

TODAY'S GOSPEL, DRAWS SHARP CONTRASTS BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE,
IN VERY DIFFERENT STATIONS IN LIFE.
FROM THE BEGINNING, HE NOTES HOW DRAMATIC THEIR LIVES ARE UNLIKE ONE ANOTHER.
THE RICH MAN, DRESSED IN FINE ROBES,
WHO NEVER MISSED A MEAL,
BUT MISSED LAZURUS AT THE END OF HIS PROPERTY.
AND THEN WE HAVE LAZURUS.
APPARENTLY UNABLE TO MOVE FAR HIS CLOTHES PROBABLY WERE THE COLOR OF THE GROUND THAT
HE LAY ON DAY AFTER DAY.
HE COULD NOT EVEN BRUSH AWAY THE DOGS WHO HAD THEIR OWN WAY OF TORMENTING HIM.
ONE MAN HAD EVERYTHING,
AND THE OTHER HAD NOTHING.
PROBABLY NO FAMILY , NO FRIENDS AND ESPECIALLY NO HOPE.
THE RICH MAN WE FIND OUT HAD FIVE BROTHERS.
HE DID NOT LIVE ALONE AND HAD OTHERS TO RELY ON.
WE DON'T HAVE A NAME FOR HIM BUT WE HAVE A NAME FOR LAZURUS.
A WAY OF SAYING THE IMPORTANT ONE IN THE STORY,
WAS THE CENTER OF THE STORY EVEN THOUGH HE HAS NO WORDS TO OFFER IN THIS NARRATIVE.
BUT HE MUST HAVE BEEN A MAN WHO KNEW THAT HE NEEDED HELP.
HE KNEW THAT HE COULD NOT EXIST WITHOUT THE HELP OF OTHERS TO GIVE HIM SCRAPS TO THAT HE
COULD BREAK EVEN AND PERHAPS LIVE ANOTHER DAY.
THE RICH MAN, PROBABLY NEVER TASTED HUNGER OR SUFFERED.
BUT THE WORLD WAS HIS AND HE RECEIVED WHAT HE THOUGHT HE NEEDED.
AND, AS THE STORY DEVELOPS,
WE FIND OUT A COUPLE OF THINGS ABOUT HIM.
FIRST OF ALL, HIS HISTORY DID NOT MATTER TO HIM.
MOSES AND THE PROPHETS AND ALL THEY PROCLAIMED HAD NEVER BEEN ENOUGH TO TOUCH HIS
LIFE.
PERHAPS HE WENT TO TEMPLE, WE DON'T KNOW.

BUT IF HE DID, RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS BELONGED TO OTHERS AND NOT HIM.

PEOPLE LIKE LAZURUS WERE AN INCONVENIENCE.

HE PROBABLY FIGURED OUT A COUPLE OF THINGS ABOUT THE POOR MAN.

HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO GRACE THE RICH MAN'S LIFE.

AND HE PROBABLY HAD A LOT OF REASONS TO DISMISS THE POOR MAN,

TO EASE ANY CONSCIENCE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN HIM.

LAZURUS MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO DESERVE IT.

AND EVEN WHEN HE FOUND HIMSELF IN THE PLACE OF TORMENT,

HE STILL WASN'T READY TO TRULY ACKNOWLEDGE THE MAN WHO HAD LAID OUT HIS HOUSE IN PAIN.

BUT HE WAS READY TO TREAT HIM AS A SERVANT, SOMEONE BENEATH HIM.

He wanted to
ABRAHAM, TELL, NOT ASK, HIM TO GIVE HIM SOME WATER.

He wanted to
ASBRAHAM, SEND LAZURUS TO WARN HIS BROTHERS.

> He still would not deal w/
the Unimportant Lazurus

EVEN IN THAT PLACE, HE DIDN'T REALIZE THAT HE WAS IN TROUBLE.

HE STILL DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CONFIDENCE IN THE WORDS OF MOSES OR THE PROPHETS.

HE WANTED SOMETHING DRAMATIC.

IF LAZURUS, AFTER DYING, WERE TO SHOW UP TO HIS BROTHERS,

THEN THEY WOULD LISTEN.

MOSES AND THE PROPHETS HAD THE WORDS THAT WERE NEEDED.

AND LAZURUS PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN TREATED ONLY AS A GHOST.

I WOULD IMAGINE THE FORMERLY RICH MAN WOULD PROBABLY REACH A POINT WHERE HE FINALLY
CAME TO HIS SENSES AND REALIZED THAT THE ACTIONS OF HIS LIFE HAD ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES.

HIS ACTIONS THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, DETERMINED HIS LIFE FOR ALL ETERNITY.

BUT HE HAD SPENT HIS ENTIRE LIFE TURNING AWAY FROM GOD,

ONE DECISION AT A TIME.

AND EVEN IF WE DON'T MENTION THE AFTER LIFE,

THIS IS STILL A STORY ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES WE FIND IN LIFE WHEN OUR DECISIONS,

ONE AT A TIME,

TAKE US FURTHER AND FURTHER FROM GOD AND WE CAN REACH A POINT OF SUFFERING

IN THIS WORLD AS WE GO DAY TO DAY.

THE WORLD IS A GOOD PLACE TO BE.

AS I MENTIONED LAST WEEK, GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

BUT STILL A FUNDAMENTAL CHOICE.

DO WE USE THE WORLD ONLY FOR OUR OWN ADVANTAGE.

OR DO WE KNOW ABOUT MOSES AND THE PROPHETS.

DO WE USE THE WORLD FOR THE PLEASURES IT CAN OFFER.

OR DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

IT ALL MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.

LOOKING OUT FOR OURSELVES ONLY HAS DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR US HEAR AND NOW.

KNOWING ABOUT OUR ANCESTORS IN FAITH, BRINGS THE CONSEQUENCE OF LIVING A GOOD LIFE

THAT GIVES TRUE MEANING TO WHAT REALLY FULFILLS AND TRULY GIVES US MEANING AND PEACE.