

**Sunday, Sept 25, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Bible Study – Luke 16:19-31

“Gulf is Crossed”

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes)

In pairs or groups of three, discuss the following: Who is the wealthiest person you have met?

Luke 16:19-31 Context. Following on the parable of the steward who had squandered the things entrusted to him, and the sayings about wealth/Mammon, Luke continues with this week’s reading, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. We misread it if we think it’s telling us anything literal about life after death. The real point is one that Luke has been making since the very first chapter of his Gospel: in God’s kingdom, the rich and powerful of this world will be cast down and the poor and humble exalted. And it doesn’t take a resurrection to understand this – just read the Scriptures!

Read Luke 16:19-31

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Luke 16:19-31 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Read I Timothy 6:17-19. What does being rich in the kingdom of God look like?
- Jesus tells the story of a rich man for the third time. What might it mean that the rich man is not named, but the poor man, Lazarus, is named?
- Why would this story have been surprising to Jesus’ audience? (Who would they have assumed to be carried away by angels to be with Abraham?)
- For whom does the rich man express compassion? Why is it easier to express compassion for those closest to us and so hard to express compassion for those we do not know?

- What does it say of the rich man that he requests that Lazarus be sent to soothe his torment? What does it reveal about the rich man?
- What caused the rich man to be sent to Hades?
- John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, commented on this passage, “It is no more sinful to be rich than to be poor. But it is dangerous beyond expression. Therefore, I remind all of you that are of this number, that have the conveniences of life, and something over that you walk upon slippery ground. You continually tread on snares and deaths. You are every moment on the verge of hell!” (Sermon 112: “The Rich Man and Lazarus.” Quoted in the *Wesley Study Bible*, 1268.)
- Reflect on this quote as a group.

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

Gracious God, we desire to be apprenticed in your ways. Continue to prompt us by your Holy Spirit where our lives need amending that we might glorify you in all we do. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.