**The Missionary That Waited Too Late**

**Luke 16:27-29**

**Join me, if you dare, as we try to hear Jesus speak to our 21st century world through a parable from his first century world.**

**It begins with two characters as starkly different as the five foolish virgins were from the five wise virgins.**

**Jesus begins his parable “There was a rich man.”**

**The man has no name. He’s just a rich man.**

 **But the words “rich man” translated into Latin is dives, so sometimes he is called Dives.**

**Jesus doesn’t give him a name.**

**He only tells us he “dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury everyday” (16:19)**

**The other character in the parable is given a name, Lazarus.**

**The name comes from the Hebrew name “Eleazer” which means “God helps.”**

**Lazarus is a pitiful beggar.**

**He is covered with sores and longing to eat any of the crumbs that might fall from the table of the rich man with no name.**

**Everyday this man who lived in fine clothes and lived well passed this beggar almost everyday…**

**He saw his condition.**

**He understood his plight.**

**But even though he was blessed beyond measure….**

**He was never moved to extend his blessing to others.**

**How does this translate into the Christian faith?**

**We teach justification by faith don’t we?**

**We teach we cannot earn salvation through works, even the good works of being generous to the poor.**

**We can’t earn salvation by feeding Lazarus.**

**All of that is true.**

**But neither do we teach that faith and works are two separate matters.**

**The sting of this parable is true for the New Testament just as it was for the Jewish mindset of Jesus’ contemporaries. James, the brother of Jesus said, IN James 2:14-17 *“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if people claim to have faith but have no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs what good is it*?**

***The same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead*”.**

**Just a few short epistles later John declares, *“If anyone of you has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in you?*” (1 Jn 3:17).**

**The NT teaches that faith and works are part of the same fabric.**

**Jesus is teaching a powerful truth in this parable that every age needs to hear:**

**We Can’t Separate Our Eternal Destiny With Our Earthly Activity!**

**We can’t ignore the poor, step over their bodies, dismiss their pleas, and remain absorbed in our materialistic pursuits and expect to end up anywhere but in the same place as this tormented rich man.**

**Dives was overwhelmed by the mindset of self preservation…**

**His mission in life was to make sure he had everything he needed to make his life comfortable……**

**Dives discovered too late that his money couldn’t help him.**

**He discovered too late that his fine clothes didn’t impress anyone now….**

**And he discovered too late that the greatest mission in life is not self-gratification but soul salvation….**

**He Is A Missionary That Waited Too Late.**

**The question I want to ask you this morning is this:**

**Are you missionary minded and if so whose mission are you minding……**

**YOURS OR God’S…**

**While he was alive Dives earthly minded and no heavenly good.**

**But look at the change in him now.**

**Before He Had Charisma But Now He Has Concern….**

**Vs. 27 “send Lazzrus to my fathers house….**

**People who have a missionary mindset are concerned about the lost…**

**They are concerned about not only their present state but their eternal future….**

**There’s something wrong with a believer who passes by lost people day after day but never shares the blessing of God’s grace?**

**Too many in the church has no concern for the lost.**

**They are not concerned for their future or their fate.**

**They are modern day Dives on their way to the same place.**

**Not Only Did Dives Have Concern But He Had A Plan.**

**It’s in the text…”*send Lazarus to my five brothers so that he may testify to them*…”**

**Some one said that if you fail to plan you can plan to fail…**

**Dives is in torment, he suffering, he’s realizes that hell aint the party everybody thought it would be…**

**And now when it’s too late he finally gets some concern.**

**But notice even though he now shows some concern for others and develops a plan, it’s still a selfish concern…**

**Send word to MY house, MY family, MY people…**

**It was as selfish as him asking God to send Lazarus to bring him water……**

**Somebody better listen today….**

**God’s plan is not to just go to people who know, or people you like.**

**God’s plan is not limited to a chosen few….**

**But His plan is a who so ever plan….**

**“*Who so ever will let him come*……**

**Listen Church…. The Concern Of Our Heart Needs To Be Expanded, Because Only Then Will The Reach Of Our Efforts Be Increased.**

**If we are going to carry out God’s mission we need to get in line with God’s plan…**

***Mark 16:15 (NKJV) “****And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”*

**I know this is going to rattle the cage of some of you pew hugging Baptist…**

**But the plan is for you to get up and go….**

**Preach if you have too…**

**Teach if you can…**

**But Testify to everyone who will listen the gospel of God’s amazing grace.**

**Dives said Luke 16:30-31 (NKJV)**
 ***And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'  But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "***

**Listen I think the point Jesus is making here is that it’s not the person that brings salvation….**

**IT’S THE MESSAGE!!!!!**

**It doesn’t matter if it’s a preacher or deacon or Sunday school teacher….**

**It doesn’t matter if it’s a choir member or back slidden Baptist…..**

**THE ONLY THING THAT WILL BRING A LOST SOUL TO REPENTANCE IS THE GOSPEL OF GOD….**

**Jesus friend Lazarus died and Jesus raised him up but they didn’t repent…**

**Jarius daughter was brought back to life but they still crucified Jesus….**

**Jesus got up that after three days in the grave and people are still unbelieving and unrepentant….**

**It’s the word of God that brings revelation.**

**It’s the gospel of grace that brings deliverance.**

**It’s the word made flesh that paid the price for the sins of man.**

**It’s the word that will save you.**

**It’s the word that will raise you.**

**It’s the word that will cleanse your sins and save your soul.**

**Don’t be like Dives today church…..**

**Don’t wait until it’s too late to get missionary minded.**

**Develop concern for down trodden today.**

**Develop compassion for those blinded by sin.**

**Let God’s plan be the focus of your life….**

**Go out and tell somebody…**

**Go out and testify of the goodness of God’s grace….**

**Is there a Lazarus at your doorstep? Is there a Lazarus in your community? Is there some way for you to take seriously the call of Jesus to demonstrate our faith through deeds of compassion? Of course. Absolutely!There is no excuse. Absolutely none.**

**There was no excuse for this rich man who passed by Lazarus every day. And there is no excuse for you and me. If you’re waiting from someone to come back from the dead to shake you up, …consider yourself shaken. Jesus died, and came back from the dead. And he’s here today, telling us to have compassion on poor Lazarus. Amen.**