



Several of the weeks in our Kingdom Stories Series have been connected to loving others and sharing Jesus with them. As you heard Jacob announce this past weekend, this summer our Outreach Team will be offering a Re-Think Workshop on the “Helping Others Do the Same” portion of our vision statement.

We want to help others know Jesus and become more like him. It can seem intimidating at times, but it doesn't need to be! During this workshop, you'll have the opportunity to re-think what it is to share Jesus with others, not as one more thing to add to your to-do list, but as a natural part of your life.

This would be a great workshop for your Life Group (or several from your group) to attend together. Here is a Registration Link: <https://www.lincolnberean.org/eventfinder/eventdetails/?id=31534>. Each person will need to register on their own.

## Introduction

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We step into a parable referred to as "The Rich Man and Lazarus." Through vivid storytelling, Jesus paints a detailed contrast between a wealthy, self-righteous man and a poor, afflicted beggar named Lazarus. Their fates, both in life and beyond, serve as a lens through which we examine the values of this world next to God's value system. As we delve into this passage, we are compelled to confront challenging questions about righteousness, mercy, and our eternal dwelling.

**To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.**

## Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

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- 1) If you could determine your last meal that you would ever eat and enjoy, what would be on the menu? Be specific!
- 2) How did the Personal Spiritual Exercises go for you last week? Share your insights with the group.

## Getting Started

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Transition into group discussion.

Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:

- a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
- b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
- c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you

Read the full passage together with your group.

## Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

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- 1) Prior to this week, how familiar were you with this parable? What was a detail, thought or moment that stood out to you from the sermon or individual study?
  
- 2) Read Luke 16:14-15 for the context of the parable. Why does Jesus tell the story of “The Rich Man and Lazarus”? How does this detail form the way you read the parable?
  
- 3) Jesus seasons his parable teaching with images of contrast. They provide a vivid explanation of the differences between multiple kingdoms: earthly kingdom, Hades and God’s Kingdom. Sharp distinctions between joy and sorrow, hope and torment, or success and failure heighten this reality that the choice to surrender your life to Christ is a matter of the heart. **Make a list of all the contrast images you find in the passage. Share this list with your group.**

As we look closer at these contrasts, we begin to see that Jesus’ teaching has many layers to it. His Word is rich with meaning! The take-home message of this particular Kingdom Story is not about the poor being more righteous than the wealthy. **From your list of contrasts what do you notice Jesus saying about the value system of God’s Kingdom?**

How is this different from the value system we find and experience in the kingdoms of this world?

In light of this realization, how might you live different in loving God with your life, and loving others?

- 4) The dialogue between the rich man and Father Abraham in Luke 16:23-31 serves as a sobering reflection on the permanent, eternal consequences of sin. Did you wonder why the rich man, in his time of need, called upon Father Abraham rather than the true Heavenly Father? Perhaps it was another indication of his heart status. **At the start of this dialogue, what is the rich man's request of Abraham, and what is Abraham's response?**

As Jesus helps us understand the way of God's kingdom in this parable, it reminds us that people will respond to the good news of the Gospel message differently. **Thinking back to the parable of the soils (Matthew 13), which soil do you think the rich man represents, and which soil does Lazarus represent?** Soil types are path, rocky, thorns and good/yielding soil.

A side-by-side look at both parables can help us see the consistency of Jesus' teachings and the Truth found in them. With each parable, Jesus adds another aspect to the complete picture of salvation. **How do you continue to process your own personal story of receiving Christ as we study the various parables? Share any personal insights or discoveries you have made with your group.**

Think of a specific person in your life that might represent the rich man. **How does the meaning and message of the parable change the way you share the gospel and pray for this person?**

- 5) The parable of the rich man and Lazarus *is* about the value system in God’s Kingdom. It is *also* a glimpse of the realities in life after death. The irony of this parable is that Jesus was doing for the Pharisees what the rich man asked Abraham to do for his brothers still on Earth. Jesus was warning the Pharisees. **What observations about life after death do you make from this specific passage? What details does He reveal about Hades and Heaven?**

(For more detail on these ideas, you can check out Pastor Bryan’s book *Life After Death* at the Publication Center, or visit our website and check out the Life After Death Sermon Series at this link:

<https://www.lincolnberean.org/sermon-serie/life-after-death.>)

Knowing that Christ endured the cross, conquering sin and death, should compel us to heart and life change now. **How do these details about Hades and Heaven change the way you live your life now?**

## Personal Spiritual Exercises

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Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

**Prayer Focus:** This week, remind yourself daily of Christ’s finished work on the cross for you. Commit to praise-filled conversations with God. Perhaps start with the meaningful lyric of Phil Wickham’s song, “Living Hope”.

*How great the chasm that lay between us. How high the mountain I could not climb. In desperation, I turned to heaven and spoke your name into the night. Then through the darkness Your loving kindness tore through the shadows of my soul. The work is finished, the end is written. Jesus Christ, my living hope.*

*Who could imagine so great a mercy? What heart could fathom such boundless grace? The God of ages stepped down from glory to wear my sin and bear my shame. The cross has spoken, I am forgiven. The king of kings calls me His own. Beautiful savior, I’m yours forever. Jesus Christ, my living hope.*

*Hallelujah, praise the one who set me free. Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me. You have broken every chain. There’s salvation in your name. Jesus Christ, my living hope.*

**Scripture Focus:** The name Lazarus was a common name in the Jesus' day, that means "whom God helps". The use of this name in the ministry of Jesus, and its connection to the theme of resurrection is undeniable. Although the Lazarus in this parable is not the same Lazarus that Jesus befriends in the book of John, we can connect the dots on our thoughts about resurrection with these two Bible passages. Read and reflect on John 11 and 12 to develop a bigger picture of God as our Helper. You will see how His reversal from death to life is the ultimate source of help for those who believe.

### **Prayer** *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

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A significant part of "coming together" is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say "Amen" aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?