



Daily Reflections

September 25, 2016

Scripture

Luke 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

“There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day.

And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table.

Dogs even used to come and lick his sores.

When the poor man died,

he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham.

The rich man also died and was buried,

and from the netherworld, where he was in torment,

he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off

and Lazarus at his side.

And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me.

Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.'

Abraham replied,
'My child, remember that you received
what was good during your lifetime
while Lazarus likewise received what was bad;
but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.
Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established
to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go
from our side to yours or from your side to ours.'
He said, 'Then I beg you, father,
send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers,
so that he may warn them,
lest they too come to this place of torment.'
But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets.
Let them listen to them.'
He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham,
but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'
Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets,
neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Our Scripture Reflection

Luke organizes his Gospel around certain key themes. Today's text focuses on the theme known as "Divine Reversal." What does this mean? Luke shows us that when we encounter situations of injustice, we must not lose hope. In His Kingdom, the Lord God will turn the injustice upside down. This theme is very vivid in the story of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus. The rich man had an incredibly luxurious lifestyle. Day in and day out he feasted while dressed in his royal purple clothes. Lazarus was in a pitiful shape and went unnoticed by a man who could have made a huge difference. After death, however, the situation is made right: He who ignored the needs of a beggar inherited eternal punishment while he who begged inherited Paradise. Luke's point: Act rightly while you have time to do so.

Food for your Journey

"The resurrection is God's way of revealing to us that nothing that belongs to God will ever go to waste," wrote Henri J.M. Nouwen in *Our Greatest Gift*. "What belongs to God will never get lost — not even our mortal bodies."

Popularized by the 2007 film of that name starring Morgan Freeman and Jack Nicholson, the phrase "bucket list" refers to a list of things people yearn to do or see or accomplish before they die. Marvel at the Taj Mahal, skydive, hike up to Machu Picchu, shake the hand of the president, cook the perfect soufflé, watch a game at every Major League ballpark -- the lists are as varied as the people who assemble them.

The goal is to accumulate memorable experiences, as one would fill a bucket with strawberries at the pick-your-own berry farm.

What would a Christian bucket list look like? Well, let's start with the bucket. Would it be turned upright, to accumulate the most desirable experiences possible? Or would it be turned upside down, to pour out goodness upon the world?

A deeply Christian bucket list focuses on making others happy.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You have blessed me with so many gifts and talents and the gift of time to do good things in this life. Make me humble and grateful, Lord. May I always be aware of and attentive to the needs of others. Amen.