

Parables of Relationships: Our Brother (Luke 16:19–31)

The Rich Man thinks he can ignore Lazarus at his gate. Only after death does he suddenly become interested in how Lazarus might be able to assist him. This parable contains various allusions to the Old Testament which challenge us to care for the needy. It also points out that our time is limited and that the Scriptures are sufficient evidence for our evangelism.

Peter J. Williams is the Principal and CEO of Tyndale House, Cambridge. He was educated at Cambridge University, where he received his MA, MPhil, and PhD in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament at Cambridge University as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History, and Philosophy. Since 2007 he has been leading Tyndale House, and he is also an Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He is a member of the Translation Oversight Committee of the English Standard Version of the Bible. He assisted Dr. Dirk Jongkind in Tyndale House's production of a major edition of the Greek New Testament (2017) and has written *Can We Trust the Gospels* (Crossway, 2018), which has now been translated into 7 languages.

I. Setting

- A. 15:1–2 A learned audience
- B. 15:3–32 Lost sheep, lost coin, lost son(s)
- C. 16:1 'a rich man'
- D. 16:14 Greedy audience
- E. 16:19 'a rich man'

II. Story

- A. 16:19 'There was a certain rich man'.
- B. Clothes of purple / fine linen; feasting every day.
 - i. Like Xerxes/Ahasuerus's 180-day feast, which climaxes with purple & fine linen (Esther 1:6), but Xerxes invited every man!
 - ii. Like Job's children, who (arguably) feasted every day (Job 1:4–5).
- C. Rich Man unnamed / Lazarus named.
- D. Lazarus had severe mobility disability.
- E. The Rich Man had to pass through the gate and see Lazarus.
- F. Lazarus was covered with sores.
 - i. Like Job (Job 2:7), who had always helped poor (Job 31:16–22).

- G. The story doesn't tell us why Lazarus was poor.
- H. The Poor Man died first. It does not say that he was buried.
- I. Abraham's bosom or side is the unique dining place next to him in the heavenly feast (the word is used in John 1:18; 13:23).
- J. Abraham feasts in Luke 13:28–30.
- K. 'And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham from afar.' (Luke 16:23)
 - i. Like 'On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.' (Genesis 22:4)
 - ii. 4 things in common: Abraham, 'lifting eyes', 'seeing' + 'from afar'.
 - iii. See also "And they lifted up their eyes from afar" (Job 2:13).
- L. Rich Man calls Abraham 'father' 3x (16:24, 27, 30).
- M. He seeks to stress his close connection with Abraham.
- N. He only talks to Abraham.
- O. He still treats Lazarus as a servant
- P. He makes a mathematical mistake:
 - i. How many brothers does the Rich Man have?
 - ii. How many children does Abraham have?
- Q. Abraham: 'They have Moses and the prophets'.
- R. Rich Man: 'Abraham, your theology is wrong'!
- S. People won't be convinced by miracle, even a resurrection, if they don't believe Scriptures.

III. Significance

It doesn't mean:

- i. It's wrong to be rich: God, Abraham, and Job are rich.
- ii. It's wrong to feast: Abraham feasts.
- iii. You get to heaven by being poor.

It does tell us about:

(1) Money

- i. Problem isn't being rich; it's love of money, which deceives (Matthew 13:22; 1 Timothy 6:6–10).
- ii. Don't be stupid and think you can keep money.

iii. Christ gave up wealth of heaven.

(2) Family

- i. Recognize our spiritual brothers and sisters.
- ii. Avoid comfy inner family.

(3) Bible

- i. Jesus studied the Scriptures.
- ii. The Scriptures reward study.
- iii. The Scriptures are evidence.
- iv. The Scriptures need to be practised.