

"THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS"**Introduction**

1. Perhaps the most awesome of Christ's parables
2. Is it a parable – or is it factual?
3. At any rate, it is powerful teaching which we need all to pay attention to.

1. THIS RICH MAN IS MEANT AS A WARNING TO US

- 1) At first sight we envy him:
 - (i) he has everything people want: money / clothes / food...
 - (ii) a life free from worry: no care for the poor...
APPLICATION: If we had to choose, we would say that of these two men the rich man is the happy one.
- 2) In today's style: he is the wealthy film-star / pop-star / sportsman:
 - (i) the big house – the big cars – the designer clothes
 - (ii) all for himself – no care for anyone else
 - (iii) no place for God / Bible / church / prayer
OBSERVE: If he read the Bible, he would have attended to the poor man at his gate.
- 3) This is the life people want:
 - (i) the appeal of gambling: "Give your dreams a chance": yacht / holidays abroad / no work.
 - (ii) because, no thought of the life after death

Lessons

1. Never envy the godless rich: See Psalm 49
2. God's Common Grace to the wicked is short-lived
3. If you ever get any money, share it with the poor and needy
4. Look at the worldly way of life through the eyes of the Bible: Matt. 6:19; 1 Tim. 6:9-10
5. How much money did the OT prophets have – or the Apostles – or CHRIST?

2. THIS POOR MAN IS A COMFORT TO US

- 1) He had very little on earth, yet he was blessed.
So: "a man's life consisteth not..."
Q. Did he have anything? No – and Yes.
- 2) He had many things to make him feel sad:
 - (i) compelled to beg – a humbling thing
 - (ii) bodily weakness – "was laid"
 - (iii) a wretched state of health: "sores"
 - (iv) hungry: "desiring to be fed..."
 - (v) exposed to misery – "the dogs"
APPLICATION: Could any sight be more pitiable?
- 3) So Christ shows us how different men's conditions are from what they seem:
 - (i) the rich man seemed so happy
 - (ii) the poor man seemed so wretched
APPLICATION: "Call no man happy till he is dead" = only the sequel to life is proof whether men are truly happy or not.

Lessons

1. Common Grace is nothing compared to Saving Grace
2. Poverty is not a blessing – but it does us good if it turns us to God:
ILLUSTRATION: J. C. Ryle
3. God often gives his people poverty and suffering in this life to prepare them for the comforts of heaven at last.
APPLICATION: Do you understand this?

3. THE ONLY LASTING HAPPINESS IS THAT WHICH BELIEVERS HAVE WITH GOD IN HEAVEN

- 1) See what a massive change comes now to the rich man! What total loss!
- 2) See what massive improvement now comes to the poor man!

- 3) Of course, the rich man's sin was not his wealth; nor the poor man's virtue his poverty. (Explain).
- 4) What makes hell so terrible:
- (i) the fire
 - (ii) the memory of lost time
 - (iii) the realization of heaven forfeited
 - (iv) the company of those who hate them
 - (v) it is for ever

Lessons

1. Do not be deceived by worldly pleasure
2. Make sure of heaven
3. Reckon the sufferings of the Christian life to be very small
4. Picture yourself as one of these men

APPLICATION: O value your soul!

ILLUSTRATION: Is not this whole parable reflected in the life of Christ?

PSALM

49: 1 – 9

49: 11 – 15

49: 16 – 20