

Reflection Questions: Luke 16:19-31

For the message, “The Coming Great Reversal” given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on February 6, 2022

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Luke 16:19-31

19 “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’

25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’

27 And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ 29 But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’

30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Key Points to Remember as You Reflect on this Parable

- It's easy to get lost in the details of this parable—it prompts lots of questions that Jesus simply doesn't answer here. Keep in mind that Jesus is telling a story: the coming of God's kingdom means a great reversal is coming, and what we do here has ripple effects into eternity.
- Jesus is aiming this parable at lovers of money, especially the religious elite of his day who thought they were okay with God because of the blessing of their wealth, but who in fact showed that the love of God was not within them because they do not have compassion on others (cf. 1 John 3:17).
- Jesus was telling those who thought they were in the coming kingdom because they were Abrahams' descendants will actually find themselves outside because of their rejection of the message of Jesus (15:1-2) due to their love of wealth (16:13-15) which lead them to neglect the poor (chs. 15-16)

Let's get started...

- What initially grabs your attention in this teaching? Is there a phrase or sentence that jumped out at you?

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- How would you say that this man's wealth and neglect of the poor illustrates what he truly values? How does his commitment to "feasting sumptuously every day" while neglecting a poor, needy human laid at his gate reveal what Jesus said in the previous section: You cannot serve God and money (16:13)?
- How would you answer someone who said that on first glance, it looks like Jesus is saying you can buy your way into the kingdom of God if you are generous to the poor? Is Jesus saying that?
- How does this passage help you understand that a real, heart-felt response to the good news of Jesus actually transforms us into radically generous people? How does it help us grasp that we have been blessed to be a blessing?

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

- How does this story Jesus tells remind us that our calling as a community of faith is to both declare the gospel to everyone AND to display the gospel, especially towards the vulnerable?
- In our study of this passage last Sunday, the pastor mentioned that kindness to the poor is not an elective in our discipleship with Jesus, but rather a required course. What did he mean by that? What role should the church play in helping disciples complete this lifelong required course?
- Proverbs 19:17 says, "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord...", and Psalm 41:1 says, "Blessed is the one who considers the poor...." How can we motivate and "stir one another up to love and good works..."? How do you need to be encouraged or challenged in this area of Christian spirituality and discipleship?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- How do you think Bryan/College Station would be different if everybody did what Jesus describes in this passage?
- How does this passage serve as an invitation to the world to join God's mission?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

CLOSE IN PRAYER