

A study of Jesus' Parables

ETERNITY

Watch this 2-minute clip from the QR code.



Nick Foles is a committed Christian who also happens to be a Super Bowl winning quarterback. He stated that hoisting the Lombardi trophy wasn't where his identity was found. That's good, because as he faced injury playing for the Jacksonville Jaguars, that didn't define him either.

Athletes, I've got hard news for you. One day your sports career will end. Seniors, most of you will be done at the end of the school year. All the work, all the toil, all the blood, sweat, tears, and fears will come to a close. Who will you be if you're not an athlete? Who will you be if you're no longer popular? Possibly worse, who will you be if you become a superstar?

Our final three Weeks will focus on eternity. It takes everything we've learned so far and stretches us to think of the end of our lives. Will we be ready? While so much of the world is in a quest for identity, if our identity is in Christ, no matter our circumstances, the answer is, "Yes, we will be ready for eternity."

LUKE 16:19-31

¹⁹ "There was a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.

²⁰ But at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus whose body was covered with sores, ²¹ who longed to eat what fell from the rich man's table. In addition, the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² "Now the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And in Hades, as he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far off with Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ So he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this fire.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus likewise bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. ²⁶ Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' ²⁷ So the rich man said, 'Then I beg you, father—send Lazarus to my father's house ²⁸ (for I have five brothers) to warn them so that they don't come into this place of torment.' ²⁹ But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they must respond to them.' ³⁰ Then the rich man said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' ³¹ He replied to him, 'If they do not respond to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

SCOUTING REPORT

SETTING Disciples & Pharisees

NEED Contrast status and wealth in this world v. eternity.

STORY Rich man v. beggar, Lazarus, switch positions in their eternal destiny.

TRUTH True wealth is eternal

DISCUSSION

Visit www.globalrichlist.com and type in the salary you hope to receive in your future career. What did you discover?

1. Who are the two lead characters and what do we learn about their lives? (19-21)

#1

#2

2. What reason was given that Abraham denied the rich man's request for water? (25-26)

3. What miracle does the rich man think would convince his family to repent? (30)

4. Why would someone who rejects God's Word not accept God's miracles such as raising someone from the dead as Abraham suggests? (31)

5. Name some things in your world that are highly prized versus what is highly prized by God.

Thinking of eternity brings many emotions. That's normal. However, as Christians, we have confidence (see 1st John 5:13). If you have doubts or questions, talk to your coach today.

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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STUDY NOTES

PRIVILEGE

The word "privilege" is a cultural buzzword. Perhaps you have teachers who've pounded on "privilege" and whether you have it or you don't. It's usually used in reference to inequality of wealth, race, or some other hot topic that gets people riled up. It impacts education, law enforcement, and a host of complicated issues.

Inequality is real and I don't want to make light of it. However, while some of us have more "privilege" than others, all of us have privileges. For example, if you go to www.globalrichlist.com, and type in your family's income, you can see where you stack up against the world's population. Most likely, compared to the world, you're rich—very rich. What you'll see is that a household income of just \$32,500 is in the top 1% of the wealthiest people on the planet.

Again, because someone is in the top percentages of wealthiest people on the planet, doesn't mean they don't face significant challenges. However, realizing our comparative wealth should broaden our perspective and gratitude about the advantages we have. If we have a pulse, we have privilege and we have an opportunity—possibly to share an eternal privilege.

Secular academics and thinkers have been looking at the issues of privilege and inequality and do you know what they're preaching? "Use your privilege to help others." That's great advice. In fact, God said some very similar things in the Law of Moses recorded over 3,000 years ago.

As we have seen, Jesus proclaimed a message of helping others, such as in Week 6 with the Good Samaritan. However, Jesus' ultimate message went far beyond issues of wealth and race. Jesus taught of an entirely different kind of privilege—the privilege of coming into a relationship with the God of the Universe. Whatever privilege a person may seek, nothing is more valuable. It's completely free and completely available to all people. The only condition for this great privilege is to believe it and receive it.

A BEGGAR ILLUSTRATES TRUE WEALTH

Today's parable states the condition of two different men. The first, **was a rich man** who had the best dress and food. The second was **a poor man named Lazarus** who **was covered with sores** and **longed to eat what fell from the rich man's table**. After a brief introduction about the condition of their lives, both men died.

The fates of both men were opposite. **The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side.** The rich man, however, woke up **in Hades, as he was in torment.**

Quickly, we want to note that, while there is a lot to learn in this parable, it's not designed to teach specifics about salvation, heaven, hell or anything of the sort. Lazarus was not "saved" because he was poor. The rich man was not condemned because he was rich. Likewise, while heaven and hell are real, they are probably different than pictured here. We can safely glean, though, that the torment the rich man faced was tragic and serious.

The torture was so bad, and the rich man's thirst so strong that **he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this fire.'** Although those in heaven probably can't hear those in hell, **Abraham** responded. The rich man had never considered the suffering of Lazarus until he was suffering. True wealth is not found in earthly riches. It's found through investing in eternity.

TRUE WEALTH COMES ONLY THROUGH FAITH

The rich man, understanding his situation, wished that his family not suffer the same fate. He begged Abraham, **"Send Lazarus to my father's house."** Abraham said they must respond to what God has already revealed through **Moses and the prophets. Then the rich man said, "No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."**

Perhaps you have prayed something similar. That God would give you a sign that he is real. Here we read a warning about dismissing a God who doesn't jump through our hoops. Abraham's response should haunt us for these kinds of prayers, **"If they do not respond to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."**

Abraham's words eerily confirm what Jesus understood. No greater miracle could be done than conquering death. Jesus did that, yet many do not believe. What miracle could convince someone if not the resurrection? A person who rejects God's Word will reject everything God does.

The world prizes wealth and privilege. The Lord prizes humility and repentance. We must test ourselves in this. We must ask ourselves where is our wealth?

Where is our privilege? How are we using these things to impact eternity? It would be a shame to settle for riches, when God has so much more in store for us.