

Time Audit Chronicles: The Rich Man and Lazarus

(Luke 16:19-31)

Prologue: A Tale of Two Lives and Eternal Consequences

The Presswood family gathered in their cozy living room, the evening air crisp outside. Ariel had just finished reading **Luke 16:19-31**, the **Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus**, a powerful story Jesus told to illustrate the eternal consequences of how we live and the importance of **compassion**. Ariel sat in quiet reflection, her mind processing the profound nature of the story. Alice, still clutching Mr. Fluffernutter, was playfully arranging her stuffed animals, each one representing either the rich man or the beggar, Lazarus.

“Daddy,” Ariel asked, breaking the silence, “Why did Jesus tell this story? What was He trying to teach us about **compassion** and **eternity**?”

Ryan smiled, appreciating the depth of Ariel’s question. “That’s an excellent question, Ariel. This parable shows us that **eternal consequences**—the way we live our lives today—are incredibly important. The rich man’s story teaches us that wealth, status, and comfort in this life mean nothing if we neglect those in need. Lazarus, on the other hand, was poor and suffering in this life, but he was rewarded in eternity. Jesus was teaching that **compassion**, **mercy**, and how we treat others, especially the poor and needy, have eternal significance.”

Ariel thought for a moment. “So, this story isn’t just about **wealth** or **poverty**—it’s about how we live our lives and how we treat others, especially those who are hurting.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Let’s use the **Time Audit Machine** to go back and witness this powerful parable and see how Jesus used it to teach about compassion and the consequences of our choices in this life.”

The Journey Begins: The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-21)

The Time Audit Machine hummed to life, and with a flash of light, the family found themselves standing at the gates of a **lavish mansion**, surrounded by fine linens, rich food, and expensive decorations. In contrast, at the gate of the mansion lay a poor man named **Lazarus**, covered in sores and desperately wishing for scraps of food that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs came to lick his sores, and there was no one to help him. The contrast between the two lives couldn’t have been starker.

“This is the beginning of the story,” Ryan said. “Jesus is introducing two very different men—the rich man, who lives in comfort and indulgence, and Lazarus, who is poor, sick, and neglected. Jesus is setting the stage to show how their lives in this world are very different, but how their **eternal destinies** are completely reversed.”

Ariel looked around, taking in the details. “The rich man has everything—food, comfort, status—but Lazarus is **suffering** and ignored, even though he’s right outside the rich man’s gate.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “This is where the story starts to teach us about how easy it is to become consumed by **self-interest** and **comfort**. The rich man is so focused on his own life that he doesn’t even notice the man in need right in front of him. Lazarus represents the **needy**—the poor, the sick, and the suffering—whom society often overlooks or neglects.”

Ariel nodded, reflecting on how often people ignore those in need around them. “So, Jesus is showing us that **wealth** and **comfort** can make us blind to the needs of others.”

“That’s exactly right,” Ryan said. “The rich man’s lifestyle kept him disconnected from those in need, and that’s a warning for us today.”

The Afterlife: The Great Reversal (*Luke 16:22-23*)

The story then takes a dramatic turn. Both men die, but their fates are entirely different. **Lazarus** is carried by angels to **Abraham’s side** (a symbol of being in God’s presence), while the **rich man** finds himself in **hell**, in torment. He lifts his eyes and sees **Abraham** and **Lazarus** far away, and he begs Abraham to send Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool his tongue, for he is suffering in the flames.

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” (Luke 16:22-23)

Ariel was quiet for a moment. “So, Lazarus, even though he was poor and suffering on earth, is now in **paradise** with Abraham, while the rich man, who had everything, is in **torment**.”

“Yes,” Ryan said solemnly. “This is the **great reversal** that Jesus is teaching us. The rich man, who lived in comfort and ignored the needs of others, is now suffering in hell. Lazarus, who endured hardship and suffering in life, is now being **comforted** and rewarded. This is a powerful reminder that how we live in this world has eternal consequences.”

Ariel’s expression softened. “It’s not about what we have in this life—it’s about how we live, how we treat others, and whether we recognize God’s mercy and grace.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Jesus is showing us that **selfishness** and **neglect** for others can lead to separation from God, while **compassion**, **mercy**, and **faith** lead to eternal reward.”

The Request for Mercy: A Warning to the Rich Man (*Luke 16:24-26*)

The rich man, in torment, asks Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers to warn them so they don’t end up in the same place. But Abraham replies that they have **Moses** and the **prophets** to guide them, and that if they don’t listen to them, they won’t listen to someone who rises from the dead.

“And 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.” (Luke 16:24)

Ariel looked at her father, her face serious. “The rich man is asking for mercy, but Abraham says it’s too late. Why can’t Lazarus go to his brothers?”

Ryan nodded. “Abraham’s response is a warning. **God’s truth** has already been made clear to them through Moses and the prophets. If they’ve ignored the messages of **repentance** and **compassion** in their lives, they won’t listen, even if someone comes back from the dead. This teaches us that **the choices we make now** have eternal significance. We can’t wait until it’s too late to change our hearts or begin showing compassion.”

Ariel frowned. “So, if we don’t pay attention to God’s message now, even if we’re given a second chance, we might not listen.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “This is why it’s so important to live with a heart of **compassion** and to respond to God’s call now—before it’s too late.”

The Final Lesson: The Importance of Compassion and the Warning of Eternity (Luke 16:27-31)

The rich man, now fully aware of the consequences, pleads with Abraham again, asking that Lazarus be sent to his father’s house to warn his brothers. But Abraham’s reply is firm: If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t listen even to someone coming back from the dead.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” (Luke 16:31)

Ariel was quiet, processing the gravity of the story. “So, Abraham is saying that the **prophets** and the **Bible** are enough to show us how to live, and if we ignore them, nothing else will change our hearts. Even if someone came back from the dead, it wouldn’t help if we don’t already have a heart open to God’s message.”

“Yes,” Ryan said, his voice serious. “Jesus is teaching us that **God’s Word** is the ultimate guide for our lives. We can’t wait for dramatic signs or miraculous events to change us. We have the message of **compassion, mercy, and eternal life** already in front of us. It’s up to us to live according to those teachings now, before it’s too late.”

Reflection: Compassion and the Eternal Consequences of Our Choices

Back in the garage, the Time Audit Machine powered down, and the family sat in quiet reflection, absorbing the heavy lessons of the parable. Ariel turned to her father, her thoughts deep and introspective. Alice, still holding Mr. Fluffernutter, was pretending to offer food and water to all of her stuffed animals, symbolizing the **compassion** she had just witnessed.

“The story of the rich man and Lazarus really makes me think about how we live our lives,” Ariel said softly. “It’s not about how much we have

—it’s about how we treat others and whether we choose to show **compassion and mercy.**”

“Yes,” Ryan said, his voice thoughtful. “This parable is a stark reminder that **eternity** is shaped by how we live now. The choices we make today—whether to be compassionate or indifferent—have **eternal consequences**. We are called to live with a heart that reflects God’s love for others, especially the **poor** and **suffering**.”

Ariel smiled, a quiet resolve in her eyes. “So, it’s not just about having a good life now—it’s about living in a way that honors God and shows His love to others.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “This life is short, but the choices we make in it echo throughout eternity. Compassion, mercy, and kindness matter to God, and they are the things that will endure.”

Takeaway: The Importance of Compassion and Eternal Consequences

In **Luke 16:19-31**, the **Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus** teaches us that how we live today has eternal consequences. The rich man’s neglect of Lazarus and his self-centered life led to eternal separation from God, while Lazarus, who suffered in this life, was rewarded in eternity. Jesus teaches us that **compassion, mercy, and faithfulness** are not just matters of earthly comfort—they have **eternal significance**. The choices we make, especially in how we treat others, have lasting consequences. We are called to live with a heart of compassion and to act in ways that reflect God’s love, understanding that our actions in this life shape our eternal destiny.