

Lessons from the Parable

Many sermons on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus dwell on the reasons why the rich man went to a place of torment (hell), but very few attempt to answer the question: “Why did the poor man Lazarus end up in the ‘bosom of Abraham’, where he was comforted?”

First of all, a couple of things need to be clarified: First, the poor man Lazarus in the parable is not the same person as Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, the friend of Jesus whom He raised from the dead (John 11:1-44). Second, the “bosom of Abraham” is not the same as heaven. The “bosom of Abraham” is generally considered as a temporary holding place for the righteous who died before Christ redeemed the world, where they awaited Christ to come and lead them to heaven. After Christ's Death, He descended to the realm of the dead and opened the gates of heaven for the righteous.

So, why did Lazarus end up among the righteous, when the parable did not give any indication of his good or bad deeds, or whether he had faith in God or not? All the parable tells us is that Lazarus, covered with sores, laid at the rich man's door, and would have gladly eaten his fill of the scraps that fell



from the rich man's table (cf. Luke 16:20-21). However, we can reasonably glean from these two verses that Lazarus had a humble and patient acceptance of his life situation on earth. He did not complain to God or curse the rich man for not helping him. What Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3),” epitomizes Lazarus as the poor who depended on God, in contrast to the rich, who depend on their riches and wealth.

There is much more that we can learn from this parable: Jesus teaches that heaven and hell are real. Many preachers shy away from uncomfortable topics such as hell. Some even preach “universal salvation” – that everyone goes to heaven. Yet Jesus spoke about hell many times: Gehenna (Matthew 5:22, Mark 9:43), eternal fire (Matthew 25:41) and eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46), to mention a few. Scripture is clear that every person who has ever lived will eventually spend eternity in either heaven or hell. So many are complacent in their conviction that all is well with their soul, but many will be shocked to hear the Lord tell them otherwise when the time comes: “I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.” (Matthew 7:23)

This parable also tells us that once we cross over to the next life, there are no more chances. The transition to our eternal fate takes place right after judgment at the moment of death. Those in heaven are saved for eternity and those in hell are damned for eternity. There is a great chasm that prevents anyone from crossing from one side to the other (Luke 16:26). Those in heaven will rejoice forever and those in hell will be grinding and gnashing their teeth (Matthew 8:12, 13:42, 50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30) as they look back at the opportunities they did not take for true repentance.

Many false preachers teach people the “prosperity gospel,” where material wealth on earth is seen as evidence of God's love and blessing for them; while on the other hand, poverty and destitution are evidence of God's curse. The Epistle of James sums up the parable with this warning: “You have lived on earth in luxury and pleasure; you have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter (James 5:5).” Not only do riches not get us into heaven, they are serious obstacles to heaven: so difficult like a camel going through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:23-24) and the rich young man who could not be detached from his possessions (Mark 10:23-25, Luke 18:24-25).

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每周公告 Weekly Bulletin

2025 年九月二十八日 September 28, 2025

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attention children and parents: We will have Sunday School class on Sunday.

We will celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival on Oct. 5. Our monthly pot-luck for October will be on Oct.5 instead of Oct.19. Please bring your favorite Mid-Autumn Festival dish to share!

Attention OCIA candidates and sponsors! We will have our Rite of Welcome on Oct. 5 during the 10:30am Mass. You are required to be present.

Attention Chinese Cursillo members! We will have our monthly Ultreya meeting on Sunday, September 28.

The 10th year anniversary of the dedication of our church will be on November 19, 2027. We would like all church members to have their picture taken for the 10th year anniversary commemorative parish book. Please sign up with Tommy Puk.

For our iGiveCatholic initiative this year, SUPPORT OUR OUTDOOR PRAYER GARDEN AND RECREATION AREA. We have begun the first phase of a new outdoor prayer garden and recreation area in our church property by clearing the space needed for this small capital improvement project. The first phase includes ground covering, outdoor benches and a gazebo or mini-pavilion, our goal for Phase 1 is \$10,000. We envision the prayer garden to grow organically with one or two additions/enhancements at a time. When completed, the prayer garden will contain an outdoor Stations of the Cross and a monument to Our Lady of China with engraved commemorative bricks. The prayer garden will provide our parishioners and visitors a sacred outdoor space for group prayer and private meditation, as well as open up opportunities for activities which foster both spiritual growth and community building.

Prayer List: Gao Aishang, Xie Yannong, Xu Chunmei, Bian Meiyi, Chen Kun, Chen Shupeng, Ni Yufang, Lydia Chen, David Wang, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.

Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	Sundays 9:00-9:30 AM	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)	Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM	Mondays 6:00 PM (English)
	By Appointment	
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)		Eucharistic Adoration
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	Anointing of the Sick	Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Tuesdays 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 7:00 PM (English)		
First Saturday 10:00 AM (Chinese)		