

## Group/Individual Study

Series - The Greatest Stories Ever Told: The rich man and Lazarus

Passages: Luke 16:19-31, Luke 16:13-15

REFLECT on the message heard on Sunday, 8/12

1. The meaning of Jesus' parables often becomes more clear when you notice who was in the room when He told them. Read Luke 16:13-15. How does this context add meaning and understanding to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus?
2. Read Luke 16:19-31. In Bible times there was no government-run "safety net" for people who came on hard times. Some scholars suggest that laying Lazarus at the rich man's gate was someone's attempt to get Lazarus' plight before someone with the means to help. The rich man literally would have to step over or walk by Lazarus every time he came and went from his home. How does this add to understanding this parable? What did the rich man value? What did he ignore?
3. "Lazarus" is the only character in all of Jesus parables who is given a name. "Lazarus" literally means "He whom God helps." How does God's compassion for Lazarus in particular and for the poor in general affect you? Do you like it or does it make you uncomfortable? Do you ever feel the temptation to be self absorbed and uncaring like the rich man was? Explain.
4. At least part of Jesus' audience was Pharisees, who as v.14 says, "loved money." They also had theology similar to a "prosperity gospel" -- where if you loved God He would bless you financially and if you were poor, you must have done something wrong to deserve it. Do you ever see this type of "prosperity Gospel" today? How does the prosperity Gospel seem to differ from how God sees wealth and poverty? How would you express what God's take on these issues seems to be?
5. Read John 6:44. The rich man is convinced that if Lazarus were to rise from the dead and warn his brothers, they would repent. But Abraham says that's not true, implying that even a miracle won't turn the heart of someone who's dead set against God. John 6:44 teaches the opposite truth -- though even miracles may not turn a hard heart, when God is drawing someone, wonderful new faith becomes possible and even likely. How can you recognize people whose hearts God is stirring to faith?
6. God's concern for the poor -- and His expectation that His people will care for them is shot through the Bible from first to last. How does God's call on us in this regard transcend politics? Is there any poor person that God seems to have "put outside the gate" of your home or heart? How can you stop for them this week?