



The Rich Man and Lazarus Frans Francken The Younger (1581-1642)

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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 ²¹ 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. ²⁶ 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, ²⁸ 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.’”

Luke 16:19-31 (A lectionary reading for tomorrow)

Silence, Prayer, And Communion Ending 9.30 a.m.

Silence

A time for thought...reflection...prayer

Prayer – meditation on the prayer of Richard of Chichester

Together we say:

*Thanks be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ
For all the benefits Thou hast given me,
For all the pains and insults Thou hast borne for me.*

*O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother,
May I know Thee more clearly,
Love Thee more dearly,
Follow Thee more nearly.*

Thanks be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ for all the benefits Thou hast given me, ...

Give thanks

for an ordered society amid a world of chaos
for our homes and families and friends
for one another here in this church this morning
for any special blessing we have received recently

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

...for all the pains and insults Thou hast borne for me.

Above all give thanks that God loves us so much He sent his Son to die for you and for me

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother, may I know Thee more clearly, ...

We pray that we may know you

in quiet moments of private prayer or public worship
through the actions and kindness of others
in great things – in the beauty and wonder of your created world, and
in little things – in the everyday routine of our lives

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

...love Thee more dearly, ...

We pray that nothing will separate us from your love

and that we may return that love to you through the way we live our lives
and in the way we share that love with others

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

...follow Thee more nearly.

Heavenly Father we pray that whatever holds us back from following you may melt away, whether it is

our self-reliance and self-centredness
our love of worldly things
our faint-heartedness and inability to stick at things
our feeling of unworthiness

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

The Diocesan prayer for this week, said together:

**Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

And

Please stay for the communion even if not taking the bread and wine. You can come to the rail for a blessing (a brief prayer) – simply carry this sheet.

Communion

A moment to reflect on the times when we have not been loyal to God and His ways and have not cared for others.

In God's holy presence we call to mind our need for forgiveness.

Silence

We say together:

**Father, our sin has brought you sorrow,
has harmed those who share our life,
has been hurtful to ourselves.
We dare not say we have only lightly sinned;
Yet Christ has taken to himself the burden of it all.**

In Jesus' name may we be freed from the penalty and power of sin. **Amen.**

God of love and wonder, we sing your praises: with the great company of people, past and present, here and everywhere. We adore you, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

You are indeed holy, eternal God and Father;
in love greater than we can imagine you gave your only Son,

that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life.
Not as we would, but as we are able, we praise and thank you
for the reality of his birth, the glory of his humanity, the generosity of his life:
for his sacrifice on the cross, the wonder of his resurrection,
and the assurance that he lives for ever to save us;
for the gift of the Holy Spirit, for our calling to be his people,
for the hope all can find in him.

We say together:

**Remembering his life and sacrifice
we now come to his table
as he has invited us to do.
Send to us now, we pray, the Holy Spirit
so that we may indeed be your people,
and that as we share the bread and wine
we may share in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Amen**

These are the gifts of God
for the people of God.

Please come to the rail now.

Ending

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:
**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

A closing prayer, said together:

**Fill us, good Lord, with your Spirit of love;
and as you have fed us with the one bread of heaven,
so make us one in heart and mind,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

The blessing

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is the source of all goodness and growth,
pour his blessing upon all things created,
and upon you his children,
that you may use his gifts to his glory and the welfare of all peoples;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

The next SPACE service will be on Wednesday July 3rd

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus

Frans Francken came from a family of painters active in Antwerp during the Golden Age of Flemish art. In his depiction of this parable he emphasises the invisible but very real barrier separating the two men. Lazarus, richly dressed, sits at a table laden with food. He commands everyone's attention. Those at table are all turned towards him, listening intently. The servant carrying yet another dish is presumably asking where it should be placed. The artist shows no wall separating this scene of luxury and plenty from the space outside, where, just yards away, Lazarus lies on the ground by the man's gate. Dogs lick his bandaged legs; a servant, wielding a cudgel, attempts to send the man away.

Above the table in the rich man's house we see a picture and within that a second picture is visible. Together the two indicate the differing fates that await these two men. In the world to come their fortunes will be reversed.

While that message will bring hope to those who are poor and oppressed, there is another dimension to this parable. A few verses earlier (v14) Luke writes:

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.

Luke includes the parable of the rich man and Lazarus as the third in a series on money. First we hear of the Prodigal Son, who wastes his father's money. Then comes the parable of the dishonest steward, who wastes his employer's money. Finally in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the man wastes his own money on selfish luxury. Or is it really his own money?

All three parables are really about grace and response. In this parable the rich man's problem is not so much his riches but his **response** to his good fortune. In Francken's painting we see the man as the centre of his own world, so not surprisingly his response to his earthly good fortune was self-centred. He regarded his possessions as his own, to dispose of as he pleased. He was happy to live a life of luxury while remaining indifferent to the responsibilities that come with great wealth. He had not grasped the concept of holding his goods in trust, to use them wisely in the service of God and his fellow men. Consequently he could remain unmoved by the plight of a beggar on the other side of his gate, even though he knew this man by name (as we see in v24). Riches and the power they brought him reinforced his feeling of self-reliance and dulled his sensitivity and empathy towards those less fortunate than himself. Did he never think of using his wealth and power to help others, like the unfortunate Lazarus at his gate?

Tragically, the rich man knew enough of the Law and the Prophets to call on Abraham as Father when in distress, but had ignored the basic commands to love God with all your heart and mind and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself.

This parable speaks to all men and women of faith who enjoy the comfort and security of the western world. Each of us who has heard and understood the good news of the gospel has a choice. We can sit tight and ignore the world outside, keeping the good things we have to ourselves. Or we can trust God and respond to whatever gifts we have received in grace – *not by our own merit* - and use them in service to others.

The choice is ours.