**Use Your Time on Earth Wisely**

Based on [Luke 16:19-31](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk16.19-31)

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Now that things are opening up again, and faster than was originally anticipated, we are all beginning to have busy lives again. Looking back over the past couple of months, did you use the time wisely? Did you get the things done that you just didn’t have time to do before? Or did the time pass without your making much progress in household chores, bookwork, bible study, etc? A lot of people had a windfall of free time on their hands, at least when the virus first broke out? How did we use the time?

Jesus’ story about the Rich Man and Lazarus could be summed up with such a proverb, “Use Your time on earth Wisely.” Both a rich man and a poor man named Lazarus had their time on earth, and they both died. The rich man used his time to enjoy this world’s pleasures, while neglecting to help the cause of his poor neighbor Lazarus. That was a waste of time, because now he is dead has no time to repent and live as a redeemed soul in the image of his creator.

The rich man is a type of unbeliever. Just like the rich man, there are and will be false believers who, on the last day will knock at the door of the wedding feast and be shut out. There will be those who will be told that what they did and failed to do for Jesus’ disciples, they did to him. They will be informed that all the bigger and bigger barns that they built for hoarding more wealth while ignoring the things of God was really for nothing, because they can’t take what they’ve hoarded with their soul into death.

And Lazarus is like Christ. While on earth--while there was time to befriend him, to attend to him--the lovers of money, pharisees and sadducees did not. Caiaphis and others even plotted his death. Many disciples who had followed him left him when his teaching became difficult. Pontus Pilate felt some compulsion to not let Jesus be put to death, but when it threatened his status with Caesar and his reputation with Rome, he washed his hands of him.

When the rich man was in Hell, in torment, he called out to Father Abraham, that he would send Lazarus with some water to help his thirst. But the rich man had given Lazarus no food or water when he was alive. And, remember Jesus taught that “**if you give even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, because he is a disciple, you will by no means lose your reward.**” But the rich man lost his reward, he didn’t use his time or his goods on earth wisely. Now he calls on Lazarus for help, just as many people in death will call on Jesus, but it will be too late. The time to befriend Jesus and his disciples is now.

But some did befriend Jesus, even rich men. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, sought him out at night, defended him before the sanhedrin. Joseph of Aramathea--a rich man, who saw Jesus hanging dead on the cross--did not pass him by. He asked Pilate for the Body. And--with the help of Nicodemus--laid him in a tomb he had purchased for himself. Of course Jesus’ true disciples followed him; but to my recollection, of all the Pharisees, Sadducees and prestigious and wealthy men in the new testament...*only these two men* are described as *wealthy and of influence*, who followed Jesus. Truly, truly, many are called few are chosen.

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea--though they followed Jesus--could only bring themselves to do so in secret. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, and the gospel says Joseph was a secret follower in secret “because he feared the jewish leaders. You see, your wealth and prestige turn against you when you follow Jesus. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The rich man’s fate is sealed, so is the fate of all the faithless dead who squandered their life here in selfish vanity without true repentance. The rich man realizes this. So next he pleads Abraham to send Lazarus back to earth, resurrected, to warn his brothers. He supposes they just need more convincing proof. It won’t work. The refusal to trust in God comes not from lack of evidence. It comes from a love of the world and the things in the world.

There is a very apt illustration in the area of substance abuse. Wouldn’t it be great if you could just tell the alcoholic that he needs to stop drinking because the stuff is killing him? Or now with the opioid crisis, or methamphetamines...do you think that it’s a matter of unbelief? Do you think it’s as simple as they don’t believe people who say this stuff destroys lives? Maybe at first. But once you are addicted, rationality flies out the window. And even the most cogent argument or evidence--if it gets in the way of your addiction--will be ignored or dismissed. Repentance is not a change in the evidence...it’s a change of the heart and of the mind.

Jesus is clear, the world and it’s treasures are an addiction to sinful men. Wealth, prestige, privilege...these do prove to give a comfortable life in the world. Many people live happily without them, but once you have them they are ensnaring. And it can be astounding what people will do to preserve them, what they will ignore or compromise in order to keep comfortable in their position.

All this comes back to a simple message of wisdom. Use your time wisely here on earth. Do now what you will be unable to do in death. Well if one thing this pandemic should have done for us all is bring us to the realization that we never know what might happen tomorrow. Focus on what’s important. And what is more important than anything else in all of creation, is to be right with God, and remain right with Him, so that, when your death comes, you are prepared to meet Him.

[**15**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/5-15.htm)Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, [**16**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/5-16.htm)making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. [**17**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/5-17.htm)Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. [**18**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/5-18.htm)And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, [**19**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/5-19.htm)addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, [**20**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/5-20.htm)giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [**21**](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/5-21.htm)submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:15-21)