**The Rich Man & Lazarus**

*by Harry Osborne*

In Luke 16, Jesus first spoke a parable about an unjust steward. The point of the parable was plainly stated when Jesus concluded it: *"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"* (Luke 16:13). The word "mammon" signifies material goods or wealth.

The Pharisees who heard Him were said to be "lovers of money" (Luke 16:14). They "derided" Jesus for His teaching instead of listening to Him. Thus, Jesus rebuked them saying, *"You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God"* (Luke 16:15).

Jesus went on to cite one example of their frivolous practice of divorce and remarriage that showed their evil practice while claiming to do right (Luke 16:18). These Pharisees needed to be sobered up! They needed to understand that their ungodly desire to live for their own pleasure would bring punishment.

The next story in the context was just such a wake up call to those Pharisees who took little thought of eternal consequences (Luke 16:19-31). Notice that Jesus does not present this as a parable or fable, but an actual account of what happened with two men - one unnamed rich man and one poor man named Lazarus. In our time, this story should still strike fear into those callously in sin.

*"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried."*

*"And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, `Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'*

*"But Abraham said, `Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'"*

*"Then he said, `I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, `for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, `They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'"*

*"And he said, `No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, `If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"*

Notice a few lessons taught by this story which were true then and are still true today.

**First**, punishment beyond this earthly life for the evil doer is a reality. Some try to escape this fact by saying the story is a parable. Jesus does not say it is a parable. However, if it was a parable, parables relate possible happenings to teach a lesson. The fact that punishment beyond this earthly life is a reality is plainly taught by the Bible (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48).

**Second**, there is no second chance. Once the rich man was in torment, he desperately wanted a second chance, but none was available. At death, our fate is sealed and we go to Judgment (Hebrews 9:27). In that Judgment, we will all give answer for the things we did while in the body, not what we would do if we had a second chance (2 Corinthians 5:10).

**Third**, if we want to avoid eternal punishment beyond, we must listen to God's word now and obey it. The will of God for the rich man at that time was the law of Moses. Christ took that law out of the way by His cross and replaced it with his Gospel (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 3:14).

If we do not obey that Gospel, we will suffer the vengeance of God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Thus, we must always seek to know God's will and put it in practice in our lives rather than justifying our present path. The only way to know that will of God is to study constantly and thoroughly His message of truth.

**Why Do You Talk Like That?**

*by Kyle Campbell*

Psalm 39:1 says, “I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.” It is difficult for a Christian to feel at ease in an environment where God’s name is used profanely and disrespectfully; where terminology reflects on the honor of motherhood, where ugly four letter words are thrown around fluently, and sexual life degraded in wicked, crude language.

It is certain that some professed Christians seem more at ease in using vulgar language than they do in trying to refrain from talking ugly in situations where they know they must not! Why do people curse, swear and talk ugly? Several reasons can be proposed. First, those who find it difficult to express themselves will flavor their language with profane expressions. Second, some seek to gain attention, so they curse and utter obscenities. Third, cursing, swearing and vulgarity are merely bad habits to some, well- set in their lives by years of usage. Fourth, many are depraved in nature, filthy in mind, evil in attitude and express it all in wicked language. Fifth, some feel they must use bad language to be accepted and “fit in” with their companions and friends.

The sins of the tongue include lying, cursing, profanity, gossip, slander and obscenities. These “lip sins” are expressions of a deeper disorder. The answer to the question, “Why do you talk like that?” may be found in the words of Christ: “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34). The true disorder is in the heart, but you can change your speech habits if you want. Remember that when you talk you speak in the presence of God who is to be honored, and in company with others who will be either helped or hurt. Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” We should be expressing “... that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29).“Do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:30), for God is listening!