

Luke 16:19-31

19th Sunday after Pentecost

Sept. 24, 1989

In the <sup>our</sup> ~~real~~ world <sup>they are</sup> ~~he is~~ never nameless. Donald Trump, Leonak Helmsley, David Jacobs, Imelda Marcos. They are therich. Some are wise investors, some are shady dealers, some like the Kenedys are born to mansions, but in our world no matter how they acquized their billions, the rich always have a name.

It is the poor who remain nameless, The poor, the hungry, the homeless, even here in our prayers they are a nameless mass, faceless, most often forgotten.

But when Jesus tells a story, he tells it from the point of view of another world, the world that shall come after this one. There the rich man has beclme nameless, the poor man given a name, Lazarus. There the beggar has become the one served by Abraham himself, the rich man now a beggar. There the hows and whys of the poor mans poverty have been all forgotten his poverty alone now brings him a place, recognitions.

#### HearxJesusxstoryx

Once there was a very rich woman the story might have beenn told, who bought shows, hundreds of shoes, thousands of shoes, while all around her palace children ran in the streets with nothing to cover their feet.

Or once there was a man who bought a yacht for millions, with gbbd faucets, and every luxury imaginable that he might with it circle the island of Manhattan where men and women and children were imprisennad by their needs, rats and mice and cockroaches were the visitors at their parties.

Or once there was a man who was clothed in puprle and Fine linen who feasted sumptiously each day, and every time he left his house and every time he came home he walked right by a beggarx who was starving, whose body was a mass of invfection and sores because of his malnourishment.

Whatever the beginngng of our story, when we hear that the rich percon ends up suffering in hell, we say, Right. Justice. That's the way it should be.

And the poor who never had a chance in this world are blessed in the next. Relieved of their suffering. Granted a name, and honor. God balances the scales, that too is justice, right.

Since I am neither rich nor poor, this story of Jesus doesn't seem to have much to do with me. Or with you. There is no one in this parable who goes to work, or who wonders <sup>how</sup> she is going to pay the expenses if costs keep going up. There is no one with children to provide for, who must save for college tuition, while now providing food and clothing and at least some of what a child today thinks he needs. There is no one who tries to gauge the years ahead whether they will bring rampant inflation or a nursing home, that there might be enough money to last to the end. Just a rich man, and a poor man.

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And the Lord. Jesus tells us this story. Jesus who gave his life to open the gates of hell that sinners might rush into the very presence of God, Jesus tells this story. Jesus who sat at table with the rich, Jesus who weread looked at a rich man who asked what he must do to be saved and loved him, this Jesus tells us the story of a man eternally condemned to torment. Jesus tells us the story of his failure to save one, a rich man, in the hopes that it will never happen. In his telling we see how it troubles and pains out God that we do not share. When we walk right by another in need, training ourselves to no longer see, when the ones for whom God has a name have no name <sup>that we know</sup> ~~for us,~~ are just the poor, when in all the world so few have so very much, and so many so very little, then our Lord is deeply troubled.

This morning it is not important that we can see ourselves in this story, but so very important that we see our Lord through it. We must know and never doubt that it is his will that his <sup>brothers and sisters</sup> ~~children~~ share.

What might God have asked of the rich man? That he do at least what the dogs were ready to do, clean the sores of the man he stepped around every day. Give him a little bread, Learn his name, talk to him.

And of us, what does our Lord ask? I don't know. But I have a feeling that our finding out what our Lord desires of us will not begin with opening our purses and wallets and giving money. You heard that right. I don't think that is where our Lord's will for us begins.

For we live in hard times. Before there were zoning laws, and highways to whisk us right into downtown and back out again without ever even seeing a poor person, much less getting to know their names, in other times and places, people with enough might have come to know the names of some poor people, might have come to know them. But as our houses and yards get bigger, our stores finer, more and more we only see people who are like us.

~~And so I ask you to consider this: Consider volunteering to be a tutor,~~

And so I ask you to consider this: Consider volunteering to be a tutor, you'll never be the same. If there is any way for you to do it, help distribute food at the Lorain food cooperative, or at the crisis center. Volunteer your time with the Tri-City office on the aging. If you do you'll begin to discover why our Lord is so troubled when we fail to help our brothers and sisters in their need. Give yourself for others, as our Lord has given himself for you.

By saying this I do not mean to imply that giving our money is not important. The Crisis Center From Tri-City office on aging, to Lutheran World Relief, others serve as our substitutes, touching, embracing, feeding through what we provide. Still if you are in any way able to give more than your money, your time, your love, then do so. There will be blessing in that.

Bring our Lord Joy. You can do it. Give of yourself for those one who is in need. Amen.