

MARKET STREET

"And this is the message we have received of Him, and declare unto you..." (1 John 1:5)



MESSENGER

**Market Street
church of Christ**
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Volume IX

December 24, 2017

No. 52

The Rich Man & Lazarus: Jesus' Christmas Carol

George Hutto

You should know that Jesus spoke about what happens to souls after death, which is our most authoritative source on the subject. After all, Jesus arose from the dead to prove His knowledge of Paradise, Hades, and other such otherworldly things. Therefore, consider that Dickens' novel and the Bible are not equal. Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* because he was in a financial bind, while Jesus gave us the divine message of the Rich Man for the salvation of souls. Dickens' Christmas Carol is an endearing story of redemption, of generosity and love for our fellow man. Jesus' warning of Hell for the spiritually negligent is from the perennial best-seller, the Bible, particularly, Luke 16:19-31.

The Rich Man *"fared sumptuously every day,"* gave no concern for beggars like Lazarus, and did not bother to read the writings of *"Moses and the prophets."* Lazarus, on the other hand, was poor and miserable, but obviously a devoutly religious man who found a place in Abraham's embrace after death. The conversation between the Rich Man (we are not even given his name) and Abraham are at the core of the story.

The Bad News First. Death is a place of torment for the unfaithful. The Rich Man sought only a drop of cold water to cool his tongue – *"for I am tormented in this flame."* But he was given nothing. All hope of comfort was gone. Abraham explained that, even if he wanted to deliver that cool drop of water, there is a great gulf fixed between the tormented and the blessed.

Also, death is a place of separation. The Rich Man thinks of his five brothers back on Earth and how they must hear his word of warning, *"lest they come to this place of torment."* This request was also denied, and Abraham pointed him to the Scriptures, the very thing he had neglected in his opulent lifestyle. The Rich Man insisted that if word came from him, surely his brothers would believe. But a harsh reality was handed back to him: *"Neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."*

Another, un-amusing point to be considered with this bad news in

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes..... 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship..... 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes..... 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Marty R. Adams..... (256) 503-8843
Tommy Coblentz..... (256) 232-3312
Jerry McGlocklin..... (256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith..... (256) 777-6737
Bonnie Sutton (256) 232-2081

Deacons

Joel Hamm (256) 278-1977
Danny Holt (256) 206-2746
Larry Mitchell (256) 230-0185
Marcus Morris..... (256) 232-8871
Russ Wulfekuhl (256) 683-9396

Evangelists

Buc Chumbley (256) 777-1065
David A. Cox..... (256) 233-8910
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*is published in the interest of New Testament
Christianity and to enhance the work of the
Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

Jesus' account is that there is no hope given for any change, ever. Jesus' story is couched in between warnings against divorce (Luke 16:18) and those who offend "little ones." (Luke 17:1-2) He is talking to people who like to "play hardball;" people who "play for keeps."

All the efforts to get the lost out of Hell do not diminish the finality of Jesus' picture of the Rich Man in torment. Purgatory has a happy ending, if it were true. Baptism by proxy is ingenious, if the Bible taught it. The idea that souls simply stop existing at the Judgment might make God a more just God in the eyes of some, but the Bible just does not teach it, and Jesus' story about the Rich Man teaches otherwise.

"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:46)

Medics talk about "a sense of impending doom" experienced by those who are bleeding to death, experiencing a heart attack, or otherwise sense that death is near. Jesus' words in this story are designed specifically to give the lost such a sense of urgency, dependency, and dire need.

The Good News. Surely, Jesus anticipated his own resurrection from the dead when he told His story of "a certain rich man." The resurrection is good news, **first**, because it assures us that Jesus knew what He was talking about. When the Lord spoke to Nicodemus about being born of water and the spirit, He said, "Most assuredly I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen..." (John 3:11) Jesus' assurance of the blessedness of the righteous is just as sure as the resurrection. Do you believe?

Second, the resurrection is good news because it reassures us that our salvation is secured by more than simple good works. Ebenezer Scrooge's repentance from greed is a wonderful story, but what about all his past sins? What about his devotion to God who made the spirits? Why did Jesus die in the first place but to atone for our sins!

"And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:17-19).

Third, there is good news in the fact that we are given the Rich Man's story on this side of the grave. And, we

have not only "Moses and the prophets," but also the entire New Testament, which gives us "the rest of the story." If the Rich Man is lost for his neglect of Moses' message, surely the unrighteous will be lost today for neglecting Christ's message! (Hebrews 10:26-31).

So, repentance is in order! Not just the doing of good deeds, but refraining from evil works (Galatians 5:19-21) and indifference (Matthew 12:30).

Jesus has given us time to confess and to be baptized for remission of sins. That is the story of Saul of Tarsus, a severe Scrooge if ever there was one. *"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16).

Jesus' story is not just for Christmas, and not just for commercialized England, but for all time and all places.

"Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem'" (Luke 24:46-47).

"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned'" (Mark 16:15-16).

Dickens had it right that Scrooge's story was to be finished by Scrooge himself. Jesus made it clear that the Rich Man wrote his own story, as did Lazarus. You and I are writing our own stories, too.

~via *Tidings*; Russellville, Alabama.



Making The Story Real

George Slover

"Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which

you were instructed.” (Luke 1:1-4)

One of my greatest challenges as scribe and preacher is to help the story of Jesus come to life in the hearts of the readers. It was for this very purpose that Luke recorded his account of the incredible life of Jesus.

At the close of the 19th-century skepticism swept over the British Isles. Among the skeptics was a brilliant young scholar by the name of William Ramsay. He was an agnostic who wanted to disprove the accuracy of the Bible.

Sir William Ramsay went to Asia Minor as an archaeologist to disprove Luke’s accuracy. His conclusions are recorded in Josh McDowell’s book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, pg. 74: “Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense... In short, this author should be placed along with the very greatest historians.” Ramsay’s discoveries changed him from skeptic to believer.

The purpose of Luke’s gospel is both literary and spiritual. From the literary viewpoint, Luke sets the life of Jesus within the context of institutions, customs, geography, and historical characters of the time. From the spiritual viewpoint, he plainly presents the person of Jesus Christ as the perfect man and Divine Savior of the world. Jesus really was God in the flesh!

As one reads through Luke’s gospel he must be impressed with the powerful life of Jesus. Luke wants the reader to grasp the authority and graciousness of the master teacher. He presents Jesus as a God who wishes to extend his help, mercy, and love to mankind. The thrilling account of those who witnessed Jesus after his death and resurrection reminds the reader of how much Christ offers.

Have you been moved by Jesus lately? Take time to read the gospel of Luke. It could be a spiritually life-changing experience!

~via *West-Oaks Church Bulletin*; Burnett, Texas.

Bible Study



Remember Our Study Periods

Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m.

News & Notes...

THE SICK:

Marion Mitchell

Grady Threet

Doris Lovell

Cindy Glass

Linda Jones

Barbara Carter

Mike & Anita Wheeler

Arvid McGuire

Ann Bush

Wayne Gooch

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Joe Leopard

Janice Cagle

Priscilla Tucker

Jenny Pickens

Phillip Christopher

Linda Ordonez

Cindy Walker

Gene Carpenter

Betty Christopher

Al Pollard

Elizabeth Howard

Will Weir

Bobby McLemore

Irene Inman

Jeanette Weir

Patsy Thomas

Ella Melvin

Everette “Bud” Dollar

Wayne Wooldridge

Brittany Bates Carter

Charles Burns

Una King Currier

Ava Brooke Campbell

Matt Poff

Phillip Harwell

In The Hospital/Rehabilitation:

Bonnie Sutton; Huntsville Hospital, rm. 627

Flossie Smith; Huntsville Hospital, rm. 1559

Adrian Maynard; Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Barbados

Norman Hamm; Millenium Rehab - Huntsville

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Helen Trousdale, rm. 43 Nelva Reed, rm. 61

Matty Murray, rm. 2 Dorothy Draper, rm. 73

Oneal Martin, rm. 81 Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36

Joyce Martin, rm. 73 Mable Crafts, rm. 39

Valeria Dalton, rm. 7 Christine Hudson, rm. 77

Kathleen Wales, rm. 103

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Robert & Mot Beasley, at Riverside Sr. Living, Decatur

Gwen Bullock, at granddaughter’s in Huntsville

Mary Ruth Gardner, at Merrill Gardens, Madison

Carl Hargrave, at granddaughter’s home in Hartselle

Elvin Stoffregen, at daughter’s in Rutherford, Tennessee

William Thomas, Madison Manor, Madison

Ruby Jean Tinnon, at home

Updates:

Elvin Stoffregen was taken to the Baptist Memorial Hospital in Union City, Tennessee for congestive heart failure last Sunday. He is now at home with medica-

tion...*Dwaine Allfrey* had surgery to remove a tumor from his eye on Monday...*Bonnie Sutton* continues in the Huntsville Hospital undergoing a series of tests on his heart in preparation for surgery next week...*Marion Mitchell* is at home the removal of the kidney stones...*Steve Usery* recovery has gone well and is getting back to himself...*Margaret Carter* was able to be back at Bible Study Wednesday night...*Sherry Davis* was able to be back at Bible Study Wednesday night after being sick...*Priscilla Tucker* is under-going her radiation treatments...*Arvid McGuire* saw a kidney specialist in Birmingham on Wednesday...*Grady Threet* continues under hospice care and is not doing well...*Adrian Maynard*, a preacher for the Hindsbury Rd. church in Barbados, had his surgery on Wednesday for the tumor on his brain. They were able to remove the tumors.

WORK GROUPS: Work Group Three will be meeting this evening after our evening service. If you are in group three, remember to meet with your group tonight.

SERMON IN SONG: There will be a sermon in song on Wednesday night in place of meeting for class this week.

SYMPATHY: We want to extend our deepest sympathy to all the family of *David Hartsell*. David passed away on Tuesday afternoon after a long battle with a brain tumor. David was a gospel preacher and had held a number of gospel meetings in this area. He was a great laborer in the kingdom. David's funeral was at the *Fourth Street church of Christ* and he was laid to rest in the *Cullman City Cemetery*. May the Lord bless Belinda and all the family in his passing.

DEATH: My uncle and *Jackie Cox's brother-in-law, Willard Cox*, passed away Friday night late at his home in Searcy, Arkansas. The arrangements are incomplete at this time.

NEW QUARTER IN BIBLE CLASS: The new quarter for the Bible class will begin the first Sunday morning in January, January 7th. If you have not been a part of these classes now would be a great time to begin.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Prices: A. J. and Andrea* have been in Orlando, Florida this past week on vacation...*Harvey Nixon* was in Virginia this past week.

THE RECORD: Attendance for the week of Dec. 17th

Sunday: Bible Classes 122
 Morning Worship 168
 Evening Worship 122

Wednesday: Bible Classes 104

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, December 24th:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Joel Hamm
 Song Leader Ashton Gatlin
 Prayer..... Jerry McGlocklin
 Preaching..... Buc Chumbley
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... Terry Andrews
 Assisting Marty Adams
 Serving Danny Holt Mike Ogles
 David Terry Tony Thomas
 Closing Prayer Roger Hammonds

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Joel Hamm
 Song Leader Tommy Burns
 Prayer..... Christian Usery
 Preaching..... Song Service
 Lord's Supper Terry Andrews
 Closing Prayer A. J. Price

Other Assignments for Sunday, December 24th:

Ushers..... Keith Hinkle/Hunter Cox
 Work Sound System..... Landon Adams

Wednesday, December 27th:

Song Leader Larry Holt
 Bible Reading Philippians 2:9-11
 Joy Warner
 Prayer..... Kenneth Smith
 Invitation..... David A. Cox
 Closing Prayer Steve Usery

Sunday, December 31st:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Keith Hinkle
 Song Leader Tommy Burns
 Prayer..... Dwaine Allfrey
 Preaching..... Buc Chumbley
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... Harvey Nixon
 Assisting Joel Hamm
 Serving Christian Usery Keenon Currier
 Roger Hammonds .. Danny Johnson
 Closing Prayer Mike Ogles

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Keith Hinkle
 Song Leader Ashton Gatlin
 Prayer..... Dan Reed
 Preaching..... Harvey Hixon
 Lord's Supper Joel Hamm
 Closing Prayer Larry Mitchell

Other Assignments for Sunday, December 31st:

Ushers..... Tommy Coblenz/Steve Bradley
 Work Sound System..... Terry Andrews