



My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday, we hear two important messages about the limits of faith without love. The first comes from our Lord's story of poor Lazarus who lay at the gates of a Rich Man's home, longing *"...to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table..."* (Luke 16:21) When the time came for each man to depart this life, they were given that which they sowed on earth: *"The poor man died and was carried away by the angels... The rich man also died...and in Hades...he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus..."* (Luke 16:22-23) Now the man who would not think to welcome Lazarus into his home asked that Abraham send Lazarus to dip only a finger in water, to cool his tongue.

Abraham, however, reminded him 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."* (Luke 16:25) The parable then becomes a discussion in which Abraham refuses the Rich Man's request to send Lazarus to warn the Rich Man's

five brothers to repent, because, *"If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."* (Luke 16:31) However, I would like to draw connections between this, and the Epistle, which comes to us as one of the most beloved scriptural passages.

To the Corinthians, St. Paul writes of where we might find our places in the Church. *"Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way."* (1 Corinthians 12:29-31) St. Paul understands that despite spiritual gifts, faith, and belief, *"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."* (1 Corinthians 13:1-2) The Rich Man certainly did not show love for Lazarus; but even in death, he never expressed remorse for his sin, only concern for his brothers. Indeed, St. Paul also condemn those who, like the Rich Man, claim piety, but only out of pride. *"If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."* (1 Corinthians 13:3)

This love—true love—comes from emulating God because it is Godly: *"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."* (Corinthians 13:4-8) May it be so, for all of God's people, as we strive to live and act in the footsteps of our Lord, who truly showed us how to love; both in words and deeds, but especially through His Life-giving Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection.

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