

GRACEPOINT CHURCH

Weekly Devotional

Once upon a Kingdom: The Stories Jesus Told Lent 3

A Tale of Two Rich Men – Ian France – 8.3.2026

Scripture

Genesis 18:1-10; Luke 16:19-31

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation

Genesis 18:1-10

The story of Abraham entertaining three visitors under the terebinth trees would have been well known to Jesus' listeners. They would have known how he ran out from his tent to offer them his hospitality. This was the practice of Abraham's culture and he was eager to provide his visitors with water and a meal. His generosity is in stark contrast to that of the rich man who features in Jesus' parable. It seems as if both Abraham and Sarah took part in preparing the feast, rather than giving orders to servants to do it. Once again, Abraham is promised a son – and this time there is a date given – 'this time next year'.

Luke 16:19-31

This is the only parable that names an individual who features in it. The rich man (who is unnamed, although traditionally he is known as *Dives* which means 'rich') wears luxurious garments and eats well every day, unlike many of the people of the time. Lazarus (whose name means 'God is my help') was a poor, sick man who lay, day after day, at the entrance to the rich man's home. The rich man ignored him. Lazarus survived on the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. He was covered in sores which the dogs licked. Jesus continued with His account. Both men died, and Lazarus, who was not given the honour of a burial, was carried to Abraham by the angels, where he was placed in a position of honour. This did not happen because he was poor but because he had a relationship with God. The rich man, on the other hand did not have any such relationship, and, whilst he was honoured with a burial, he was sent to a place of torment in Hades. His wealth did not impact where he would spend eternity. Whilst the rich man was a descendant of Abraham, this fact was not enough to let him escape the torment he was experiencing. He now begged Abraham to send Lazarus to ease his pain. He

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still saw himself as superior to Lazarus and expected him to do his bidding. Abraham reminded him that he had enjoyed good things during his lifetime, but he had not shared them or used them in any way to prepare for eternal life. Whilst the rich man and Abraham could talk to one another in the parable, there was a huge gulf between them that could not be crossed. Their destinies were fixed for all time. The rich man now began to beg Abraham. It is evident he still considered Lazarus to be inferior and so treated him as a servant. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus on an errand for him to go to his five brothers. He wanted him to warn them about the place of torment he was in but Abraham reminded him they had Moses and the prophets to warn them. The brothers should listen to them. The rich man pursued his argument, knowing the family did not take Moses or the prophets seriously. But, he insisted, if someone went to them from the dead – then they would listen! He hoped that the appearance of someone from the dead would persuade his brothers to repent – something he had not done himself. But Abraham knew this was not the case. And, in fact, when a man called Lazarus and Jesus Himself both rose from the dead, many did not believe, even then.

Icebreaker:

Who is the most generous person you know? What makes you see them as generous?
How do you feel about them?

Application

- The Pharisees gave out of obligation; the rich man did not give at all; Abraham gave out of generosity and his relationship with God. What is the condition of your heart as you give? How do you give? Does it make you joyful to give generously or do you struggle? Why?
- Does a person's wealth (or poverty) say anything to you about their relationship with God? Why/why not? How would you respond to someone who thinks that it does?
- How can you respond to someone who says '*Sawubona*' to you? Would you use it as a greeting yourself – not as a greeting in someone's home language necessarily, but as one which says to the person you are greeting 'I see you'? What would that mean to you? What could it mean to them? Now you have thought about it, perhaps for the first time, will you use it to acknowledge a person's worth? Why/why not?
- How can Gracepoint use it more effectively? Who do you think are those who need to hear '*Sawubona*' from Gracepoint or ourselves as individuals in our community? How can you do that as individuals, as a group, as a church?

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- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

Try to 'see' people this week in a way that makes them real to you. Make a note of how this affects your relationship with them – and with God. Share next week of any change you notice.

Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-18/>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/luke-16/>

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