for a scrap of food to fall from the table. Not even that would be given to the rich man here. Not even that. All he wants is a drop of water.

The Beggar's Voice Still Unheard

The rich man seemed to have disregarded Lazarus as someone beneath him. You notice that? First off, there are two Greek words. One is for beg, and one is for asking—a request, a formal request. The word for beg actually shows up in the first parable in this chapter. It does not show up here in this parable. He does not beg, at least in the Greek. He doesn't beg Abraham to send Lazarus. He makes a request: send him over here. He's possibly still trying to treat Lazarus as someone who is beneath him, even in Hades, even in torment. He still has a sense of entitlement; he won't even talk to Lazarus because he's beneath him. Abraham, send him over here. Abraham, can you send me? Abraham, can I get some? Abraham, hey, send him. I know him. I know Lazarus. Send him over here to drop a drop of water on my tongue.

Let that sink in. Father Abraham, it stinks over here. I'm in torment. All I want is a drop of water. Hey, there's Lazarus. The rich man, despite being in torment, still has not possibly gotten it yet. Not only has he not humbled himself despite his current circumstances, he still feels like he has the status that he died with.

Abraham's True Children

Luke has already planted the seed early on in the gospel account for this parable, by the way, in [Luke 3:8](#). Remember when the Pharisees came to John and they were claiming they had entitlement because their father was Abraham? Remember how John responds? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. How about that? And do not begin to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father, for I tell you out of stones God can raise up children of Abraham. Those who legitimately refer to Abraham as my father are those who live and reflect their repentance and their orientation towards God's redemptive plan.

This is what makes the rich man's request so ironic as well as presumptuous. In Jewish tradition, especially in the first century, what is the number one characteristic that Abraham is known to have? So it's based on the account when the three angels, the three messengers came to Abraham, right?

Abraham's Hospitality to Strangers

And Abraham saw them coming from afar off, and they were strangers. He didn't know who they were. So how did he respond? Hospitality—not only hospitality, but hospitality towards strangers. And that's still a traditional number-one characteristic in Judaism today. They tell stories about how Abraham had a tent with no walls because he was always on the lookout, 360 degrees, for strangers coming in. It's a little silly, but I really appreciate it at the same time, right?

And so he goes and kicks in the door. He goes and gets the cow. "Cook the meat, Sarah." "Sarah, I need you to make three measures of bread." My wife has been experimenting with bread making for a while. I know Sarah and Jeremy are also experimenting with bread making. Three measures. We think, oh, it's three cups of flour. Yeah, that's a couple of loaves of bread, little biscuits. That'd be good. I can't remember if it was 60 pounds of flour or three bags of 60 pounds of flour, but three measures of flour would produce more bread than everyone in this building could eat. Three people are coming. Sarah, make 3,000 loaves of bread. Overly generous hospitality towards these three individuals that are coming. I love that.

The Rich Man's False Claim

And here we have a man claiming Abraham as his father, asking him to send Lazarus to run this errand, to fetch a drop of water for himself—when he himself has never displayed the qualities

of his supposed father. That's the irony here. "Abraham, I need something. Get me something." When he himself has not given any ounce of hospitality. Father Abraham, are you though?

The Chasm Is Fixed

Verse 25: Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted there and you're in agony. And besides all this, between us and you is the great chasm that has now been set in place."

So notice the language. It's a chasm that is now fixed, now set in place—as if there was a time when it wasn't, but now it has been solidified. It has been set in place so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can you cross over here.

He answered. And if you have the NIV or maybe the CSB, it says, "Then I beg you"—the Greek word means "request"—"Father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let them warn him. Send him up there and warn them so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them."

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

He said, "If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced if someone rises from the dead."

Abraham Refuses

I love that. So once again, he's requesting that Abraham send Lazarus. Lazarus is just sitting there hugging on Abraham, right? Never speaking a word. And the rich man never speaks directly to Lazarus. "Abraham, send him up there." It makes me wonder if he was wise—why didn't he just ask to go? "Can you just send me up there real quick?"

Abraham refuses the request for help from the rich man. Why? Because he chose to be a victim of his own choices in life.

And it's interesting because here Abraham says he received the good things. He received his wealth, his stuff. Does everybody have stuff? And Lazarus received the bad things. And what I love about this comparison is Lazarus couldn't give any of the good things to the rich man. He's incapable of doing that. But the rich man could have changed Lazarus' status. He had that

ability. The rich man could have recognized that he had the means to change another person's status in life, but he did not.

Lazarus as the Best Witness

And look at how Abraham distinctly defines the chasm. "The chasm is now between us and you. I request of you, Father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. At least warn them." I mean, I had no idea. Warn them.

Once again, Lazarus is requested to be sent away to do something for the rich man. Even further damning is the possibility that the rich man's entire family must have also known Lazarus. They must have known him if he was going to go up and make a difference. He should be the best messenger, right? "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced if someone rises from the dead."

The Core of the Matter

What is this parable trying to convey? That the rich don't get into the banquet and they all go to hell? No. The rich man being rich wasn't the issue at all. The issue was Lazarus being poor. The issue was Lazarus being in need. The issue was Lazarus not being able to help himself. The issue was Lazarus lying at his gate with open sores, at the mercy of scavenger dogs. That's the issue. That's the issue.

The issue is there was another person who needed help in whatever way, shape, or form they needed it. There was another person who needed to be shown love in whatever way, shape, or form it needs to be shown. And the person that could have done it did not. The rich man did not see his stuff and abilities as stuff given to him to show forth the glory of God.

Abraham refused to give help in this story. He said the rich man was already told what to do in the Torah and the prophets: the example of Abraham showing hospitality to strangers, the commandment to love thy neighbor as yourself, the commandment to take care of the poor, the commandment to celebrate before the Lord, inviting the widow and the orphan and the stranger—everyone to your table, the commandment to think of the needs of others and have mercy on them. The commandment to do whatever you need to do to sacrifice your own pride and entitled attitude of rebellion.

Justice at the Gate

The parable says Lazarus was lying where? At the gate or at his gate, depending on how you read it. Amos chapter 5, verses 12 and 15. Remember, Amos was from the southern kingdom, so he was kind of like an immigrant from the south going up through the border to the north into Judah. And he was accusing Judah of keeping their wealth and using their status as God's people and blessing them.

And here's what he says in Amos chapter 5, verses 12 and 15: "Hate evil, love good, and establish due justice at the gate." It was at the gate that justice was served, that justice was implemented, that justice was experienced. And we all want to be Wyatt Earp when it comes to justice in the world, right? Like we talk about justice. "Yeah, I'm going to serve justice."

Biblical justice looks like the rich man inviting Lazarus into his house and bandaging his wounds and understanding that Lazarus cannot do for himself what needs to be done. That's biblical justice. Throughout the narrative of the Hebrew Bible, it's when his people show others his kingdom.

God Has Given Us Stuff

Guys, God has given us stuff, hasn't he? Amen. I like my stuff. Love my stuff. Stuff is good. Stuff is nice. I believe one of the main messages here in this parable is that there is an expectation for those who have been blessed with stuff to do something with it. Do something with it. And it's not just physical stuff. Maybe it's the ability to do something sacrificial for someone else.

Sacrifice means it takes something from you for their benefit. Don't put it in storage, don't hold it for yourself, don't hoard it, and don't sit around feasting daily. The word for feast that's used in this parable is the same word that's used in the parable of the prodigal son returning home to his father. The father goes out and kills the fatted calf and holds a feast. How many of us feast off the fatted calf every single day while the opportunities lay right outside of us to actually participate in what the Torah commands?

Action, Not Just Money

Again, this may not be about money. It could just be about action. Money is actually rather easy nowadays. Write a check and you can check it off your list. It's not a whole lot of sacrifice. Doing, effort, making the choice to sacrifice something. Maybe it's your pride. Maybe it's your time. Maybe it's your energy. Love thy neighbor.

This parable was told in response to the Pharisees in the story—the same Pharisees that complained against Yeshua's hospitality with social outcasts, and they even ridiculed his teaching about the appropriate use of money on behalf of the poor. The very Pharisees to whom Yeshua now speaks this parable.

Disregarding God's Will

And in neglecting the poor, in neglecting to do something with the stuff that they've been given, they have disregarded the will of God that is so clearly laid out in the scriptures they have. Do not overlook the person at the gate. If you haven't noticed, I'll give you one clue. It's likely the person you don't like or you don't wanna like, or you don't wanna love, or you don't feel deserves your attention, or you don't feel deserves your mercy, or you don't feel deserves your grace, or you don't feel deserves your pride, or you don't feel deserves your money. Because that's how the rich man viewed Lazarus. "He's not worthy of even a scrap from me."

I don't think this parable is as much about what you have as what you do. [Deuteronomy 15, 7](#) and [Isaiah 58, 7](#) are amazing illustrations of what Abraham was referring to in the parable. [Deuteronomy 15, 7](#) says, "Does everybody know what tight-fisted means? Yeah, we don't want to talk about this, do we? It means your fist can't—it's too tight. You can't give of anything."

[Isaiah 58, 7](#).

Guys, I believe the point of the parable is that despite what paradise is, what lies beyond death in the afterlife... We are called to uphold our part as covenant members by behaving like real human beings that God actually breathed life into.

That's what we're called to do. We care for the poor. We recognize it when our brothers and sisters are in need. And we don't gripe when we're called to be our brothers and sisters' keepers. And if we expend everything on ourselves only, there's nothing left for our heavenly treasure. Again, don't make the mistake of thinking this stops with just money. What will you do with the things that God has given to you? Your money, again, that's the easy one. How about your time, your energy, allowing yourself to recognize those needs that are immediately around you and being the true Torah keeper that the Pharisees claimed they were, the true covenant member, the true ambassador of Christ to the world. The parable ends with such a kick in the gut to the reader. And you likely missed it. I did for a very long time. What the rich man asked Lazarus to do was to warn his brothers of the threat of this hell he was in. The parable also does this for the readers. Will the five brothers of the rich man who may hear Lazarus? The Torah's insistence that they are to love their neighbor and love the stranger and love the immigrant and

love the liberal and love the conservative and love the sinner and love that person who due to whatever disability or illness they have, will you listen to the voice and begin viewing the world and everyone in it like Yeshua did as opportunities for the love of God to be felt everywhere? Will the five brothers listen to the words of Moses and the prophets? We don't know. The story ends. Will you? Will we?

Listen to the Voice

Worship team, you guys can come up as we conclude in worship. Yeah, sometimes the world around us sells us a rotten bag of goods. Sometimes we are trained to believe that eating the fatted calf every single day is the goal. That's what we're taught here, by the way. That's the American dream, right? That's it. The world will tell you that because someone believes something different than you and has a different opinion, that's when you just need to leave them at the gate sometimes. That's what the rich man did. The world tells us who our neighbor is and who isn't. And it changes so frequently depending on which channel you watch, right?

The world wants to condition us to be a part of its system. [Philippians 3](#) says, you are a citizen of the kingdom in heaven, heavenly kingdom. You're a citizen of another kingdom that's not like this place. Do not fall for the traps. Do not fall for the bait. Do not fall for the conditioning that the world tells us.

A Citizen of Another Kingdom

The man could not understand why his father, Abraham, would not fulfill his request. John tells them, you think you're entitled to the status of Abraham and the blessings that come with it? You know, Paul writes in [Galatians 3.29](#). Love this verse. He says, if you are in Christ, you are Abraham's seed, right? It's a great verse. We have become the children of Abraham. We have become the people of the promise through Yeshua, the ultimate seed that came from Abraham.

But the harsh part of that verse—[Galatians 3.29](#)—if you're in Christ, you're Abraham's seed. If you're an ambassador of the kingdom, if you show your absolute allegiance to that message and kingdom, you're Abraham's seed.

Abraham's Seed Through Yeshua

Please stand. Guys, I don't know where you're at today. The parables of Yeshua are hard. Because they require us to meditate. They require us to sit on them. They require us to look inward. They're not just a black and white checklist. They're not easy. They cause a love-hate

relationship with them. So I don't know where you're at today, but we're called to rest with Abraham and to feast at the table, just as the parable demonstrates.

Will You Dare to Give?

Will we take the warning that Yeshua gives here? Will we take and meditate on the example of the rich man and the words of Yeshua. What will it take for you to give of yourself to help someone else, even if it is just seemingly insignificant? Would you dare give? Would you dare take the example that Yeshua gives? Guys, if you need prayer today, for any reason, we have prayer warriors on either side of the room. I invite you to take advantage of this. They will stand with you and approach the throne of our Heavenly Father beside you, lifting you up.

Let Us Pray

Alvina Malcano, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this time together. We thank you for once again allowing us to dive into the words of your Son, Yeshua. And Father, I ask that the Holy Spirit that you have said is already residing in us would allow us to meditate on this. Show us the areas in our lives where each and every one of us is being a rich man, the rich man, that we would not follow that example any longer, that we would take the opportunities that you have given to us to show the world what your love feels like, to love our neighbor as ourselves. We thank you for this day in your spirit of peace and love within us. In the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen.

Support This Ministry

If this message impacted you or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we invite you to take part in making sure the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach others. To make sure this happens, you can donate through our online giving portal at foundedinatruth.com/give or by texting any amount to 704-275-0752. Don't forget to like and subscribe for new content every single week. And we thank you for your continued support. And we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom.

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at foundedinatruth.com

Email: info@foundedinatruth.com

Facebook: facebook.com/foundedintruth

Website: <https://www.foundedintruth.com>

Google: <https://g.co/kgs/az3iPeM>

Watch or listen: foundedintruth.com/bible-teachings/no-help-from-abraham-parable-of-the-rich-man/

This automated transcript has been lightly edited for readability; scripture quotations appear as spoken. For the authoritative teaching, watch the video. • Founded in Truth Fellowship, Rock Hill SC • Saturdays 11:00 AM • Your giving keeps every teaching free: foundedintruth.com/give