

# THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

## STEWARDSHIP

AMOS 6: 1a, 4-7  
1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16  
LUKE 16: 19-31

JESUS, WHO BECAME FLESH AND LIVED WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF OUR DAY TO DAY LIFE, GIVES US A PARABLE THAT UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING OUR LIVES NOT FOR THIS WORLD, BUT THE WORLD TO COME — LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN...

NOT FOR HIS OWN SAKE DID JESUS UNDERTAKE THE JOURNEY INTO THE DEPTHS OF HUMAN NEED, FRAILTY AND SIN - BUT FOR OUR SAKE.

HE DID NOT COME TO SUFFER AND DIE FOR HIMSELF BUT FOR US!

INDEED, JESUS HAD TO SURRENDER, JESUS HAD TO SACRIFICE, JESUS HAD TO BECOME ONE OF US, IN ORDER TO SPEAK TO US IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE OF THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE, ILLOGICAL AND IRREPRESSIBLE LOVE OF GOD FOR US.

IT IS A LOVE THAT WE ARE CALLED TO BE ABOUT OURSELVES.

YES, A LOVE THAT'S DEEP FOR ONE ANOTHER. THAT'S WHAT THE RICH MAN WAS MISSING...

WE ARE CALLED TO IMITATE THE LOVE THAT WE LEARN AND EXPERIENCE IN JESUS.

TODAY I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THIS LOVE.....THE DOWN AND OUT PRACTICAL WAYS IN WHICH WE CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER IN THIS COMMUNITY.

I WANT TO SPEAK WITH YOU TODAY ABOUT A SUBJECT THAT I DO NOT READILY GET UP HERE AND SPEAK...

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT MONEY!

WHY AM I FEARFUL?

AS A PASTOR.... I KNOW PEOPLE SAY THAT ALL THE CHURCH EVER TALKS ABOUT IS MONEY.... I KNOW THIS IS NOT TRUE — IN FACT, FOR OUR VISITORS AND GUESTS ATTENDING TODAY, THIS IS NOT MY NORMAL WAY TO SHARE THE GOSPEL.... I ALSO KNOW WE HAVE BEEN GENEROUS IN THE PAST...

BUT... I REALIZED IT IS NOT A SUBJECT I NEED TO APOLOGIZE FOR, IN FACT I AM GUILTY OF IRRESPONSIBILITY IF I DO NOT TALK ABOUT IT WITH YOU...

I NEED TO CONVEY TO EACH OF YOU *THREE ITEMS* THAT ARE ITEMS OF OPPORTUNITY - YOU MIGHT SAY THAT I AM A VERY CONCERNED FATHER OF A LARGE FAMILY AND THE FAMILY NEEDS TO HAVE A MEETING. . .AND SO HERE WE ARE!

AS FATHER I AM VERY AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES YOU FACE WITH THE ECONOMY, THE PRICE OF GASOLINE AND MILK, THE COST OF EDUCATING CHILDREN WHETHER PUBLIC OR AT HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL.... AND I KNOW THESE ARE DIFFICULT TIMES FOR MANY OF YOU.

BUT I ALSO KNOW OUR LORD ASKS EACH OF US TO SACRIFICE IN LOVE FOR THE WELFARE OF OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS.

DO YOU NOT DO THAT FOR YOUR CLOSEST LOVED ONES? I KNOW I DO...

OUR PARISH NEEDS EVERYONE TO STRETCH JUST A LITTLE MORE TO TAKE CARE OF THE *FIRST* SITUATION IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES. YOU MAY HAVE NOTED IN THE WEEKLY BULLETIN THAT WE ARE FALLING BEHIND IN OUR REGULAR SUNDAY OFFERINGS - AT THE END OF THIS FIRST QUARTER OF THE FISCAL YEAR WE ARE OFF BUDGET OVER \$27,000 DOLLARS.

MANY WHO STRETCH THEMSELVES TO HELP REACH THIS WEEKLY NEED - MAKING A LOVING RESPONSE IN GRATITUDE TO OUR LORD FOR HIS MANY BLESSINGS... ARE SURPRISED AT THE MORE BLESSINGS AND GROWTH IN FAITH THAT FOLLOW...

IN THE COMING WEEKS, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL GIVE YOU DETAILS IN PERSON ON THE OVERALL FINANCIAL CONDITION OF OUR PARISH.... BUT FOR NOW, WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO MEET THE WEEKLY NEED...

YOU HAVE HEARD THIS IN PERSON IN THE PAST AND SINCE I BECAME PASTOR WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TRANSPARENT THROUGH THE WEEKLY REPORTS IN THE BULLETIN AND THE END OF YEAR REPORT ABOUT FINANCES.

I KNOW THAT SOME OF YOU THINK THAT WE HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY...WELL, WE DON'T!

IN A PARISH COMMUNITY AS LARGE AS OURS IT'S EASY FOR YOU TO

THINK THAT OTHERS MUST BE GIVING PLENTY AND SO YOUR DONATIONS ARE NOT NEEDED...OR NOT THAT IMPORTANT...

PERHAPS YOU HAVE SEEN THE WORK ON OUR DOORS AND THE STAIN GLASS WINDOWS OR OUR NEW PIANO, AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS... LIKE THE AUTOMATIC DOORS IN THE ATRIUM.... OR EVEN THE PARISH HOUSE AND YOU THINK IF THE MONEY IS THERE FOR THAT THEN EVERYTHING MUST BE MORE THAN FINE.

THOSE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED BECAUSE OF GIFTS TO THE PARISH FROM GENEROUS MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY WHO SAW A NEED OR AN OPPORTUNITY AND WANTED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.... SPECIFIC RESTRICTED GIFTS...

AND THESE FOLKS GAVE SO MUCH MORE AND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR PARISH MINISTRY WEEKLY...BY REGULAR CONTRIBUTING...

THOSE GIFTS WERE DESIGNATED FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS THAT THE DONORS SAW AS NEEDING ATTENTION TO IMPROVE OUR WORSHIP AND LIVES OF FAITH.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT ST. JOHN CHURCH HAS VALUED OVER THE YEARS IS OUR MISSION - SIMPLY TO CONTINUE TO BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD THROUGH LIVES OF FAITH...

AS ST. JOHN CHURCH CONTINUES TO GROW, WE DISCOVER MORE WAYS THAT GOD IS CALLING US TO REACH OUT TO MEMBERS AND OTHERS THROUGH OUR VARIOUS MINISTRIES... ALL WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL AS WE BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD HERE IN THIS PLACE...

I PRAY YOUR HEARTS WOULD BE MORE OPEN IN LOVE TO THE GOOD WORK THAT HAPPENS IN OUR PARISH...IT IS GOD'S WORK!

THE SECOND OPPORTUNITY THAT IS BEFORE US IS THE ANNUAL DIOCESE OF TOLEDO PRIESTS' RETIREMENT FUND APPEAL... THIS APPEAL NEXT SUNDAY HELPS SUPPORT THE OVER 80 PRIESTS WHO HAVE SERVED OUR DIOCESE OF TOLEDO UNTIL AGE 70- OR FOR 40 YEARS OF SERVICE... THIS FUND ENSURES THAT A RETIRED PRIEST CAN RETIRE IN THE MANNER IN WHICH HE WAS ACCUSTOMED OF LIVING AS HE WAS AN ACTIVE PASTOR... THE RETIREMENT FUND INCLUDES A MODEST PENSION FOR FATHER, AND LIMITED FUNDS FOR FOOD AND HOUSING...THIS APPEAL IS DIFFERENT THAN THE NATIONAL APPEAL FOR THE RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT FUND - THIS SERVES OUR OWN PRIESTS OF THE DIOCESE OF TOLEDO...PRIESTS YOU KNOW WHO VISIT US REGULARLY...

I PRAY YOUR HEARTS WOULD BE MORE OPEN IN LOVE TO THE GOOD WORK THAT OUR RETIRED PRIESTS GAVE OUR PARISHES...IT WAS GOD'S WORK!

OUR THIRD OPPORTUNITY IS TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR FEST FOR ALL IS A GREAT SUCCESS - WE ALL NEED TO CONTRIBUTE BY SELLING AND BUYING THE RAFFLE TICKETS, BY INVITING FRIENDS FROM ALL CHURCHES AND TOWNS TO COME AND ENJOY OUR EVENT. . .THIS FEST FOR ALL EVENT PROVIDES ESSENTIAL FUNDS TO MEET OUR ESSENTIAL MINISTRY NEEDS...

I WANT TO ASK YOU TO DO TWO THINGS:

PRAY ABOUT HOW WE CAN EARNESTLY MEET THESE NEEDS AND TO BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF AND WITH GOD - MAKE A RESPONSE IN LOVE...

SECONDLY, I AM ASKING YOU TO MOVE TOWARDS TITHING, THE BIBLICAL STANDARD FOR GIVING, OVER THE LONG HAUL BUT BEGIN BY INCREASING YOUR CONTRIBUTION BY ONLY \$10.00 PER WEEK.

FOR SOME OF YOU PERHAPS I AM ASKING YOU TO START AT THAT \$10.00 CONTRIBUTION.

WILL GIVING JUST \$10.00 OR \$10.00 MORE PER WEEK REALLY KEEP YOU FROM DOING ANYTHING THAT YOU DO NOW? IT WON'T FOR ME...

I ASK YOU TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU MAY BE CALLED TO SHARE AS A RESULT OF OUR FAMILY MEETING.

MAYBE \$10.00 PER WEEK WILL MEAN A SACRIFICE.

PLEASE, AS I BRING THESE THINGS BEFORE YOU, DO NOT THINK THAT MY GRATITUDE FOR YOU IS ANYTHING LESS THAN OVERWHELMING.

I KNOW THE HOURS OF MINISTRY, OF TIME AND TALENT THAT ARE PUT FORTH BY COUNTLESS MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH...

THESE ARE VERY MUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT IT TAKES TO HELP THE PRACTICE OF OUR FAITH FLOURISH AS IT DOES HERE.

YET, AS JESUS SACRIFICED SO ARE WE CALLED TO SACRIFICE.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK EACH OF YOU NOW TO CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR A MOMENT IN PRAYER, ASKING GOD FOR GUIDANCE...

*LET US PRAY.*

*HOLY SPIRIT, OPEN US TO OUR CALLING.*

*MAY WE BE WILLING INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S LOVE AND ENDEAVOR TO IMITATE JESUS CHRIST WHO SACRIFICED HIMSELF COMPLETELY FOR US.*

*STRENGTHEN US IN OUR RESOLVE TO TRULY BE THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE YOU CALL US TO BE FOR ONE ANOTHER AND FOR YOUR WORLD.*

*WE PRAY THIS IN JESUS' NAME.*

*AMEN.*

I KNOW THAT WHAT I AM ASKING YOU TO DO IS A RISK.

FOLKS WHO LIVE STEWARDSHIP SAY THE RISK IS WORTH IT, THE MOST DIFFICULT OF JESUS' COMMANDS WAS TO "LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."

PART OF THAT LOVE IS THE SHARING OF OUR TREASURE FAITHFULLY AND AS FULLY AS THE LORD CALLS US TO DO... UNFORTUNATELY- THE RICH MAN IN TODAY'S PARABLE FOUND THAT OUT TOO LATE...

WE MUST HAVE FAITH SHARING IN LOVE, "JESUS' GLORY AWAITS YOU AND ME."