

The First Sunday after Trinity Sunday

St. Luke 16:19-31

June 6th, 2021

Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC

Simpsonville, SC

St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC

Augusta, GA

Pastor Jerald Dulas

Though One Rise from the Dead

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Gracious Father, God of love, Who, loving us from everlasting, gavest Thy Son into death for us when we were enemies, and desirest us to know the love Thou hast to us, and on our part to love Thee and our neighbor: we beseech Thee, remove from our hearts tormenting fear, and fill them with childlike faith and trust in Thee, cleanse us also from hatred and ill-will, incline us to render one to another kindly dispositions and services of love, and grant us at the last boldness in the Day of Judgment; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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.

There are some people that no matter what means you use to persuade them, they will just not listen. No matter what arguments you use; no matter what sound reasoning you produce; they will just not hear what you have to say. They will continue to remain obstinate. They will continue to cling to their position. This is true not only in matters of a secular nature, but is especially true in matters of a spiritual nature. There are people in this world who will refuse to hear the Gospel. They will either want to remain in their sins, or continue to believe that the truth that we preach is just finely crafted fairy tales. And they will continue in their unbelief no matter what arguments you produce from holy Scripture; no matter how clearly they are shown the wonders of the Lord God's grace. There are some people who will always refuse to hear Moses and the prophets.

What did Moses and the prophets proclaim and prophesy? They preached the Messiah—the Christ—that He would come into the world to redeem the world from their sins and from death. They prophesied that the Messiah—the Anointed One—would suffer and die for the sins of mankind; that He would atone for the sins of the whole world by His death. The Old Testament scriptures are full of stories of people who not only refused to listen to Moses and the prophets; who choose to cling to their false idols and their false worship, but it is also full of stories who actively sought the pain, suffering and death of the prophets sent by the Lord God to preach to them salvation in Him alone.

In the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke for today, we have such a one. The rich man fared sumptuously every day. Meaning his every meal was a veritable feast. He was also dressed in purple and fine linen. Meaning that he had the best and most expensive of clothing. Our Lord + Jesus during His suffering and death was mocked by the Roman soldiers when they put a purple robe on Him and hailed Him, mockingly, as the King of the Jews. The purple robe was a symbol of the type of clothing that would be found on royalty. This is the way that the rich man dressed. He dressed like royalty. He had all that the world could offer, but he lacked the one thing needful: he lacked mercy. He

lacked the same mercy that the Lord God showed him when he was gifted by the Lord God with, as Father Abraham says in the parable, "Your good things."

For, there was laid at the gate of the rich man a beggar. This beggar's name was Lazarus. The name Lazarus means, "the one whom God helps." In the eyes of the world, the ones who praise people that possess all the worldly things that this world has to offer, this beggar named Lazarus was poorly named. Not only was he a beggar, but he lacked what the rich man had. The rich man had plenteous food and drink, and fine clothes. The beggar had neither. Furthermore, Lazarus was full of sores. He did not even have good health. The one who is named, "the one whom God helps" in the eyes of the world did not seem to be receiving much help from the Lord God.

By outward appearances the world would say that the Lord God loved the rich man and hated the beggar Lazarus, because this world only sees the things on the outside of man. This world loves to chase after the rich and famous; placing them on a pedestal of worship. There are even false preachers who would also point to the rich man as sign of the Lord God's blessing. He must be blessed if he has such wonderfully extravagant gifts. This is the lie that these men, and the world, cling to as the truth. It is the only "truth" they desire to hear. This is the same whether we are talking about physical gifts or spiritual matters. The people of this world want all manner of earthly possessions; they always want the next best thing: the biggest T.V., the nicest car, the biggest house in the best neighborhood, the latest iPhone, and the like. But the people of this world also crave after the falsest of religions. Any religion that will give them a list of things to do in order to be saved is what this world chases after.

People want to be seen doing good works. They want to be seen as loving and being a good person, for they know they will receive the praise of mankind. The truly dangerous thing is that these acts are seen as acts of mercy. But mercy does not just include the outward act. It does not just include given someone thirsty a cold drink of water, or a hungry person some food. Mercy flows from the heart; a heart filled with the mercy of the Lord God. A merciful heart does not do these things to receive praise from mankind. The merciful heart gives no thought how the world views the merciful acts it is performing. The world helps other people struggling in this world to be *seen* helping other people. In other words, they do it to receive the praise of other men. The true merciful heart does not care what other people think of the merciful act for the mercy that exists in his heart flows out naturally on account of faith in the Lord God.

This is something that the world refuses to hear, because they want to continue to be pleased with their own works; their own self-righteousness. I am sure that the rich man in today's parable from the Gospel reading according to the Evangelist St. Luke was not only rich, but was also popular. He was probably seen as a "good man." For this rich man, like it is with many people in the world today, helped the people that the world deemed worthy of help. In other words, he helped all the right people. He helped the people that would win the praise of his fellow man. In the eyes of the world this rich man, like it is with people in our world today, was a merciful man. He was probably even praised as such at his funeral. As it is in this world when someone dies. The laundry list of wonderful things that that person did are talked about incessantly at a funeral.

Sadly, the one thing necessary for that individual is blatantly lacking: his faith and trust in the Lord God's atonement for him. No one wants to talk about how much of a sinner the deceased person was. Even with the proof of his sinfulness staring us in the face through his lifeless corpse. People still refuse to talk about the sin that he had inherited from Adam, and filled him with sinful acts, thoughts and words every day of his life. And where the talk of the sinfulness of this person is lacking at a funeral, even more so is the talk about the only means of salvation from this man's sins. The suffering and death of our Lord + Jesus as the atonement for the sins of the whole world, and the justification given to the individual on account of his faith in the Lord + Jesus is sadly missing in many funerals today. Even, sadly, so-called Christian funerals. Just consider how many funeral sermons we have heard that

only praise the deceased earthly works, and make no mention of the only means of salvation that person has.

I imagine the funeral of the rich man was such. The world praised him as they mourned him. But our Lord + Jesus in the telling of the parable gives him a rather unceremonious funeral. He died and was buried. No fanfare, no grand praise for this man who fared sumptuously every day and was dressed in purple and fine linen. He died and was buried. Such was his fate for living an unmerciful life; for living a life exempt from faith in the One, True Lord God. He was praised by men, but by the Lord God he was as nothing. He did not even have a name. Now, there are some who would call this man, "Demas." That name derives from what the Lord + Jesus refers to him as in the parable. The Greek word for "rich man" is "demas," hence the name of "Demas." But our Lord + Jesus rightly does not give him a name, for all of his acts that the world praised him for in this life, he became nothing. He was in torments in Hell. The hell he deserved because he lacked the mercy that flowed from a heart of faith. He was in Hell because he refused to listen to Moses and the prophets.

Lazarus, the one whom Lord God helps, did not appear to the world to be receiving any help from the Lord God. He had two things though that the rich man never possessed. He is given a name by our Lord + Jesus when He is telling the parable. And he clearly had faith, for he was carried by the angels to Father Abraham's bosom. His life was miserable. He was poor. He had no food. He was a beggar. He was full of sores, and the dogs came and licked his sores. But he clearly heard the preaching from Moses and the prophets. He clung to the promises found in the holy Scriptures in spite of the earthly troubles forced upon him. Most likely he was troubled by the devil with all these trials because of his faith in Moses and the prophets. The rich man was not troubled by Satan and received his good things in life, because he lacked faith. The man of faith, Lazarus, is troubled by the devil and his angels for his entire life.

In the afterlife, the roles are reversed. The rich man received the eternal torments of Hell because he did not hear Moses and the prophets; because he did not believe what the Lord God had to tell him through the preaching and prophesying of Moses and the prophets. His life was grand, but his death was unceremonious, and his suffering in Hell was eternal. Lazarus however only received his torments in this life. His death is grand and full of pomp and circumstance. He is triumphantly carried by the angels into the loving and waiting arms of his Lord and Savior, Father Abraham. He had heard the promises preached and prophesied in Moses and the prophets, and he clung in faith to those promises. He endured his earthly trials and received the eternal crown of life.

The rich man in his unbelief and his torments in Hell wanted to ruin this for Lazarus. He wanted Father Abraham to send him back from the dead to show his five brothers; to be a testament—a witness—to the eternal life that awaits them, either in Heaven or Hell. But our Lord is quite clear that if a person can not hear Moses and the prophets, they would not listen even if someone rose from the dead. In saying this our Lord + Jesus is foreshadowing His own death and resurrection. We have an actual person who died and rose again on the third day, and this world still refuses to believe. They will never listen to Moses and the prophets, for they would rather cling to their sin and unbelief. Even in our Lord's day the people were made witness to the resurrection of the dead, when He raised another Lazarus from the dead after he was in the grave for four days. Not only did the scribes and Pharisees refuse to believe on the Lord + Jesus as the Messiah—the Christ—come into the world to redeem the world, but they also sought to kill Lazarus, just as much as they sought to kill the Lord + Jesus.

Though one rise from the dead, the five brothers of the rich man would not believe. One has risen from the dead, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, and the world still refuses to believe. There are some people that no matter what arguments you produce, or sound reasoning you supply, they will never agree with you. Even though there is Someone Who has risen from the dead and lives and reigns forever in Heaven, this world still rejects the only means of salvation. We have been given Moses and

the prophets as a testimony of the saving works of our Lord + Jesus on our behalf. Let us hear them! For they proclaim to us that our salvation is found in the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, alone. They proclaim that our sins have been atoned for by His suffering and death. We who cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus' works and merits for our salvation may suffer trials and tribulations in this life, but our death will be a joyous event in Heaven. The angels of Heaven will carry us triumphantly into our Savior's loving arms, and we will no longer endure the trials and temptations of this life, but we will have eternal and everlasting joy. May the Lord God Almighty grant this to us all. 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!