

The Rich Man and Lazarus, Part 1

Luke 16:19-23

Today we come to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, so I want you to open your Bibles to Luke chapter 16, Luke 16. While you're turning there, just to sort of set this up, I'd like to read from what the Apostle Paul says at the end of 2 Corinthians chapter 4, so you turn to Luke 16, and I'll read from 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 where Paul says this, "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient; the things that are unseen are eternal."

For those of you who know the Lord and those of you who are known by the Lord, those words from the Apostle Paul describe the life of faith. This is how we as Christians live our lives, as our outer self, self is wasting away, and for some of us it's more apparent than for others. For young people in our midst,

you're kind of like, What? What? What could that mean? I'm as strong and healthy as ever. And then they say, oh, that's right, he's old, of course he's dying, of course he's talking about all that. He's on the way down.

But listen, you, too, being young, enjoy it now. Enjoy it now because it does not last. And yet, promise you this, that as you mature in Christ, as we mature, though our outer self, our frame, the shell, it's wasting away, our inner self, our inner life is being renewed in Christ, and it's being renewed truly and powerfully in the mind as we are renewed, and we find an energy that is other-worldly, a spiritual energy. It's a life transformed by the invisible working of God.

We truly see the power of these words in Scripture changing the way we think, which changes the way we live. We are not what we were. We are not now what we shall be. And so we are those, as Paul describes in Romans 2:7, we are those who by patience in well-doing, we seek for glory and honor and immortality. And to those who practice that patient obedience in this life right now, doing good, God will graciously grant to us eternal life.



And it's an eternal life that so powerfully works now, even in our mortal bodies that are dying.

And we realize that whatever affliction we face in this life, as Paul described it, it is light and it is momentary. We're looking not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen, invisible realities. "For the things that are seeing are transient." They're passing, they're fading. But the things that are unseen are eternal.

We realize that there will be a great day of reckoning. There will be a reversal when that which is really real and that which is truly true, things that are unseen and eternal, they will take center stage. They will become the daily, predominant, lived-in experience for everyone, believer and unbeliever. And for those of you who are genuine, born again, truly true Christians, that's really, really good news, isn't it? That captures the fulfillment of our hope in the Gospel.

For others, though, reckoning with the unseen, the eternal reality, is not such a comforting thought. It's rather a

disturbing thought, a troubling thought. They'd rather stay with life as it is right now, as they can see and touch and feel and experience. So talking about unseen, eternal realities that they can't control and manipulate, that troubles them.

It's so troubling, in fact, that many ignore these spiritual realities, these realities that they've sensed in their own hearts. They ignore the internal protests of the conscience and those silent and yet ever-present nagging accusations that come from the conscience. They ignore the conscience. They suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

But one day, death will come knocking. Reality will confront them in death, abruptly and brutally in the afterlife as they live in a state of torment until that day, as Paul describes in Romans 2:16, when, according to the Gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Listen, folks, none of us needs to be surprised by our appointment with death, our appointment with unseen, eternal realities. None of us needs to be disturbed by the prospect of

death by, we, none of us needs to be anxious about tomorrow. None of us needs to be worried about dying and facing God one day because Jesus gives a preview of what's coming after death. He shows us the difference from God's point of view between how things seem to be and then how things really are, how things really are.

And that's what we see in this parable in Luke chapter 16. If you found your way there, start at verse 19 and let's read the parable together once again. "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

"Poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side, and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off with Lazarus at his side. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger

in water and cool my tongue, for I am an anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus, in like manner, bad things. And now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

"'Besides all this, between us and you, a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' He said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

The point of this parable is to answer the scoffing Pharisees. Remember that earlier in the chapter, as Jesus taught his disciples, first part of the chapter, opening part, he told them a parable, there, to encourage them toward good

stewardship, and he encouraged them in verse 9, "Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth." He's saying, Jesus saying, spend money with unseen eternal realities in mind. Don't squander your money on stuff. Don't squander your money on things you can feel and touch and see and enjoy. Don't squander your money like that, like a foolish steward. Invest the money that God has provided, so that when it fails, verse 9 again, "your friends may receive you into the eternal dwelling"

Well, the Pharisees, they're listening in to all this. These Pharisees, according to verse 14, they are lovers of money. And so they're hearing all these things, and they think he's an idiot. They believe that God has blessed them with their money, that their money, and their possessions, and their status is a sign of God's favor on their life. They think Jesus has lost his mind, and they ridicule him.

So Jesus responded, not batting an eye, in verses 15-18, and he confronts their hypocrisy, and he confronts their unbelief. He said, "You are those who justify yourselves before

men, but God knows your hearts. What is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

Listen, this parable illustrates that. And Jesus warns these Pharisees, he warns all pretenders, all hypocrites, all unbelievers, religious unbelievers, he warns them to repent before it's too late because God sees it all. God has perfect judgment, perfect sight. He sees through the illusion. He's not fooled by anything on the exterior.

He's not fooled by the body beautiful. He's not fooled by the car that you drive. He's not fooled by the house that you live in. He's not fooled by your bank account, your investment portfolio. He's not fooled by any of it. He sees to the heart. He sees to the, as Paul said in Romans 2:16, the “secrets of the heart.” God sees all. Whatever men exalt, whatever they highly esteem, God condemns it all as abominable.

That’s what we see in this parable, is a removal of the illusion of this life and a reversal of how things seem to be externally. That’s what Jesus is doing here. He's providing

clarity about death without, without our having to die. Isn't that good? He lets us see what's on the other side of the veil without us having to pass through the veil. Isn't that gracious?

He shows us here two potential outcomes before we have to pass through the veil for ourselves: Will we wake up, or will we continue sleepwalking? Somnambulism, that's called sleepwalking. Death removes all illusion, folks. We can either learn about that from Jesus before we die, or we can learn on our own after we die. I recommend option number one. Let's learn from Jesus before we die.

So Jesus tells this little parable, verses 19-21. He starts out by telling us how things appear, how things appear. You can write that down as your first point, name, number one, how things seem to be. How things seem to be. Remember, God looks not, not, God sees not as man sees. God looks upon the heart of the matter. He sees the heart. But man looks on things with, by external appearance, right?

Is that an indictment of us? No, it's just talking about our limitation as human beings. We can't look to the heart of the matter, only God can. God sees not as man sees. God looks, man looks on the outward appearance, which is just our lot in life. We're flesh and blood. The spirit within us requires the body in order to perceive things from the outside world. It's how we learn, it's how we perceive, it's how we come to understand. God looks into the invisible, hidden things, the secrets. He sees all things.

So here's how things seem to be, and Jesus paints quite a picture in verses 19-21. I'll read that again. He says, "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day, and at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores."

Could not be two more contrasting characters than these two: the rich man and the poor man. The rich man is unimaginably rich. He lives a charmed life. He lives the dream life, envied

by all, enjoyed by none but himself. And his life is contrasted by the poor man's life, which is unimaginably poor and afflicted and suffering. Some like, someone like this would be pitied by all.

And yet Jesus wants us to know that this is only how things seem to be. Wealth and poverty, they're nothing but a facade. Wealth and poverty are nothing but an, an illusion that distract us from reality. Jesus provides the true assessment of the situation in verse 15, that what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

That believing judgment, by the way, is echoed by James. James is the half-brother of our Lord, and he writes this in James 1:9 and following. He says, "On this basis let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation." Let the poor man, the afflicted man, the man with nothing, the man with nothing in his bank account, let him boast, let him brag in his exaltation.

Is that how you think? We need to listen a little bit more to James, don't we? And James goes on to say, "Let the rich in

his humiliation, let him boast." Hmm. Why is that? "Because, like a flower of the grass, he'll pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass. Its flower falls, its beauty perishes. So also will a rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. So blessed is the man," speaking to all of us now, "blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial. Blessed are the poor, the afflicted, those who go through trials, those who face and, and have to endure suffering. For when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."

James is writing, there, to encourage us to think rightly, to orient our mind around truth, around reality. Last week, Josh preached out of Philippians 4:8. "Whatever is," what, "true." At the end of the verse, "think about such things." Is it a suggestion? No, it's a command, right? It's an imperative. "Think about such things." Think about what is true. Focus your mind. Let your mind be shaped by what is true, by reality, not by how things seem to be, but how things are.

We're to make right judgments. We're to look beyond mere appearances. We're to look beyond how things seem to be so that we think, we assess, we live our lives according to how things really are. And he gets that thinking, James gets that thinking from his half-brother according to the flesh, Jesus. And he encourages us to embrace the same mindset.

Listen, we see, all of us see, Asaph in Psalm 73, he sees the rich prosper. They live in nice houses, they drive in nice cars, they take nice vacations, they meet interesting people, they eat at expensive restaurants, and they have a personal trainer to take off all the weight after they take on all the calories. They enjoy unique experiences all over the world, and we see the rich man just like anybody else, as Jesus says, "clothed in purple and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every single day." No worries, no troubles, wouldn't you like to be one of them?

This is the realization Jesus describes in Luke 16. It's the realization of the rich man's dream, what he only dreamed of. But his dream was cut short by the reality of death.

Remember that back in Luke 12, and turn back to Luke 12 and verse 16. Jesus is called in to settle a dispute about money between two brothers, and he responds by telling them a parable, guarding them, verse 15, "Take care. Be on your guard against all covetousness because one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Let me tell you a story, Jesus says. Told them a parable, Verse 16, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops.' He said, 'I'll do this, I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and all my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, and be merry."'"

That man's biggest concern? What am I going to do with all this stuff? What am I going to do with this surplus of goods? My investments have come back percentage over percentage. Look at the dividends! I don't know what to do with all this money. His

daily occupation then turns into how to satisfy his soul with whatever pleasure it desires.

So what that man in that parable in Luke 12 is dreaming about, Jesus now tells a man who, of a man who actually attained it. This is actually come upon him. He lives it, he enjoys it, he has got it all. He starts with the man's clothing, what we can see on the outside, and that is the point, is to look at the external appearance, purple on the outside, fine linen on the inside. It's clear this guy is not shopping at TJ Maxx or whatever. This man is extravagant in the extreme, and it's prohibitively expensive stuff.

I realize as I look around here, I see a purple shirt right over there, vibrant purple. I can tell you that whatever it cost to make that shirt, no offense, it's nothing compared to the purple that's described here in Jesus' day. This is extravagance in the extreme. This kind of purple, it was prohibitively expensive. The word for purple, here, is *porphyra* and refers to a, a purple dye that was extracted from a species of predatory sea snail called a murex.

Murex, maybe you've read about these before. The snail, little murex snail is housed in a little murex snail shell. It's kind of like a smaller, thinner, spinier version of a conch shell. And those murex were gathered to extract the dye from them from inside that shell. It's no small feat. Pliny, the elder, describes the process in detail in his work, *the Natural History*. He says each shell had to be broken open to expose a, this isn't his word, but the, the modern word is the hypobronchial gland, and it's about the size of the tip of a child's little pinky finger.

And inside that tiny little gland is a clear liquid, a liquid that's toxic to the sea snail's prey. But when that liquid is exposed to the air, combined with enzymes that are contained in the gland, the clear-colored precursors of that dye turn into a deep purple or a purplish blue, right on the spot. You can watch it changing in front of your eyes.

The final product of this dye had three shades of purple, a deep, deep violet, a deep scarlet or crimson, or a, a very deep

blue. Beautiful colors. The amount of clear, wic, liquid that is extracted from just one of these snails was only a few little drops, so that's hardly encouraging when you consider that it takes six pounds of this liquid to dye one pound of wool. In more concrete terms, takes 10,000 snails to produce enough dye for a single robe.

Now since this dye is so hard to get, but at the same time it's what's called colorfast. Don't know if you know about that, but its, means it doesn't fade over time, it retains its original hue. In fact, over time, this particular dye becomes even more vibrant the longer it's exposed to the sun and the elements, and this made it highly valued but still prohibitively expensive for the common person.

It's a highly exclusive dye. It was known as, Tyrian purple, in Jesus' area. Tyrian refers to the city of Tyre, where the ancient Phoenicians first discovered this and started producing this dye in the Near East. Pliny mentions other places, as well, where the dye was produced, on the coast of

Algeria and Tunisia, also in Laconia, the southernmost tip of Greece down, down south of Corinth.

But this, this production, the distribution, the use of Tyrian purple, the use of Tyrian purple by consumers who had enough money to pay for it, that's all controlled by the royal courts. Dye producers are regulated about how much they can make, how much dye they could introduce into the market at one time, who they could sell to. Wealthy buyers are restricted from wearing dyed garments since no royal official wants to show up to court in his purple or blue or Tyrian dye and see some Elon Musk kind of a guy show up and upstage him. So they have to restrict this. They have to control it so that only they can wear the coveted color. No one without rank, title, status. They're restricted.

So when Jesus describes this rich man clothing himself in this *porphyra*, this purple, this, this is a visible representation of this man's status, of the degree and the extent of his wealth. He has no concern, this guy, about hiding his wealth, hiding his status, he's not like maybe some rich

Americans who kind of cloak their status and their wealth in maybe common, plain-looking clothing, try to subdue it, try to be understated.

Not this guy. In fact, he's the kind of guy who spares no expense. He wants everyone to see just how wealthy he really is. Purple describes the outer garment, that by which he flaunts his wealth and his status. This is about image, this is about how he appears to people. It's about putting his wealth on display.

This next term, fine linen, this describes the inner garment. This is the one that's worn closest to the skin, the undergarments, linen fabric. It's made from flax, and prior to the invention of machines that automated all our linen making, our textile industries, this is another very labor-intensive process when it's produced by hand.

After harvesting flax stalks, which take roughly three months to grow into the maturity in order to extract the, the fibers, the plants are soaked in water. They're cut down, soaked in water for two weeks. It's a process that's called retting. R-

e-t-t-i-n-g. Retting softens the stalks, and it dissolves the pectin that's inside, that connects and binds those internal fibers together in order that they may be separated and extracted from the stalk.

So after two weeks of retting, then ten days of drying and another five days of what's called "stooking," s-t-o-o-k-i-n-g, that is, to gather the dry stocks together in stooks or bundles and then stand them upright so that they may dry and drain.

Well, there's another process that exposes and removes the fiber known as stutching, crimping, and brushing. You're like, Man, where did this guy study this throughout the week? Don't ask. But it is interesting. But it is also extremely labor-intensive when it's done by hand. Once those fibers have been removed through the stutching, crimping, brushing, they've been removed and they are ready now to be spun into linen thread on a spinning wheel, which is also extremely labor-intensive.

All this before the modern automation, textile industry, all that technology. Back then, the linen was divided into four

types, from the lowest to highest. It was smooth cloth, then thin cloth, then fine thin cloth, and then what's known as byssos, b-y-s-s-o-s. Byssos is the highest quality, the most precious, the most valuable, and that is the term, byssos, that Jesus uses to describe this man's undergarments.

Byssos linen was used in Egypt, and it was exclusively for the Pharaohs and the priestly class. It was also used for, in Egypt, for royal burials, for mummification of the royals. It was used to adorn the statues of the gods. Seems kind of worthless to, but that's how they flaunt their wealth, is to adorn statues with this linen, like the Tyrian purple. Not just anyone could wear byssos linen. This is the clothing of Egyptian Pharaohs and Egyptian priests, Roman emperors and senators. It's the top 1% of the top 1% who are wearing this stuff.

So obviously no one can see this man's byssos undergarments. Jesus is describing this. This isn't any way of flaunting his status. This, this is not about that. That's the external purple. Internally, this is about the, the, the innerwear is what is, is showing his love of physical comfort.

That's what Jesus is describing here. This guy spared no expense, not just for the outward show, but also for the inward feeling, feeling of soft clothing next to his skin.

In the modern world, we take comfort for granted. Our clothing, textiles, technology, automation, all that's drastically reduced the cost of clothing. It puts comfortable clothing within everybody's reach, so we don't think, really, twice about it. But most people throughout history all over the world have worn a much rougher clothing that felt more like wearing something akin to a burlap sack, scratchy, uncomfortable, hot, not breathable, all the time. So Jesus' audience as they hear about this rich man's undergarments, they can only imagine the level of luxury and comfort that this man enjoyed every day of his life. And it's over the top.

So based on how Jesus is describing the man's clothing, we can assume even more about the way he cared for himself and his body. He had baths with skin care treatments in it and lotions and potions and all the rest, all the, the best that money can buy. All of it to bathe his body in luxury, to soothe his skin,

every blemished erased, ever, no pleasure denied him. He's got personal trainers, fitness guys and exercise. And he does his exercise and he does his, his recovery process, and he gets into the bath and he's rubbed down with lotions. This is a man who loved to look good, and this is a man who loved to feel good. He is a proud man in the way he displays his wealth, and he's a sensual man in the way he lives his wealth.

And this is all illusory. Jesus' final description of the man is about how he spent his time. Says, "He feasted sumptuously every day." So by, every day, we get the point. But to emphasize that, Jesus puts the verb *eu, euphraino*, in the present tense, which conveys this continuousness, a habit of living. It's a lifestyle, his habitual way of living, it's one continuous, never-ending party.

The verb *euphraino, euphraino*, doesn't, doesn't strictly mean feasting. It includes food, of course, but the term is broader than that. Refers to merriment, or what they used to call it, glad-making. In our vernacular, though, it's just strictly partying. Partying. Jesus adds an adverb, *lampros*, to

describe the kind of partying that this guy is indulging in. It's luxurious partying. It's sumptuous, and elegant, and lavish spending for the sake of the enjoyment of the party.

This is a man who's got it all. He's got the richest foods, he's got the finest of wines, he's got the most talented performers, the most exciting entertainers, he enjoys the most exclusive, most exotic pleasures. And according to the verb tenses, this is all a continuous, ongoing reality, one never-ending party.

We learn something else about the rich man from verse 20, when Jesus starts to describe the poor man. The poor man's laid where? The rich man's gate, right? Gate. This guy's home had a gate, a *pulona*, and a *pulona* describes a, a gate, or a gateway into a large, large estate such as it could be described for a walled city. That's the *pulona* that, that opens up, and it's got a moat surrounding it, and the drawbridge comes down. That huge gate, that could be described as a *pulona*. Could be a gateway into a temple or a palace complex.

Here it describes the way into this man's palatial mansion. Man's home is not merely in a gated community. The man's home is a gated community. Pictures the man's home, then, as a hive of activity, where daily operations would rival a small city. Rich man's, he owns the best, most capable, most intelligent slaves he could, that money can buy. He has the means to train them up to their fullest potential, to their highest competencies, to get the most out of these slaves who existed for no other reason than to keep his party going.

Arborists, botanists, gardeners, maintain the visual aesthetic in the grounds, the central experience of his estates, the beauty of the grounds, the smells of the blossoms blooming, all of that for his visitors and himself. Chefs planned an exquisite menus. A skilled kitchen staff put the plans into action, provided for all the feasting, the maître d', there, to oversee the service staff, to host and to serve.

Money managers, investment officers, financial planners are all there to make sure his money keeps making more money. He's got nothing to worry about. Security staff protects his

property, his assets, and high above, perched above it all underneath him, making sure the rich man is untroubled. His mind is clear. He concerns himself nothing, with nothing else but pleasure and enjoyment, is a steward, a manager of the whole enterprise. That's the rich man. Uber rich. Filthy rich. Sounds like he's got it made, right? From all appearances, he's got not a worry in the world.

And we remember again, it's just an illusion. The extreme opposite end of the social scale, the very bottom rung of the financial economic ladder, in fact, he's so low he's fallen off the ladder and he's free-falling into oblivion, is another man. Verse 20, verse 20. His situation is abject, dire poverty. "At the rich man's gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs even came and licked at his sores."

Poor man. Jesus used the word *ptochos*, someone who's in abject poverty, someone who's totally dependent on others for support and survival. Adjective comes from a verb that means to

bow down timidly. It refers to a, a man who's completely destitute, no means at all. This isn't like a grifter or a con man that we see on the side of the road holding up a sign, you know, you know, I'll dance for beer, or whatever, that, you know, says, holding up some clever sign on the side of the road. This is not a guy like that.

This is someone who is in abject poverty. He is a true beggar, and Jesus says he's laid at the rich man's gate, right? Passive voice. He's put there by somebody else, perhaps a equally impoverished family member, or maybe a friend. So, so it's not just this man who's poor and destitute. He comes from poverty and destitution. Nobody in his life who cares for him, if he has such people, can provide anything for him. As they say, poverty breeds poverty, right?

So with no means to provide for the man and lay him down at the gate of a rich man, they put him in the path of the wealthy. They hope that somebody with some means and some modicum of sympathy will show this guy some mercy. He's so poor that if no

one gives, he starves. He's so poor that if no one has pity on him, he will most certainly die.

This poor man, his name is Lazarus. Jesus tells us he's been laid at the gate by others, which gives us a little bit of a clue into the chief contributing factor, maybe, of his poverty. Evidently the man is unable to move on his own, which portrays him as severely crippled. He's paralyzed either, at least in his legs, they're para, maybe a paraplegic, or probably more likely, is a quadriplegic. He's paralyzed in both arms and legs. He's unable to fend off the dogs.

So this is in contrast. Remember, he's helpless. He's dependent. He's unable on his own to do anything. This is a contrast to the rich man, right? It says he clothes himself every day. He puts on his own clothes. Middle voice, reflexive idea. Rich man, self-sufficient. Independent, able to take care of himself and his needs and his wants. Poor man can't even clothe himself, can't even move himself, care for himself. He's totally, utterly dependent on others for care and for protection and provision.

Further, while the rich man is clothed in the best clothing money can buy, the poor man is clothed only in his sores. Jesus uses the verb *helkoo* to describe Lazarus as covered with sores. The verb tense indicates that the noun *helkos* refers to an ulcerated sore, like an abscess. You can maybe picture on the skin a large round open sore in the skin. Outer border of the sore is kind of raised and thick, shiny and all that. Inside of the wound looks like a crater, and it weeps with fluid, clear fluid and blood. It's, it's unpleasant to behold, to sight. It's unsightly, unseemly. But even worse, it's painful, painful to experience.

This isn't leprosy. If Lazarus were described here as a leprous man, then the crowd, the audience, would have trouble picturing this man being able to be laid at the rich man's gate. He can't be in a public place with leprosy. He'd be remanded to the outskirts of the city.

But still, what Jesus pictures here, it paints a picture of continuous, unrelenting pain and suffering, an unseemly

unsightliness in front of people. Open, ulcerated abscesses like these can be caused by poor blood circulation. It's common to a paralyzed beggar, has no one there to turn him over and move him around and increase circulation, no one to take care of his abrasions that are caused by either him pulling and scraping himself along the ground or by be, being pulled around the ground by others.

These wounds, not properly treated, well, they become infected, don't they? And the longer they're left unaddressed, these infections, the worse they get. The infection spreads even to the deeper tissues, into the bones and the joints, and even to the blood, where they become toxic and deadly and poisonous. No beautiful or soft clothing to cover this man's body. Nothing to ease the constant pain on the surface of his skin. No means of helping himself.

Jesus adds another element here, if you see, another element to the pathetic picture. It says that "he desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table." Man, Lazarus is hungry. He's hungry. He's starving. Rich man had the means to

indulge every desire, and he did so. Lazarus' desires go largely unmet.

As I was preparing this at different times, my stomach would grumble and I'd say, ohh, I'm kind of hungry, and I'd go, promptly go get something to eat. Huh! How about that, huh? Imagine not being able to go, and even if you have the means to go, you had nothing to get. There's no food coming to you. He longs to have some level of satisfaction, perhaps getting some food tossed out, tossed out of the parties and the banquets, food that falls from the table, out of sight, out of mind of all the dinner guests, falling, forgotten. Ohh, it's touched the floor. Ten-second rule. It's over. I can't touch that.

And then what's ever, whatever swept up after the banqueting is tossed out and licked up by greedy dogs. That's what he dreams to have, dog food. But his belly is filled with nothing but longing. His belly is met with unfulfilled desire. Participle there, from *thymeo*. It's *epithymeon*. It's in the present tense, or *epithymon*, present tense. Most of us can only imagine what it's like to have no food at all, what it's like to

experience a gnawing, unrelenting hunger that's never, ever satisfied.

He's living, a final comment there in the verse, "even the dogs came, licked up his sores." That adds insult to the injury here. First of all, it's the fact that dogs have gathered around him to lick his sores. It indicates he has no strength, no ability, no arms, no physical capability to get them away from him, or himself away from their mouths to avoid being licked by dogs. Why are the dogs coming to lick him? Because his body is covered with these repulsive sores that they find appealing.

Rich man was there, too, had all the means to pamper his own skin and soothe it with lotions and ointments and, find, fine linen. Lazarus, here, he's clothed, covered in sores, extremely painful, with nothing to soothe his skin but the rough tongues of the dogs.

Now lest you, especially you Disneyfied younger generations imagine this poor guy surrounded by fluffy, playful, cute little puppies, trust me, Jesus is not talking about a pet here. This

is the world, the word *kyonai*. These are vicious street dogs. If you've ever been to maybe south of the US border to like Tijuana or someplace like that, or go to the Middle East or go to India, you're going to see this is a common sight.

These, these curs that roam the streets often in packs, they're mangy, dirty, flea-bitten, disease-ridden animals. They're ravenous. They're unpredictable. They're dangerous. Not only that, but the *kyonai*, the dogs, they're scavengers. They feed on dead things, and so these dogs surround him 'cause they can smell death. As these dogs catch the scent of Lazarus, they know death is imminent for him. So when they come near to lick his sores, that's not to apply comfort to his skin. This is a sense of relief from his misery. His sores are appetizers for the dogs before they eat their main meal, which is Lazarus.

By the way, there's no good evidence, as some have supposed, that dogs licking his sores will provide some kind of analgesic or analgesic or sterilizing benefit. Contrary to popular myth, dogs' mouths are not cleaner than human mouths. All right? Put that aside. Mouths are filled with whatever

bacteria that you put into them by eating food. So whenever these scavenger street dogs are eating in the streets, dead things and the like, consider their mouths not very pleasant. They're bacterial Petri dishes licking all over his body.

So his misery, sorry to be disgusting. It's in the text though, okay? It's, I got to preach, be faithful to what's there. His misery is not really by the dogs. In fact, if anything, his condition is worsened. Not only that, but because these dogs are scavengers, they're feeding on dead things, they're ceremonially unclean as well. This is what adds insult to the injury, that this is what made Lazarus ceremonially unclean through no fault of his own.

But to his pain is added the humiliation and shame of being laughed at by these mangy mongrels, these ceremonially unclean curs. And so this is all happening in public, in front of everybody. How shameful. How embarrassing. And in the judgment of his community, he's already repulsive. He's already someone they want to stand apart from. But now they see the dogs there, and he's the lowest of the low. He's the vilest of the unclean.

The company of unclean dogs meant he'd get no sympathy from his fellow man because they considered him cursed.

Here's Lazarus. He's alone at the gate of the rich man. His only companions are the dogs that will devour his body once he's expired. And from the gate he can hear the sounds of the, of the partying going on, of the rich man in the company of wealthy, powerful, beautiful people, the elites, the movers, the shakers, the somebodies, all within earshot of Lazarus laying at the gate.

From all appearances, the rich man is somebody. He's made it. Lazarus, he's the nobody. He is the forgotten, accursed. From all appearances, the rich man's life, that's the one that's counted. That's the one that matters. Lazarus' life counts for nothing. He's in a condition worse than Job. He's the dregs of humanity. He's really taking up space, and the space itself is more valuable than that life is. It's not even a life worthy to be lived, according to the rabbis.

And yet notice: Jesus has given this poor man a name. The name of the rich man is not known. Some have tried to balance this story, given the name Dives or Divase or, or Dive to the rich man. D-i-v-e-s. It looks like dives, but it's a Latin word, *dives*, that means rich. So it's not really a name, it's just a description.

But that's not the rich man's name. The rich man has no name, and giving him a name in the parable really distracts from the point because there is a reason Jesus gave a name to this poor man. By the fact that the poor man is named, Jesus gives his audience, he gives us a hint. Not everything is as it seems.

The rich man is not as rich as he appears to be. He's not as secure. He's not without a care in the world, as he thinks, as we suppose him to be. Likewise, the poor man is not so impoverished as he seems to be by our outward observation, because he has a name.

Inserted into the starkly contrasting descriptions of the rich man and the poor man, Jesus adds this clue. He gives us

this hint. Not everything is as it seems. Tells us, basically as the audience, don't judge by appearances. Poor man's name, that he gives him, his Lazarus, rich with significance.

He's not a, I should just clear this up right now. He's, he's not alluding to his friend Lazarus. Jesus is not alluding to his friend, the brother of Mary and Martha, the one he raised from the dead in John 11. That's not that Lazarus. That Lazarus in John 11, Jesus' friend, brother of Mary and Martha, he was not poor, he was not paralyzed, he was not covered with sores. He was financially very well off.

The name Lazarus is not significant because it's Jesus' friend. It's significant for another reason. Lazarus is the Hebrew name Lazar, which is a shortened form of the name Eliezar. Eliezar means, God helps or God has helped.

Again, judging by outward appearances, it would seem like God isn't helping this poor man at all. By how it seems on the outside, God seems to have abandoned this man. Still, by his condition, by virtue of this hint of his name, Jesus is showing

us a man whose only hope is in God. And if he's to be helped at all, his hope will not come from this world. His hope will only come from God.

By all, all outward appearances, Lazarus has nothing going for him. The rich man has everything going for him. Lazarus has everything stacked against him, so it seems. For Lazarus, there's no sympathy coming from any other human being, not a hint of help. So with hope and humanity shattered, gone, no help coming from men, the poor man's help, well, it can only be from God, right? From God alone.

And that is enough. The psalmist Asaph, we read this earlier, Psalm 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you? There's nothing on earth I desire besides you." Why would he say that? Because he gets it. Because if God is our help, we have no need. If God is our help, the eternal one, the one with infinite treasure, infinite riches, the one with great infinite omnipotent power, do we have any need? Do we have any lack? Do we have any want? Not at all, not at all.

When Jesus' disciples were abandoning him at the end of John chapter 6, they're all leaving because they thought they were going to get free lunch, free food from this miraculous supply that he just keeps producing. Bread and fish, bread and fish. Bread that had never grown on this earth and been formed into loaves of bread had to taste amazing. Fish that had never swam through the seas, all of a sudden, present, presented before them, not swimming through polluted waters or anything else. Fresh. Eating, eating, eating their fill, they followed Jesus. They wanted more.

And when he starts telling them about eating his body and his blood, they're like, whaa! Cannibalism! I can't understand any of this! And they leave, and they judge him. Jesus looks up after speaking to them and confronting them, and he sees his disciples standing around him, and he says, "You don't want to go away, too, do you?" Peter says, "Where are we're going to go? You have the words of eternal life."

In God, the source of all life, if we have him, if he is our help, we have no lack though we be Lazarus at the gates,

covered in sores licked by the dogs. We are in an advantaged position. The rich man may seem to have it all together. He has the world on a string, always with money in his pocket and a smile on his face. But actually, it's Lazarus who is the richest of all. With God as his helper, he lacks not one thing.

And that's what we see next as death comes, and death is the great revealer. Death removes all the illusion. It rips away the mask and shows that how things seem to be are not as they may appear, and it reveals, point number two, write this down, how things really are, how things really are. From here on, that's what we're going to see: stark reality. For the rest of the parable, we're going to see how death has revealed things as they really are, and Jesus starts with the beggar Lazarus, gives this poor man some relief.

Poor man died, verse 22, and he's carried by the angels to Abraham's side. And stop there for a second. Poor man died. No mention of his burial, probably because his body is half-eaten by the dogs and then captured and dumped into a rubbish pile.

But there is an immediate transfer, isn't there, to Abraham's side.

And Jesus is not trying to teach immediate bodily resurrection, here. That's not, he's not teaching doctrine here. He's simply using popular imagery to aid their imagination. We might talk today when we're talking to people about, going to see Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates, but we don't really try to say that the Apostle Peter is up there checking IDs and taking tickets and all that. It's the same thing here, same thing in the imagery. Angels carry Lazarus to Abraham's side, and that's a picture, for the Jews, of paradise. That's how they picture it.

So Jesus wants his audience, here, to picture this radical reversal of fortune. Here's the Lazarus' limp, useless, helpless body, once carried by men and dumped at the gate of the rich man. And now he's carried upward in the powerful arms of angels, transported from the lowest low he'll ever know, transported from what is the closest to hell he'll ever come. He's taken up

to the highest height that any Jew could ever imagine, to be at Abraham's side in paradise.

Jewish theology in Jesus' day, they believed angels conveyed the souls of the righteous to Abraham's side. The word, side, that's an interesting word, the word *kolpos*. So that doesn't actually mean, side like beside, but it actually means chest, you know, this area of the front of the body between the arms, the chest area, sometimes called the breast or the bosom. You'll see that translation.

But the *kol*, the *kolpos*, is that area not at the side, as if it's unfamiliar or even, even an honored place. But it's right here, it's, it's in the chest area. This is a place of closeness, it's a place of, of friendship, of familiarity. It's of, of personal, this is your personal space, and when they were close friends, they didn't mind getting into one another's personal space, place for private conversation. This is a place where John, the beloved disciple, he just wants to, just wants to hug Jesus, and be there, sitting as close as possible and leaning on his *kolpos*.

The word *kolpos* can also be used in geographical terms. It can be referred to a terrain feature along a shoreline that we call an inlet or a bay. So it's where an inlet or a bay is, where harbors are built so that ships can come in and find refuge and shelter from storms. So there is a, an element of safety and security, of a harbor that's nestled into a bay and sheltered in that inlet, letting sailors recuperate and rest, letting them refit, replenish the ship.

And all that is included in this picture as well. Abraham's side is also a place of honor, as Jesus said in Luke 13:28. This is where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are, along with all the prophets. They're rejoicing at the table in the kingdom of God. So Abraham's *kolpos*, this is the highest of the high. It's a picture of close friendship and intimacy. It's a place of eternal refuge and rest. It's a place of great honor and eternal glory.

So when Lazarus crosses over this threshold, death is no enemy to him. Death is a friend. He's moved from this life into

the afterlife, afterlife, and all that suffering is forgotten in this place of refuge and rest. All his humiliation is forever eclipsed in this place of honor and glory, all his loneliness replaced with intimate friendship with none other than Abraham. He's in the company of the righteous men made perfect.

Finally and forever, Lazarus's state of being has been transformed radically, utterly, eternally. He's been, his state of being, what he really is, despite all appearances to the contrary, what he really is, is now brought into alignment with reality, and it is the just pleasure of God to do so. He is the righteous. He is a believer in God, the God who is his help.

And you say, wait a minute, wait a minute, time out. I didn't see anything in the description, there, that said Lazarus is a believer. How do you know he believed in God? Well, it's by deduction. At the end of the conversation between Abraham and the rich man, what is it that kept the rich man out of paradise? What is it that would keep his five brothers out of paradise? It's the fact that they disregarded and did not believe Moses and the prophets, right?

So if the rich man is in torment for refusing to regard Scripture, and Lazarus is in paradise, then what do we conclude? He regarded Moses and the prophets. This man is a true believer. He obeyed the word of God. Even in his severely diminished, extremely limited capacity that Jesus has described for us, Jesus has also confirmed that Lazarus is a believer in God, that he is a believer in his name's sake, the God who helps. He believed and obeyed Moses and the prophets. That's where he found his hope, not in what he could see. It's what was unseen, what was promised to him in the Scriptures.

And the God he read about there is the God who knows him. It's the God who sees all his suffering. This is the God who helps him. This is the God who lifts him up from the deepest pit to bring him to the highest height: paradise at Abraham's side.

Takes us back, doesn't it, to Luke Chapter 6, what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus pictures, here, in a parable, what he taught in the Beatitudes, there. Luke 6:20-23, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours," is what? Highest

height, "the kingdom of God. Blessed are you are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied," filled. "Blessed are you who weep now. You shall laugh." Trust God. Trust him. This poor man, Lazarus, he trusted God. And God turned it all around. And that is not for a short minute, amount of time in this life. That is forever in the life to come.

Jesus now turns in verse 22 to the rich man's fate, and this is where things get somber, sobering. If you're not a believer in Jesus Christ, this should be terrifying, deeply troubling. It illustrates the woes that Jesus pronounced in Luke 6:24-26, where he said, "But woe to you who are rich, for you've received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry, then, woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."

Look at verse 22. "The rich man also died, was buried. And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off, Lazarus at his side." In his death, the rich man no doubt had a lavish funeral. He's not there to enjoy it, but it's one last hurrah with his money, on his dime. It's

attended by the wealthiest, prettiest, most important, influential people. Jesus mentions none of that. Doesn't matter. "The rich man also died and was buried." That's it. Party over. Reality sets in.

Several points mark his new state of being. First, he's got a new location. He's taken up residence somewhere else. He'd been living in a palatial mansion. That no longer translates. Now his new residence is in Hades. Concept of Sheol, that's the, actually the word used here, Hades. Concept of Sheol is what predominates the Old Testament. That's where Sheol is a picture of where all souls go, righteous and unrighteous, that's where they go after death.

But in Sheol, that's where the righteous will receive their reward on the way to an eternal reward. And it's where the unrighteous receive their punishment while they await judgment. So Sheol in the Old Testament, same place, different fates, different outcomes, different judgments.

New Testament separates the fates of the righteous and the unrighteous into paradise for the righteous and Hades for the unrighteous. Hades always describes the place, in the New Testament, of torment for the unrighteous. So while they await the final judgment and sentencing to eternal Hell, to the lake of fire, that's where they are.

You can think about it in, in criminal or, or, you know, judicial terms. You can think about it in terms of that's where the criminal waits in jail as he's going through his trial process while he awaits, you know, the final outcome of the trial and the sentencing. Once he comes to the sentencing, they take him from there. He never goes back to, to the jail. He never goes back to Hades, so to speak. He goes on to his final sentencing, and in this case, the final sentencing would be what? Eternal hell, right? Eternal, conscious torment.

That's the doctrine that undergirds all that we're teaching here in Luke 16. Eternal, conscious torment in hell. He's not in hell, yet. That's not the final sentencing, and yet, same feeling, same reality. Because death and Hades, according to

Revelation, will be cast into the lake of fire. So he's going to go with his abode into that final state, that final sentencing.

Rich man, according to this, immediately realizes because, where he is, because of a second reality: the experience of a severe pain. That awakens him. His new state of being is in, in a condition of torment. It's the word *basanos*. It describes the torture that's inflicted on a prisoner. And if it's a prisoner of war, it's to a, maybe elicit confession or maybe just to inflict punishment. Sometimes the word *basanos* referred to the torture implement itself, like an older version of a, of a medieval rack meant to inflict pain.

We're understandably squeamish about torture in our day. The Abu Ghraib prison scandal, that's never far from the American conscience. I can assure you, though, that our enemies have no such qualms about inflicting pain and torture on their prisoners. They have no squeamishness, no soft stomach about torture. Most of the world throughout history and even today tortures its victims without mercy. Want to see what happens if Russia wins? Want to see what happens when China wins? You want

to see what happens when ISIS or Al Qaeda or any of those people win? Torture without mercy.

This is torment, that Jesus describes here. And remember, this is the Jesus that, back in Luke 15, described the father as so loving, compassionate, merciful, running to his prodigal, embracing him in his arms, saving him. We turn the chapter and see Jesus describing this: Torture. If it's torture, if it's torment, you know what that means? Means there's a torturer. Means there's a tormenter. This is intentional. Someone is in charge of the pain.

Remember, this is Jesus describing the torture of the wicked in Hades, and that adds a certain element of terror to punishment in the afterlife because it's the sudden realization that the one who's been rejected, the one who's been rebelled against, the one who knows all things and sees all things into the secrets of the heart, but hears every word and sees every deed, that is the one who's in charge of the torture. The one against whom all sin has been committed is the one in charge of pain and torture and torment in the afterlife as well.

This is a terrifying, sobering reality. And, beloved, if your heart is not moved for compassion for your unbelieving friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, you've got to question whether you have a pulse. This is gripping, and this ought to grip our hearts for the lost.

We understand God is sovereign over salvation. Oh, if I didn't believe that, I could not sleep at all at night knowing one person hadn't heard the message of the Gospel. But beloved, we've got to talk to our neighbors. We've got to talk to our friends because this is where they're going if they don't put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Third reality Jesus describes here end of verse 23 shows the man who is in torment and he's conscious. He knows he's in torment, and it says here in verse 23, "He lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off," Abraham far, far away. Pleasure, pleasantness, paradise, far, far from himself. There's a vast unpassable distance. He's in total separation, total isolation. Abraham's there, Lazarus at his side.

Well, what's this about? This is, this is the additional internal pain. By, by the way, Jesus is telling a parable. So there are elements here that are not total reality, stretched. This is for the sake of illustration, for the sake of understanding. Obviously, no one in torment can look up and see paradise.

So what Jesus is describing in pictorial, graphic, vivid language, is the experience of the conscience, the experience of the mind. This is the additional internal pain that's brought on by an awakened conscience and feelings of eternal regret. Jesus said in Luke 13:28, he says, "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth," when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, you yourselves cast out.

Rich man recognizes and consciously recognizes and thinks about, with everlasting regret, that God had provided him in his life with a continuous and convenient opportunity, Lazarus lying daily at his gate, and means that he had in his possession to

alleviate the suffering of a fellow human being, and he did nothing. Now in a profound, profound reversal of fortune, whereas he was once clothed in purple and fine linen, Lazarus clothed in his sores, now he is clothed in flame.

Whereas he once filled his belly, Lazarus went hungry, now he longs, verse 24, for just a drop of water to relieve his suffering, and he gets nothing. Whereas he's once surrounded by wealthy, flattering companions, tell him all the great things about him, Lazarus is surrounded by dogs who tell him nothing but just lick his sores. Now he's left utterly alone except for his thoughts, except for the unrelenting torment of an accusing and awakened conscience.

Jesus brought his audience into the story in verse 23, and he wants us to come in and enter into the story as well. Our English translations in verse 23 puts all the verbs in the past tense. It's kind of conveys right English grammar. But the verb translated, he saw, that verb is actually, in the Greek, it's in the present tense. It's, a, what's called a historical present, and it's intended to bring the audience into the story so that

we would kind of picture ourselves there and think about what would this be like.

Here's how it sounds, it says "in Hades, lifting up his eyes, being in tormenting pain." Here's the verb. He is seeing Abraham at a great distance, Lazarus at his side. He's seeing it. Are you seeing it?

Friend, imagine that's you and you're looking up from this perspective and you're seeing this sight, and you're coming to this dreadful realization. Imagine that's you. There's no escape from this place. There's no end to the torment. No one goes to heaven simply by being poor. Neither does anyone go to hell by being rich or vice versa.

Remember Abraham? He's among the wealthiest of his generation. He's pictured here as a harbor of refuge for the Lazarus who's at his side. The wealthy are to be a harbor of refuge for the Lazaruses of this world. If you have means, is that you? For those of us with means, especially in this wealthy

country, unprecedented wealth in this modern world and in this country, we need to take heed of the warning of this parable.

Albert Barnes makes an insightful point, here. "Jesus speaks of no great fault in the rich man, no external degrading vice, no open breach of the law. And he leaves us to infer that the mere possession of wealth may be dangerous to the soul, and that a man surrounded with every temporal blessing may perish forever." End quote.

My friend, I don't know anybody's financial condition. All I can do is look at the exterior, just like you do with me. But I know we are clothed well, we eat well, we've homes to live in. Friends, think about how you spend. I'm not trying to preach a social justice gospel here. I'm not. But I am trying to encourage compassion, a right ordering of your priorities. I'm trying to encourage you, make friends by means of unrighteous wealth. Be a good steward of what God has given you. Care for people.

Are you playing the role that God has chosen you to play in this world, to be a harbor of refuge and rest for those who are weary? Do you offer your friendship and the benefits of your wealth, experience, and competency to those who people who are in need, or only to those people who you think can pay you back? Is it a *quid pro quo* arrangement with you all the time? Money for favors, money for access, money for benefits, money for money. Do you honor the poor, those with very little means? Or do you treat them with indifference and even put distance between you and them in contempt?

Remember what Jesus said, Luke 16:9, "Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth," so that when it fails, and it will fail, your money is going to be gone and useless there. They may receive you. Those friends may receive you into the eternal dwellings. Why is that? Why do we think that way? Because we look to the, not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. The things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen, they are eternal.

That is reality. It's not about your comfort. It's not about your pleasure. It's not about making you feel good. We all enjoy the comforts that God provides. We're to receive all good things that he gives us with gratitude and joy, and we should not feel ashamed when God makes distinctions among us of those who have more and those who have less. That's his prerogative. But every single one of us needs to take into account what are our priorities. How do we care or how do we not care?

Because death removes the illusion of what really matters, strips it away. Now friend, you can realize that now when you can do something about it, when you can repent of your sins. You can recognize the holiness of God that you've offended with your life, with your sins against him, with your rebellion, with your self-centeredness. You can recognize how you've offended His holiness.

Repent of your sins. Put your faith in the only atonement that there is, which is the death of Jesus Christ for sins when he died on the cross, died as a substitute for all who would believe and put their faith in him, for all those who would

follow him as Savior and Lord, and walk with him in patient obedience, denying self, taking up their cross and following him.

That's what counts, using your life as a stewardship. All your money, your time, your resources, all that is a stewardship rendered unto him. If you wait until your own death comes to have that illusion taken away to reveal what's real, man, that's too late. You'll share in the rich man's fate.

But if you recognize it now, and you put your faith in him, and you follow him, and you find the joy of a godly stewardship and the joy of generosity toward people, my friend, we'll be at Abraham's side together, feasting, rejoicing.

When we come back next week, we're going to hear the rich man appealing to Abraham, arguing a little bit with him. It's kind of interesting to see, harrowing, scary, but it's going to teach us amazing lessons in the justice of God and the sinfulness of sin. Until next time, let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you for your wisdom and your mercy and grace in revealing your Word to us. We thank you for sending the Lord Jesus Christ to be in his first advent the Savior of the world. We know in his second coming, his second advent, he will judge the ungodly. There will be no time to repent when he comes again. But for now, there is a time, patience. There is a time of a season for, in which we can repent, put faith in you and trust the Messiah, the Christ that you've sent.

And I pray for everybody in the hearing of my voice that, make this reality for, for them today, that they would find salvation in Christ, that we would order our lives according to the reality that he has revealed to us in this dramatic and vivid parable, there would be none of us, not one of us, who shares the rich man's fate. We love you, Father. We thank you so much for Jesus Christ, our Savior and our eternal Lord. It's in his name we pray. Amen.