

26th Sunday in OT_C

September 28th, 2025

St. Edward's Parish

Friends, last Sunday we contemplated the parable of the dishonest business manager and considered

how important it is to use everything that is entrusted to us to help us love God and serve others. Today

Jesus gives a concrete example of making poor use of the gifts we have. This parable the rich man and

Lazarus is filled with teaching about life and eternity. Therefore, I thought I would explore five key

insights to help us understand it and apply it to our lives.

First, the parable sets out the life of a rich man, who is not named, and a poor man, Lazarus.

The wealth of the rich man is described by his fine and expensive clothing (note purple was the most

expensive dye in the ancient world) and he feasted sumptuously, not just occasionally, but *every day*. It

is important to note in the Scriptures that while wealth can become a serious obstacle in the spiritual

life, as we heard last week you cannot serve God and money, it is the use of wealth that is most

important. Some people in scripture used their wealth wisely: the wise men gave gold to Jesus, Mary,

and Joseph; a woman took an expensive bottle of ointment and anointed Jesus; Joseph of Arimathea

gave Jesus a new tomb. The rich man in this parable did not go to hell simply because he was rich, but

because he did not use his wealth to help others.

What was the sin of the rich man? Here is our second insight: he was self-absorbed, gluttonous,

and indifferent to others. Lazarus is described as sitting at the rich man's gate. Presumably the rich man

had to step over Lazarus when he went in and out of his house. Yet, he was either oblivious to the

needs of Lazarus or just didn't care. Jesus does not say the rich man did anything to hurt Lazarus. He is

guilty because he ignored Lazarus. He could have used his wealth to help Lazarus but he did not. It is

easy for us to become self-absorbed in this life with our own problems, interests, enjoyments etc... We

must be on guard that we do not become indifferent to the things of God and the needs of others.

This third point struck me in a special way this week: in the end God bring about justice and set

things right. After much suffering, Lazarus is comforted and awaits heaven in what is called the

"bosom of Abraham". When we see suffering and injustice we can be tempted to blame God or see it

as a reason to believe God does not exist. People often ask, “How can a good God allow suffering?”; “How can a good God allow a child to get cancer or a person to starve?” The parable today reveals that suffering in this life is not the end of the story. We can’t yet see the full picture. The suffering of Lazarus was awful, but God rewarded him in eternity. The existence of suffering is not a reason to lose faith. We ought to do all we can to help others in this life; however, we must also trust that God will set things right in eternity.

Fourth, Lazarus is comforted, but the rich man goes to Hades where he is tormented—a description of Hell. Jesus does not hold back in describing that we can be separated from God for eternity based on the decisions we make in this life. He speaks often of Hell. It is not just a made-up idea or a place for the most evil criminals. The rich man did not commit a violent crime, but by his daily choices, he drifted from God. We also must be mindful that we live each day for the love of God and others; otherwise, we can be separated from God beginning in this life and continuing for eternity.

Finally, the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus from the dead to warn his brothers. Abraham, however, points out that they have all the teaching they need in the Scriptures; if they won’t listen to the scriptures then not even someone rising from the dead will help them. The same is true for us, we have everything we need right now to lead us to eternal life (e.g. the Scriptures, the teachings of the Church, the witness of the Saints etc.). We don’t need more miraculous signs to help our faith. Instead, we need to listen more carefully and put what we hear into practice.

As we listen today to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, let us resolve to use wisely the things entrusted to us in this life, being attentive to use what we have not merely for ourselves but for the service of God and others. Plus, when we face suffering like that of Lazarus, let us not doubt the goodness of God but trust that He will bring about justice in the end.