

**The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man
(26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)**

Amos 6:1, 4-7—Oracle against Slothful Rich People

1. Slothful Rich: “those who are *at ease* in Zion” (6:1; i.e., slothful)
2. Lazy: “lie upon beds of ivory” and “stretch themselves upon their couches” (6:4)
3. Entertained: “sing idle songs” and “drink wine in bowls” (6:5)
4. Indifferent: but are not “grieved” at the “ruin of Joseph!” (6:6)

Psalm 146—The Lord Gives Food to the Hungry and Raises Up the Lowly

1. Hungry: the LORD “gives food to the hungry” (v. 7)
2. Suffering: the LORD “lifts up those who are bowed down” (v. 8)

1 Timothy 6:11-16—Keep the Commandments without Stain or Reproach

1. Obedience: “keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach” (6:14)

Luke 16:19-31—The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man

1. Rich Man: “rich man” (Greek *plousios*; Latin *dives*, hence the name “Dives”) (16:1)
 - a. Luxury: “purple” was expensive; worn by royalty (Prov 31:22; Dan 5:7)
 - b. Gluttony: “feasted sumptuously *every day*” (cf. James 5:5)
 - c. Love of Neighbor: not an idolator, adulterer, thief, murderer (sin of *omission*)
2. Poor Man: “poor man” named “Lazarus” () (16:20)
 - a. Lazarus: Greek form of *Eleazar* (Hebrew “God has helped”; Exod 6:23)
 - b. Sick: covered with “sores” (perhaps a leper)
 - b. Starving: not just hungry, but starving to death (cf. Luke 15:16, same expr.)
3. Abraham’s Bosom: realm of the righteous dead
 - a. Being “gathered” to one’s “fathers/ancestors” (1 Kings 1:21; 2:10)
 - b. Bosom: “bosom” (Greek *kolpos*); banquet? (cf. John 13:23; Luke 13:28-29)
 - c. Angels: carry the souls of the righteous away (cf. *T. Asher* 6:4-6)
 - c. Comfort: he is “comforted” (Greek *parakaleō*) (cf. Matt 6:4)
4. Hades: place of torment for the wicked
 - a. Originally a Greek translation of Hebrew *Sheol* (=realm of the dead)
 - b. *Sheol*: realm to which all dead go (Eccl 9:10; Ps 89:48 LXX)
 - c. Second Temple Period: used for realm of wicked (Sir 21:9-10)
 - d. Jesus: uses “Hades” for the realm of the *damned*:

And you, Capernaum, will you be *exalted to heaven*? You shall be *brought down to Hades*. (Luke 10:15)

- c. Torment and Flames: place of “torment”/ “agony”/ “anguish” (Greek *odynaō*)
5. Great Chasm: is “fixed” between realms (16:26)

Then *the place of torment* shall appear, and *opposite it* shall be *the place of rest*; and the furnace of Gehenna shall be disclosed, and opposite it the Paradise of delight. (*4 Ezra 7:36-37*; trans. B. M. Metzger)

6. Rich Man’s Request:

- a. Intercession: asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his “five brothers (16:28)
- b. Scripture: “They have Moses and the Prophets” (16:29)
- c. Resurrection: if someone goes “from the dead, they will repent’ (16:30)

The Living Tradition

Jerome: The rich man, in purple splendor, is not accused of being greedy or of carrying off the property of another, or of committing adultery, or, in fact, of any wrongdoing. The evil alone of which he is guilty is pride... Lazarus was lying at the gate in order to draw attention to the cruelty paid to his body and to prevent the rich man from saying, “I did not notice him. He was in a corner. I could not see him. No one announced him to me.” He lay at the gate. You saw him every time you went out and every time you came in. (Jerome, *On St. Luke on Lazarus and Dives*, trans. M. L. Ewald, p. 201)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. What exactly are the sins of the wealthy which Amos condemns?

2. What did the Rich Man do wrong that he was cast into the place of “torment” and “flames”? If he did not break any one of the Ten Commandments, why was he damned? (Hint: think of 7 “Deadly Sins”)

3. According to Jesus, how important is love of neighbor for our salvation? What is the difference between “Abraham’s bosom” and “Hades”?

For Further Study

1. Arthur A. Just, Jr. *Luke*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament III. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003. Pp. 265-67
3. Pablo Gadenz. *The Gospel of Luke*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. Pp. 291-92.