

Sermon Pastor Michael TeKrony
March 14, 2021

Did he even notice?

Jesus is telling yet, another parable. This time it is a story of a rich man who has no name and lives lavishly within his gates. Certainly, this is a sign of God's blessing...right!?!?

Also in the story is a poor man, who in contrast to the rich man, is named Lazarus (which means, "One whom God helps.") and is positioned just outside the gate of the rich man's home. In addition to that, Lazarus is not clothed in lavish garments. He is covered with soars. And Lazarus isn't eating lavishly. He longs to eat just the scraps that fall from the rich man's table. All this hardship must be a reflection of his sin and God's punishment of him...right?!?!?

Did the rich man even notice Lazarus at his gate? Did he see him?

Next, we learn that both die. After they die, we find the rich man agonizing in hades and Lazarus is safely rest with Abraham.

From hades, the rich man does see Lazarus. He does know his name. He must have seen him at his gate!?!?!?

Now in death, the rich man sees Lazarus but only for the purposes of caring for himself. "Send Lazarus to care for me."

Abraham responds, "Sorry, there is this chasm between us and it can't be crossed."

What is this chasm? A chasm of...selfishness, greed, injustice??? Can this chasm be crossed? Not on our own.

"It's too late for me (rich man), in death. So, send Lazarus to warn my living brothers."

Again, Abraham responds, "They have the same opportunity to "see" because of God's messengers, and prophets that have shared God's message."

The rich man begs, "For sure, they'll listen to someone who comes from the dead."

"Nope, sorry, they wouldn't listen to someone coming back from the dead"...winky winky.

I wonder, if the rich man, after seeing Lazarus while he was alive, lying just outside his gate, if he had then extended compassion and care, if he had acted as a neighbor, would things be different?

Do WE see, and extend God's love today, maybe just beyond our gates of safety, comfort, and privilege? Do we see and then take steps to address the brokenness of:

Gender inequality: Where women do not receive equitable status, respect, and opportunity as men, like me.

Do we see and will we act against the systems in place that perpetuate this inequity?

Do we see and then take steps to address the brokenness of:

Hunger: On the streets, in our neighborhoods, at Eiber Elementary, The Action Center? And will we see and act against the systems that perpetuate this hunger?

Do we see and then take steps to address the brokenness of, Homelessness and refugees fleeing for their lives?

What are their names? What are their stories?

Or would we prefer not knowing their names or their stories? It's more comfortable to shelter behind our gates of security, safety, comfort and privilege, isn't it?

Now is the time to see and act. There will be a time when it is too late for us to do something about it.

Can we cross this chasm? I'm going to disagree with Abraham for a moment. We see in Luke 1:37, an angel sharing with Mary, "Nothing is impossible for God."

On our own, we cannot cross the chasms of all kinds of darkness and death. But, with God, it is possible!

What will it take for us to see and act?

Maybe someone who makes all things possible?

Maybe the one who makes all things possible and invites us to follow?

Maybe someone who comes to us from the dead?!?!?