

Life before death

Luke 16.19-31

Jesus tells a story about two men, one very rich who lives grandly, and one homeless and sick. Both die. The poor man is carried by the angels to 'Abraham's bosom' – we might call that heaven. The rich man goes to a place of endless torment and asks Abraham to take a warning to his surviving brothers. The reply is, essentially, that their warning is to listen to God's prophets – if they don't do that, nothing else will make any difference.

Now read Luke 16.19-31 see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

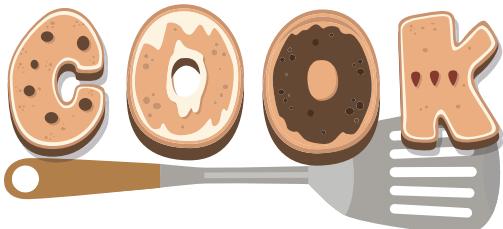
The story begins rather like a joke: 'there was a rich man and a poor man...' But that is where the joke ends. Jesus is warning listeners who, we are told, love money, that they need to think about the way they are living now, and care for those less fortunate. It is no good waiting till something bad happens and then wishing you had been more considerate.



Find out about the Fairtrade logo, then look through your food cupboards and see what fairly traded goods you have bought. Go to a supermarket and look for the Fairtrade logo. See what other fair trade things you could get (e.g. drinks, honey, biscuits). You could look at the Planbee website: <https://planbee.com/blogs/news/fair-trade-facts-for-kids>



Look together at the Dollar Street website www.gapminder.org/dollar-street?p=5 which shows families from right across the world, with photographs that illustrate their homes, habits and lifestyles. What is the same and what is different? Who is rich and who is poor? How do you find out and does it matter?



Cook some really delicious biscuits. Use your own recipe or find one online (for example: www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/chocolate-recipes/chocolate-biscuits-with-soft-chocolate-centres/). While the biscuits are in the oven, cut two slices of bread into fingers, put them on a baking tray and put them in the oven for a few minutes until they are dry and hard. When the biscuits are cool, make two parcels, looking exactly the same, one with the biscuits and one with the dry bread. Invite two people to each receive a present, giving each one of the parcels to open. Invite the people to talk about how it felt to open their parcel and see what the other person had. What will they do next?



What Christian values are in short supply at the moment, and what practical steps can you take to fix this?



Listen to the Taizé chant 'How blest are you who are poor': www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pw9mnN_twWE At the end, say the words together, and 'Amen'.



Listen to the song, 'If I were a rich man' from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Tevye, a poor milkman in a Russian Jewish village, wonders what it would be like to be rich. What would he sing about today?

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

One day Jesus was talking to the Pharisees. He told them this parable.

'There once was a rich man dressed in expensive clothes, who feasted every day. There was also a poor man, Lazarus, covered in sores, who was hungry all the time. He lay outside the rich man's gate. All he wanted was to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. But this never happened. Even the dogs came to lick his sores.'

'One day, Lazarus died, and the angels came and carried him away to be with Abraham in heaven. Around the same time, the rich man also died, but he was sent to a place where there is a lot of pain, and there he suffered a great deal.'

'Looking up, the rich man saw Lazarus, far away, with Abraham. So he called out to Abraham, "Please help me and send Lazarus here to dip his finger in water and cool my mouth."

"No," Abraham replied. "When you were alive, you received good things and Lazarus did not. Now it is different. Lazarus receives the good things here. And down there you do not."

'Abraham continued, saying, "Anyway, there is a chasm fixed between us and no one can move between where you are and where we are."

'The rich man kept pleading. "Please, then, send Lazarus to my five brothers and warn them so that they won't have to come here and suffer like me."

"No," Abraham replied. "They have the words of Moses and all the prophets to listen to."

'Still the rich man pleaded. "My brothers won't listen to them, but if someone came back from the dead and told them, they really would listen."

"No," Abraham replied. "If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, then they won't listen to someone who is raised from the dead!"'

Luke 16.19-31



Did you know?

- A prophet is someone who receives messages from God to pass on to the people.

Luke 16.19-31 (NRSV)

Jesus told this parable: 'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 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; for I am in agony in these flames." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner

evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to 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 listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'