

Luke 16:16-31
February 23, 2020

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Years ago when I was training believers in Evangelism Explosion, we learned to ask two diagnostic questions to determine where people were spiritually. The first question was, “Have you come to the place in your spiritual life that you know **for sure** that when you die, you’ll go to heaven?” The majority of people we talked to said, “yes.” So we had a follow up diagnostic question: “Hypothetically, suppose you died today and God stood before you and asked, ‘Why should I let you into heaven?’ ... What do you think you’d say?”

Q: If you had to guess, what do you think our team heard as the most common answer? [Let people engage]

Transition: The typical answer, as you have correctly guessed, was, “I’m a good person. I’m a spiritual person who believes in God and in Jesus. And that’s where it would end. We are going to read a parable that Jesus tells regarding a rich man who was shocked to find himself in hell. Equally shocking to the Pharisees who were listening to the story was the fact that Lazarus, the beggar, was in heaven! There are many people who need to understand the Gospel message, while believing they are spiritually okay and headed to heaven. Imagine the rich man begging us, “Please go to my father’s house, for I have family members who need to be warned. I don’t want them to come to this place of torment.” How are we doing in getting the Gospel message out there? Let’s read.

BOOK:

Additional Teachings

¹⁶ “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. ¹⁷ It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

¹⁸ “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

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 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 hell, 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 fixed, 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 father’s house, ²⁸for 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.’”

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Kingdom living often means earthly poverty and suffering. It means being ignored by those who are enjoying the world’s blessings and comforts. This enjoyment is temporary. Death soon comes and cuts it off. Then you must face eternity. What will you face?

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 240-243)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Pharisees needed to stop “drifting” with the crowd and start “pressing into the kingdom” as many others were doing. The Pharisees had rejected the ministry of John the Baptist and permitted him to be killed, even though they knew he was God’s prophet. They were also rejecting the ministry of Jesus Christ and would ultimately ask Pilate to have Him crucified. When your life is controlled by the love of money, you open the door to every kind of sin.

The Law and the Prophets were “until John,” for John introduced the Savior to the nation and announced the arrival of the kingdom. But that did not mean that the Law was discredited or destroyed, for in Jesus Christ, the Law has been fulfilled (Matt. 5:17–20). The Pharisees prided themselves in their faithful obedience to the Law of Moses, but they did not receive the Savior of whom Moses wrote!

Why did Jesus talk about divorce and remarriage when His basic discussion was about covetousness? The scribes and Pharisees were divided on this question, and perhaps they wanted to provoke Jesus into an argument, but He thwarted their plans. (In most marriages and divorces, money is involved, so the topic was not completely foreign to the discussion.) Some of the Jews were very lax in their views of divorce and remarriage, while others were very strict. Jesus had spoken about this subject before, so it was not a new teaching (Matt. 5:31–32).

Having silenced the sneering Pharisees, Jesus then gave them a vivid description of what would happen to them if they continued in their covetousness and unbelief. The account focuses on an anonymous rich man and a beggar named Lazarus (“God is my help”), and it warns us against covetousness by presenting several contrasts.

A contrast in life (vv. 19–21). This man was indeed rich if he could afford daily to wear expensive clothes and host splendid feasts. The one word that best describes his lifestyle is “flamboyant.” He was definitely among “the rich and famous,” and other people admired and envied him.

Why is one man wealthy and another man poor? Had the Jewish people obeyed God’s commandments concerning the Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee, there would have been little or no poverty in the land, for the wealth and real estate could not have fallen into the hands of a few wealthy people (see Lev. 25, and note Ex. 23:11; Deut. 14:28–29). The Old Testament prophets denounced the rich for amassing great estates and exploiting the widows and the poor (Isa. 3:15; 10:2; Amos 2:6; 4:1; 5:11–12; 8:4–6; Hab. 2:9–13). In Jesus’ day, Palestine was under the rule of Rome, and life was very difficult for the common people.

Lazarus was sick and possibly crippled, because he was “laid” at the rich man’s gate daily (see Acts 3:1–2). The only attention he got was from the dogs! The rich man could easily have assisted Lazarus, but he ignored him and went on enjoying his recognition and his riches. Life was comfortable for him and he felt secure.

The rich man obviously had no concept of stewardship, or he would have used part of his wealth to help Lazarus. It is a mystery why he even allowed the beggar to camp at his front door. Perhaps he thought that providing a place for the man was ministry enough, and it may be that some of his wealthy guests occasionally gave Lazarus alms. Did any of them ever recall what the Old Testament had to say about the care of the poor, such as Proverbs 14:21; 19:17; 21:13; or 28:27?

A contrast in death (v. 22). “The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all” (Prov. 22:2). As John Donne said, death is the “great leveler.” The rich man died in spite of his wealth (Ps. 49:6–9) and “was buried,” no doubt with an expensive funeral. But when Lazarus died, he was carried to Abraham’s bosom. What a difference! Perhaps the beggar’s body did not even have a decent burial, though the Jews were usually compassionate in such cases. Lazarus certainly did not have the traditional Jewish funeral, with its paid mourners, costly spices, and elaborate tomb. After Lazarus’ body was taken away, the neighbors probably said, “Well, we’re glad he’s not around anymore!”

Death takes place when the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26). But death is not the end; it is the beginning of a whole new existence in another world. For the Christian, death means to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1–8; Phil. 1:21). For the unbeliever, death means to be away from God’s presence and in torment.

A contrast in eternity (vv. 23–31). The *King James Version* uses the word *hell* in Luke 16:23, but the Greek word is not “hell” but “hades.” It is the temporary realm of the dead as they await the judgment. The permanent place of punishment for the lost is “hell,” the lake of fire. One day, death will give up the bodies and hades will give up the souls (Rev. 20:13, where “hell” should be “hades”), and the lost will stand before Christ in judgment (Rev. 20:10–15).

From our Lord’s description, we learn that hades had two sections: a paradise portion called “Abraham’s bosom,” and a punishment portion. It is believed by many theologians that our Lord emptied the paradise part of hades when He arose from the dead and returned to the Father (John 20:17; Eph. 4:8–10). We know that today “paradise” is in heaven, where Jesus reigns in glory (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:1–4). There is no indication in Scripture that souls in heaven can communicate with people in hades or with people on earth.

This narrative refutes so-called “soul sleep,” for both the rich man and Lazarus were conscious, one enjoying comfort and the other suffering torment. It is a solemn thing to ponder one’s eternal destiny and realize the reality of divine punishment.

C.S. Lewis was told about a gravestone inscription that read: “Here lies an atheist—all dressed up and no place to go.” Lewis quietly replied, “I bet he wishes that were so!”

The interesting thing is that, in hades, the rich man began to pray! First, he prayed for himself, that Abraham would have mercy on him and allow Lazarus to bring him some comfort (Luke 16:23–26). Even a drop of cool water would be welcomed. What a change from his sumptuous feasts when slaves ran to do his bidding!

The word *torment* is used four times in this account, and it speaks of definite pain. This is the same word that is used for the doom feared by the evil spirits (Mark 5:7) and the judgments God will send on an unrepentant world (Rev. 9:5; 11:10; 20:10). If hell is the permanent prison of the damned, then hades is the temporary jail, and the suffering in both is very real.

People ask, “How can a loving God even permit such a place as hell to exist, let alone send people there?” But in asking that question, they reveal that they do not understand either the love of God or the wickedness of sin. God’s love is a *holy* love (“God is light,” 1 John 1:5), not a shallow sentiment, and sin is rebellion against a holy and loving God. God does not “send people to hell.” They send themselves there by refusing to heed His call and believe on His Son. The “unbelieving” are named second on the list of the people who go to hell, even before the murderers and the liars (Rev. 21:8; also see John 3:18–21, 36).

Abraham gave two reasons why Lazarus could not bring the comfort that was requested: the character of the rich man and the character of the eternal state. The rich man had lived for the “good things” of earth, and had experienced abundant temporal blessings. He had his reward

(Matt. 6:2, 5, 16). He had determined his own destiny by leaving God out of his life, and now neither his character nor his destiny could be changed. Lazarus could not leave his place of comfort and make even a brief visit to the place of torment.

Then the rich man prayed for his brothers (Luke 16:27–31). He did not say, “I’m glad my brothers will also come here. We’ll have a wonderful time together!” Occasionally you hear a lost person say, “Well, I don’t mind if I go to hell. I’ll have a lot of company!” *But there is no friendship or “company” in hell!* Hell is a place of torment and loneliness. It is not an eternal New Year’s Eve party at which sinners have a good time doing what they used to do on earth.

Luke 16:28 suggests that Lazarus had testified to the rich man and probably to his brothers, but none of them had taken his witness seriously. But now, Lazarus’ testimony is very important! The brothers knew that Lazarus had died, so if the beggar appeared to them, they would be frightened and would listen to his witness. *People in hades have a concern for the lost, but they cannot do anything about it.*

Abraham explained that only one thing could prevent the five men from eventually joining their brother: they needed to hear the Word of God and respond to it by faith. Moses and the Prophets tell sinners how to repent and be saved, and the Jews heard them read every Sabbath in the synagogue. Though miracles can attest to the authority of the preacher, they cannot produce either conviction or conversion in the hearts of the lost. Faith that is based solely on miracles is not saving faith (John 2:23–25). A man named Lazarus *did* come back from the dead, *and some of the people wanted to kill him!* (see John 11:43–57; 12:10) Those who claim that there can be no effective evangelism without “signs and wonders” need to ponder this passage and also John 10:41–42.

In the rich man’s lifetime, God had spoken to him in many ways. God had permitted him to have riches, yet he did not repent (Rom. 2:4–5). Lazarus had witnessed to the rich man, and so had the Old Testament Scriptures that were familiar to the Jews, but his heart remained unbelieving. The fact that Lazarus died first was a strong witness to the rich man, a reminder that one day he would also die, but even a death at his very doorstep did not melt the man’s heart.

In spite of the fact that he was in torment in hades, the rich man did not change; he was still self-centered. He prayed, but it was for *his* comfort and the safety of *his* family. He was not concerned about other lost sinners; his only concern was his five brothers. He argued with God instead of submitting to His will. This indicates that the punishment of lost sinners is not remedial; it does not improve them. Hades and hell are not hospitals for the sick; they are prisons for the condemned.

Dr. Luke does not tell us how the covetous Pharisees responded to this account. They certainly knew Moses and the Prophets, and this meant even greater responsibility—and *greater condemnation* (John 12:35–41).

We must remind ourselves that the rich man was not condemned because he was rich, nor was Lazarus saved because he was poor. Abraham was a very wealthy man, yet he was not in torment in hades. The rich man trusted in his riches and did not trust in the Lord.

“The safest road to hell,” wrote C.S. Lewis, “is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36)

Jesus asked that question.

What is your answer?

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 247)

Luke 16:16–18 is included with Jesus' teaching about money to the Pharisees because it illustrates what Jesus had just said about the Pharisees justifying themselves but really being judged by God. Jesus stated that since the time of **John** the Baptist, He had been announcing God's **kingdom**. People, including the Pharisees (cf. 14:15 and comments on Matt. 11:12), were attempting to force their **way into it**.

However, in spite of justifying themselves, the Pharisees were still not living according to **the Law**. Jesus spoke of divorce as an example. To divorce and remarry constituted **adultery**. (Jesus gave one exception to this. See comments on Matt. 5:32; 19:1–12.) Some Pharisees took a loose view of divorce. It was acknowledged that a **man** should not commit adultery. But if a man wanted another **woman**, many of the Pharisees condoned divorcing his present wife for no good reason and marrying the desired woman. In this way they thought **adultery** did not take place. However, as Jesus pointed out, this was a perfect example of justifying themselves in the eyes of men but not being justified before God (Luke 16:15). The religious leaders were not actually living according to the Law. Jesus pointed out the importance **of the Law** (v. 17), which showed that the people should live by it.

16:19–21. Jesus then told the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus to show that being rich should not be equated with being righteous. The **rich man** had everything he wanted. **Purple** referred to clothes dyed that color, **and fine linen** was worn for underclothes; both were expensive.

A poor man, a crippled **beggar named Lazarus**, had nothing. One **lived in luxury** for himself, the other in abject poverty with hunger and poor health (**sores**). Perhaps Jesus picked the name Lazarus because it is the Greek form of the Hebrew name which means "God, the Helper." Lazarus was righteous not because he was poor but because he depended on God.

16:22–23. In the course of **time** both men **died**. Lazarus went **to Abraham's side** while **the rich man ... was buried** and was **in hell**, a place of conscious **torment** (vv. 24, 28). *Hadēs*, the Greek word often translated "hell," is used 11 times in the New Testament. The Septuagint used *hadēs* to translate the Hebrew *še'ōl* (the place of the dead) on 61 occasions. Here *hadēs* refers to the abode of the unsaved dead prior to the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11–15). "Abraham's side" apparently refers to a place of paradise for Old Testament believers at the time of death (cf. Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:3).

16:24–31. The rich man was able to converse with **Abraham**. He first begged to have **Lazarus** sent over to give him some **water**. **Abraham replied** that that was not possible and that he should **remember that** during life he had everything he wanted **while Lazarus** had had nothing. Even so, the rich man had never helped Lazarus during the course of his life. Furthermore, a **great chasm** separated paradise and hades so that no one could **cross** from one to the other. The rich man next begged that **Lazarus** be sent to earth to **warn** his **brothers**. It was his contention that if one came back **from the dead** then his brothers would **listen** (v. 30). **Abraham** replied that if they refused to **listen to** the Scriptures (**Moses and the Prophets** represent all the OT; cf. v. 16), then they would refuse to listen to one who came back **from the dead**.

Jesus was obviously suggesting that the rich man symbolized the Pharisees. They wanted signs—signs so clear that they would compel people to believe. But since they refused to believe the Scriptures, they would not believe any sign no matter how great. Just a short time later Jesus

did raise a man from the dead, another man named Lazarus (John 11:38–44). The result was that the religious leaders began to plot more earnestly to kill both Jesus and Lazarus (John 11:45–53; 12:10–11).

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1547). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

16:17 For Jesus' high view of the law, see Mt 5:17–20.

16:19–24 The opening to this story (“There was a rich man”) indicates that it is a parable (16:1), and thus the details of its picture of the afterlife should not be taken too literally. Certainly, however, Jesus taught life after death, including reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked (Mt 8:11–12; 18:9).

16:25–26 For more on the pervasive theme of the great reversal, see notes on 1:51–54 and 6:20–23, 24–26.

Butler, T. C. (2000). *Luke* (Vol. 3, pp. 264–269). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

C. Kingdom Living Calls for Obedience to God's Word (16:16–18)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *Jesus introduced a new stage in God's salvation history, but entrance into the kingdom depends on obedience to God's Word.*

16:16. Jesus addressed experts on God's Word, so he based his discussion on their field of expertise. In so doing he quietly assigned his opponents to an out-of-date, invalid era. The law and the prophets ruled until John the Baptist came. They were God's method of revelation for people up until John. John introduced something, or someone, better than the law and the prophets. John introduced Jesus. Jesus introduced the presence of the kingdom of God. It was not enough anymore to be an expert in explaining and in obeying God's Word found in the law and the prophets. Now one must answer the call to enter God's kingdom. Pharisees, if you want to keep up to date with God, Jesus declared, then listen to the new Word of God—the Word taught and revealed in the life of Jesus.

16:17. Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God present in his ministry. This does not mean he discarded the written word of the law and the prophets. The Old Testament remained valid. It would be simpler to have the universe disappear from sight than to do away with the authority of God's Word. The Old Testament is incomplete and cannot be the entire center of life, as it was for the Pharisees, but its teachings are still valid. Their validity, however, must be held in light of the new revelation in Jesus. Jesus showed the spirit, meaning, and purpose of the law in a new and radically different manner than the Pharisees viewed the law. The law was not a source of threat and judgment to hold over people's heads. The law was an opportunity to express love to God through obedience and to express love to other people through seeing the centrality of the law's call to love your neighbor, to help the poor, to care for orphans and widows. The law is not a road to self-justification. It is a road to selfless ministry to God and to others.

Viewed in Jesus' way, the law will never lose its power. Not even the smallest part of one letter can be taken away, for that smallest part of a Hebrew or Aramaic letter could mean the difference between two letters and thus the difference between two words. It would be the same

thing as taking the bottom horizontal leg off an E or the angular line at the bottom of an R, suddenly changing these letters to F and P. Christ brings full meaning and understanding and obedience to God's Word. He does not want to replace it.

16:18. This verse appears out of place here. Nothing in the context prepares us for a discussion of divorce and remarriage. It serves as an example of what Jesus had just claimed—the ongoing validity of God's law.

Apparently, Jesus took up a rabbinic dispute concerning legitimate and illegitimate divorce. Deuteronomy 22:13–30 and 24:1–5 provided the basis for arguments about marriage and divorce. Malachi 2:13–16 gives the strong prophetic condemnation of divorce: God hates divorce. Jesus combined this with the Old Testament teachings on adultery (Exod. 20:14; Lev. 20:10; Deut. 5:18; 22:22). He then took the strongest stand possible, saying divorce is equal to adultery. In so doing he did not say everything that could be said on divorce and remarriage (see “Deeper Discoveries”). He did show that no one in Judaism had a stronger respect for the family or a stronger determination to fulfill the letter of the law. The Pharisees could hear Jesus say that his coming brought a new era in the history of salvation. They could not condemn him for making light of God's law. He stood as the law's staunchest defender.

D. Kingdom Living Leaves No Hope for Unbelieving People (16:19–31)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *The Word of God is sufficient to lead us to salvation. Unbelievers cannot be helped, no matter what God does.*

16:19. With no transition statement, Luke introduced the parable of the poor man and Lazarus. Parallel to the rich landowner in verse 1, the central character of this parable is a rich man enjoying the most luxurious life possible. His dress and his food set him apart from Jesus' disciples and from the ordinary Jewish citizen. Here was the man the Pharisees wanted to be.

16:20–21. Lazarus, the other character in the story, represents the opposite side of the social ladder. He owned nothing, but Jesus honored him with a name, while the rich man remained anonymous. Lazarus was clothed with sores. He lived not in a gated mansion but on the street beside the rich man's gate, and he depended to live on. He himself seemed to offer nourishment for the wild dogs that licked his sores. The rich man had the opportunity to do all Jesus had commanded. He could invite the sick to his banquet table. He could show his generosity in using his material resources for kingdom purposes. He could restore a lost man who was basically dead to life and join in heaven's joy. He did not have far to search for this lost sheep. He could even sell all his possessions in his dedication to kingdom living. But not this man. He ignored Lazarus and went about his luxurious life.

16:22–23. Inevitably, the poor Lazarus died, perhaps from his illness, perhaps from malnutrition. The self-righteous and self-centered rich man certainly had some responsibility in his death. One day death also visited the rich man. Dying is the only thing the two men hold in common in the story. The difference Jesus emphasized was what happened after death. Lazarus died and went with the angels to heaven. Not only was he in heaven; he was positioned right next to Abraham, the father of Jewish faith (Gen. 12–17). Nothing better could happen to a Jew after death. The rich man went where his master—money—took him, to Hades, the place of torment (see “Deeper Discoveries”). From there somehow he could see Abraham—and what a shocking discovery. There beside Abraham, he saw Lazarus, the one he had been unable to see all those years at his gate.

16:24. What a reversal of fortunes! The rich man was tormented even more than poor Lazarus had been as the dogs licked his sores and the rich man ignored him. In desperation he

called to Abraham for help. He addressed him as father, indicating that he considered himself to be of the seed of Abraham and thus deserving of help from Abraham and from the God of Abraham. He cried for mercy, even when mercy meant having poor, unclean, filthy Lazarus come to his rescue, although he had never helped Lazarus. A fingertip of cool water would mean a lot in the horrible flaming torment he suffered.

16:25. Abraham could communicate from his eternal abode to that of the rich man. He continued the family terminology, acknowledging the man as a son of Abraham. The rich man needed a history lesson. In life he had enjoyed all the luxuries. Lazarus, on the other hand, enjoyed no luxuries, only bad things. Now the situation was reversed. Lazarus received the comfort he had begged for all those years. But the rich man had slipped from the comfortable life to pure agony. Yes, those expecting to be first were last, and those who expected to be last were now first, right beside Abraham.

16:26. An eternal reality needed explaining. Abraham might be able to communicate with the man in torment, but he could not come to him. A great chasm separated them. There is no description of the chasm, no location geographically—just the reality: You cannot get there from here. You are where you are going to stay, just as we are. Torment is your eternal reward, just as heavenly comfort belongs to Lazarus forever.

16:27–28. Father, remember the rest of my family and yours, the rich man prayed. If the chasm prevents Lazarus from coming here, at least send him to my five poor brothers, caught up in the life of comfort and ease just like I was. Explain the truth to them. I'd do anything to spare my family from this horrible place of torment. Let Lazarus go back from the dead and warn them.

16:29. Abraham pointed him to the Pharisees' favorite source of authority. They already had the books of Moses—the law and the prophets, which is the rest of Scripture. They give them all the information they need. They need to listen to them. Such a warning implies that the rich man had the same authorities his brothers did, but they refused to listen to them. Obeying Scripture should lead them away from torment and to the eternal kingdom.

16:30. No, father Abraham, I am prime example number one, the rich man replied. They need something more than the Scriptures. They need someone raised from the dead. Catch the irony of the rich man's words. This man, who has everything the Pharisees did, wanted a greater authority than Scripture, that in which the Pharisees were proud experts. Does this indicate Jesus was right? The day of the Old Testament alone had come and gone. God has provided something new. The kingdom of God is now present in Jesus. If one does not follow Jesus, hope for eternity is gone, no matter how expert one is in the ancient authorities. Jesus has come calling people to repent, for the kingdom is here. The rich man then saw that people like him may appear to be blessed and perfect. They may be religious leaders. They may appear righteous. But they still need to repent and enter the kingdom.

16:31. This verse contains the awesome declaration of father Abraham. A person rising from the dead cannot convince such people. Obviously, he foreshadows the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus came to call sinners, not the righteous, to repentance. Why? As Abraham states, those like the rich man and his brothers and the Pharisees are so convinced of their religious superiority and their righteousness before God that they will never respond to a call to repentance, even if the authority behind it is the voice of the resurrected one—Jesus. On this basis Jesus can explain that all Scripture points to him. He is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament taught. Yet, for the rich men and the Pharisees of the world, he is something radically

new—something they will never accept, no matter how powerful a sign God uses to prove that this is his Son in whom he is well pleased.

MAIN IDEA REVIEW: *Kingdom living stands opposed to worldly living. The world values wealth and possessions, while kingdom living obeys God's Word instead of the world's worth.*

III. CONCLUSION

Kingdom People

Kingdom living starts in this world. Members of the kingdom must live with the same resources and challenges as the secular person. Too often secular people outsmart kingdom people in their use of the world's resources to get ahead, plan ahead, and influence other people. Kingdom people also need to use the world's resources with acumen and wisdom. Kingdom people have a clearer vision of the future; they point toward eternity, not just toward tomorrow. Thus, kingdom living means using the world's resources to help those kingdom people Jesus consistently pointed to—poor, lame, blind, crippled. Using world resources generously to help Jesus' people is wise planning for the future. It leads to meeting those people who are waiting to greet us in heaven.

Kingdom people are single-minded people. They do not hold to both the world and the kingdom. They know no one can be a slave who obeys two masters. Nor do they need to justify their kingdom existence before other people. God justifies. People do not. What people see as justification, God sees as detestable, reprehensible.

Kingdom people live out of new resources the world does not have, even the world of the religious and pious. Kingdom people have entered Jesus' kingdom, something new beyond the authority and life of Moses and the prophets. They do not destroy the old authority. They fill it full. They may interpret the law in stricter terms than even the Pharisees and rabbis.

Kingdom living often means earthly poverty and suffering. It means being ignored by those who are enjoying the world's blessings and comforts. This enjoyment is temporary. Death soon comes and cuts it off. Then you must face eternity. What will you face? Life on Abraham's side or life in torment in Hades? The question is, Have you truly believed the law and the prophets? Have you seen that they point to Jesus and his kingdom? Have you entered eternity as a kingdom person or as a self-justifying legalist? Must you have a great sign from God to believe the true purpose of Scripture? Or will you humbly believe with those like Lazarus? Kingdom living is living Christ's way. Are you living the kingdom way today?

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 16:16-31). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.