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~ **The Beggar at the Gate** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read Luke 16:10-31.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story.

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Luke 16:10-31 NASB	Luke 16:10-31 NLT
<p>¹⁰ “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. ¹¹ Therefore if you have not been faithful in the <i>use of</i> unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true <i>riches</i> to you? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in <i>the use of</i> that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³ No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”</p> <p>¹⁴ Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.</p> <p>¹⁵ And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.</p> <p>¹⁶ “The Law and the Prophets <i>were proclaimed</i> until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. ¹⁷ But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.</p> <p>¹⁸ “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.</p> <p>¹⁹ “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. ²⁰ And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, ²¹ and longing to be fed with the <i>crumbs</i> which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking</p>	<p>¹⁰ “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. ¹¹ And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? ¹² And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?”</p> <p>¹³ “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”</p> <p>¹⁴ The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, heard all this and scoffed at him. ¹⁵ Then he said to them, “You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God.</p> <p>¹⁶ “Until John the Baptist, the law of Moses and the messages of the prophets were your guides. But now the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is eager to get in. ¹⁷ But that doesn’t mean that the law has lost its force. It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the smallest point of God’s law to be overturned.</p> <p>¹⁸ “For example, a man who divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery. And anyone who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.”</p> <p>¹⁹ Jesus said, “There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who</p>

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his sores. ²² Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.' ²⁷ And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' ³¹ But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

lived each day in luxury. ²⁰ At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. ²¹ As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores.

²² "Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and his soul went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

²⁴ "The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.'

²⁵ "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.'

²⁷ "Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home. ²⁸ For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.'

²⁹ "But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.'

³⁰ "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.'

³¹ "But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even if someone rises from the dead.'"

2. Discover key cultural and historical insights

From *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* by Kenneth Bailey, pages 378-396.

1. In the ME, there are multitudes of "gate of heaven" stories. Sometimes Peter is at the gate. At other times it is Moses, Jesus, or Mohammed. Often they are humorous, jokes, but sometimes they are political commentary.

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2. The purpose of this story was not to present the fine points of life after death but a challenge to the rulers love of money and a story that broke apart their worldview that the rich were blessed and the poor were cursed.
3. The introduction to the story is Luke 16:9-13.
4. The rich dressed himself every day in purple. This was extremely expensive and could be afforded only by the very wealthy. This man was so rich that he dressed in purple every day. He also was so rich that he could afford the fine linen from Egypt used for the best underwear.
5. Lazarus – El lazar – his name means, the one who is helped by God.
6. He could not walk. Every day he was laid at the rich man's gate and every night he would be picked up by friends or family. Obviously, they were poor and could not adequately care for him. The only thing they could do was place him at the gates of the only one in the community who had the means to help him, the rich man.
7. He longed to eat the leftovers from the table of the rich man. Laying just outside the gate, he could probably hear the festivities and smell the food served to the rich man and his family and friends. A walled garden would be just on the other side of the gate and guard dogs were kept. They would be fed the leftovers.
8. Reclining in Abraham's bosom meant they were reclining at a table and El Lazar was at the place of honor to Abraham's right. He would lean back and rest upon the bosom of Abraham just as John did with Jesus (John 13:23).
9. When the rich man speaks, he does not begin with words of repentance or ask forgiveness from El Lazar. Even in eternity he will not speak to those beneath. Instead, He speaks to Abraham and has the presumption to call him, "Father Abraham!" It is as if he is saying, "Abraham I am your child. Do you not recognize me? I am of your descendants. I have your blood.
10. Abraham begins with "my dear boy," a term of affection.

3. Answer these reflective questions.

Before Jesus gave the story about the rich man and Lazarus, or El Lazar, he made many statements about money in 16:10-13. Why was money such an important issue in his message to the religious rulers?

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Apparently, the religious rulers valued money more than anything else in the world. This became an idol for them. Are there any idols in your life that you need to turn from?

The story of the rich man and the beggar at the gate challenged the viewpoint of the religious rulers. Does this story challenge your views of what matters most to God?

What does this story teach you about preparing for eternity?
