



## The Great Divide

### Compassion and Contrast

This parable contains the only passage in the Bible that describes the actual thoughts, emotions, and words of somebody who is in hell. But it also contains a stirring account of two men who experience a great 'reversal.'

**Introduction:** There are two main themes in this parable: Divine evaluation in the afterlife and the hardness of heart that cannot be

overcome even by a resurrection. And, our service to others shows something about our loyalty to God.

#### A. The Earthly Experience :19-21

##### The contrast: Two people

1. One dressed in purple living in luxury
2. The other covered with sores living in poverty
3. One was a rich poor man
4. The other a poor rich man
5. Note: there is nothing in the parable that condemns the rich man for being rich or praises the poor man for being poor.

#### B. The Death Experience :22-23

##### A reversal of fortune

1. One had a great funeral
2. One was ushered home by angels
3. The poverty of the rich man was intensified
4. The riches of the poor man were intensified

#### C. The After Death Experience :24-31

##### Lazarus

1. His outlook remained essentially unchanged. He had known God in life, and God did not disappoint him afterward.

##### The Rich Man

1. Death for him was a shock! It overthrew his value system entirely and introduced him to thoughts he never believed he would have.
2. Jewish wisdom saw the rich as blessed by God and the poor as punished for their wickedness.
3. He had the resources but lacked the compassion
4. In death, the rich man suddenly became evangelistic
5. The rich man's view of Lazarus did not change—he saw him as beneath him and one who was to serve him
6. How we relate to God vertically influences how we relate to people horizontally.

##### Too Late

The rich man pays attention to Lazarus *too late*

He sees the unbridgeable chasm *too late*

He worries about his brothers *too late*

He heeds the law and their prophets *too late*

*It is better to beg bread on earth than to beg water in Hades*

Luke 16:19-31

**:19** "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

**:20** But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,

**:21** desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

**:22** So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

**:23** And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

**:24** "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

**:25** But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

**:26** And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

**:27** "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

**:28** for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

**:29** Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

**:30** And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

**:31** 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.' "