

The First Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Luke 16:19-31  
June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA  
Pastor Jerald Dulas+

Now He Is Comforted

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we beseech Thee so to rule and govern our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not, like the rich man, hear Thy word in vain, and become so devoted to things temporal as to forget things eternal; but that we readily and according to our ability minister to such as are in need, and not defile ourselves with surfeiting and pride; in trial and misfortune keep us from despair, and grant us to put our trust wholly in Thy fatherly help and grace, so that in faith and Christian patience we may overcome all things, through Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today we continue the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Trinity since this is its Octave—the eighth day of the feast. Therefore, much of today’s Propers and the mood of the Liturgy is geared toward the extension and conclusion of that feast. This is why we still have white paraments and vestments and not green today, because the color of the day for an octave is the same as the feast itself. This is also why we have the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, for this parable is about faith in the One, True, Triune God. The rich man does not have faith in the One, True, Triune God, but instead puts his faith in his earthly possessions. Lazarus, whose name means, “One Who Is Helped,” having no earthly possessions to tempt him away from faith, believes and hopes in the One, True, Triune God for his salvation. Lazarus believes that his help will come from the Lord.

Therefore, Lazarus is great example of faith for us poor, miserable sinners who dwell in this evil and sinful world. For even though he has nothing, as far as the world is concerned, in his faith in the Triune God he possesses everything he needs. Lazarus is a great example to those of us who lack earthly possessions, or even an abundance of earthly possessions, for he teaches us how faith in the One, True Triune God comforts us in all our afflictions, and cares for us in all of our riches and abundance.

The rich man, however, serves as a warning to us. He does not have faith, this is shown by the fact that he lacks mercy, which is produced by faith in the heart through the working of the Holy Ghost by the means of grace, Who creates and sustains love in us for God and for our neighbor. Our Lord + Jesus tells us in the parable that Lazarus sat at the gate of the rich man begging for just the crumbs from his table. Lazarus is tormented in this life by his poverty, but the rich man, in this earthly life, is comforted daily by his abundance. It is said by our Lord’s description that *“he fared sumptuously every day.”* What that means is that he never had a care in his life that his riches or good fortunes would run

out. But, even though, in the eyes of the world, he possessed everything good, he possessed nothing, for he lacked faith, and thereby lacked mercy and love.

This is shown to us by the fact that after their deaths, the rich man in Hell requests Father Abraham that Lazarus would come and give him some comfort just by touching his fingers to cool his tongue. This tells us two things, first, that in Hell he remained as faithless as he was in his earthly life, for he could have easily requested Father Abraham or an angel to come and comfort him, but no, he requested Lazarus, for just as in his mercilessness on Earth he disdained Lazarus, even more so in the torments of Hell does he disdain Lazarus, for he still believes that he is better and of more value than Lazarus. It truly pains him to see Lazarus have any joy or comfort—to see him resting in the loving arms of his heavenly Father Abraham. This torments him not only in his existence in Hell, but tormented him in the same way in his earthly life. Such a rogue is he, that he denies Lazarus even the crumbs from his table to comfort him. Now, being tormented in Hell, he wants Lazarus to show him the mercy that he never showed Lazarus; a drop—a crumb—of water to cool his lips. In this he shows that he is just as prideful and greedy and faithless as he was in his earthly life, for he still places Lazarus below him; as a servant to be tread upon and be belittled and mocked.

Secondly, the rich man's request of Father Abraham also shows us that he knew who Lazarus was in his earthly life, for he requests specifically for Lazarus to give him comfort. This convicts the rich man doubly, for this is an admission that he was fully aware of Lazarus and his poverty, and his begging, but chose to ignore him anyway. As Dr. Martin Luther would say, "This man truly is a rogue and a scoundrel," for in seeing his fellowman in suffering, and hearing daily his cries for mercy, he not only refused that mercy but added to it with his disdain for Lazarus. The rich man hated Lazarus in thought, word and deed.

Can you see how much this rich man lacks any faith in God? For if he possessed even a tiny amount of faith, he would at least show a little mercy to Lazarus by providing him with the crumbs that fell from his table. Make note of what the text says, he was "*desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.*" It does not say that he actually received them. That is to say, the rich man refused to give them, because he truly is a rogue and scoundrel; a faithless man worthy of the eternal punishments of Hell.

This a good place to make mention that the faithful one in the parable, Lazarus, is given a name. However, the rich man is not given a name. Now there are some Church Fathers who give him the name, Dives, which is the Latin word used in the Vulgate for "rich man." Those Church Fathers reason, that just as Lazarus means "one who is helped," that Dives should remain untranslated and be used as the rich man's name. However, the point should be made that his name is for eternity to be unmentioned and unknown, for this is one of the points of the parable: Lazarus is named for he is brought into Heaven because his name is written in the Book of Life, therefore, his name is to be remembered for all eternity. However, the rich man, being in Hell, does not have his name written in the Book of Life. He remains nameless for all eternity. Such is the lot of those who have no faith in the Lord + Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior of mankind; they are to be forgotten in Hell forever.

This is why we, like Lazarus, need to hear and believe the words of Moses and the Prophets who proclaimed the coming Messiah, our Lord + Jesus Christ, and we also need to hear the voice of the Apostles who proclaimed that the Messiah and Savior of mankind has come into the world to redeem mankind from all sin, and from the power of death and the devil. The rich man did not hear Moses and the Prophets, or rather more precisely, he *refused* to hear them; his five brothers refused as well. They were currently living on Earth. They also refused to hear Moses and the Prophets—the Word of God—for they trusted in their earthly possessions, and had no need for a Savior of any kind. For they thought they had all that they needed for this life and the next. But they lacked the most important thing—faith in the Christ. They only trusted in their possessions.

The same can be said of all those who not only put their trust in earthly possessions, but also those who put their trust in their good works and deeds. Good works done apart from faith in the One, True, Triune God merit us nothing. The rich man in the parable was probably loved by everyone, because the world loves such men, but God judges the heart not the outward appearance and actions of a man. Therefore, because he lacked faith, he also lacked love and mercy, and now he is tormented in Hell, and Lazarus is comforted in the bosom of Father Abraham. The same place that we will be when our Lord + Jesus Christ calls us home, for we cling to Him in faith as our Lord and Redeemer and Savior from sin, death and the devil.

Lazarus heard the promises made of the Messiah through Moses and the Prophets, and he believed and trusted that his salvation and hope was in the Promised Coming One. We have the great benefit of seeing that our Lord + Jesus has come, and the Apostles testified to this in the Holy Scriptures that the long-promised Messiah has come into the world, fulfilled the Law perfectly for us, and suffered and died in our stead on the tree of the holy cross. Therefore, since we have heard this great and wonderful good news, through the faith gifted to us through the work of the Holy Ghost in the means of grace, we believe the promise that our Lord + Jesus is the One, True Savior and that we will receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation through our participation in the Word and Sacraments. We gladly hear preaching and diligently receive the Blessed Sacraments so that we might be strengthened in our faith, and sustained in this faith throughout the torments of the flesh in this life.

In the eyes of the world, Lazarus possessed nothing; he was a beggar at the gates of the rich man, desiring to eat the crumbs from off of his table. But in the eyes of our Lord Lazarus possessed everything, for he had faith—faith in the One, True, Triune God and faith in the One, True Lord and Savior Who was to come—the Lord + Jesus Christ. We too, have been granted to hear of our One and Only Savior, the Lord + Jesus Christ, therefore, even though we may lack the earthly trappings of this life, on account of our faith in our Lord, we possess all things necessary. Therefore, we can learn to be content in abundance or in poverty, for our true hope in is our eternal life in Heaven. For our hope and comfort rests not in the things we possess or do not possess, but in the promises of Moses and the Prophets and in the promises preached by the Apostles and all those who preach the pure Word of God to us today.

So then, come and hear this promise made to you as often as you can, and come and partake of this blessed meal of our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine, which is a pledge and reminder of the promise bestowed upon us in the waters of Holy Baptism, wherein we were made children of our heavenly Father Abraham, and we received His holy Name upon our hearts and minds so that we could have our names written in the Book of Life, and with Lazarus, have our names remembered for all eternity in Heaven; where he is comforted now, and where we will one day find comfort when we are called from this earthly life of torment under sin to our loving heavenly Father Abraham's awaiting arms. There we will join with all of the angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven for all eternity, and we will sing the eternal Liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom, with His Bride the Church. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Help us, O Lord, that we may not despair in the day of want and trouble, nor in the day of plenty abuse Thy gifts or set our hearts upon things temporal, but in true faith and love wait patiently for another life, which, when all earthly griefs are past, Thou wilt give to all that believe in Thee; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

#### **The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*