

Good Call!

Called to Live More Simply

September 25, 2022

Overarching Theme: 2022 – The Year of the Lord’s Favor (Luke 4:19)

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point:

As the world awakens from 2 years of pandemic stupor, the words of Jesus proclaiming “*the year of the Lord’s favor*” is a message whose time has come. This passage from Luke 4 harkens back to the ‘year of jubilee’ of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, a year of a fresh start, a clean slate and reset for everyone who can envision new possibilities with God this year and always.

Reflect on this Scripture: Luke 16:19-31

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house-- for I have five brothers--that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If

they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

Commentary:

This powerful parable reframes the haunting question that echoes from Genesis 4:9 and continues throughout "Moses and the Prophets" – "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" The profoundly contrasting experience of the lavishly wealthy man and the neglected man at his gate, Lazarus, is juxtaposed in the final analysis in the afterlife. This thematic continuity between the parable of the rich man and Lazarus and the end of the Gospel of Luke adds an ironic force to the exchange between the rich man and Abraham. The rich man's lament, "No, Father Abraham," conveys his despair that there is little hope that his brothers will heed "Moses and the Prophets." For the brothers, repentance requires a complete reversal of their way of life and their regard for the poor at their gates – to live more simply than others may simply live. His last hope for his brothers is that if someone were to go to them from the dead, they would repent.

Abraham's response, which concludes the parable, adds finality to the urgency of hearing Moses and the prophets. If the brothers will not hear them, then they will not be convinced even if one should rise from the dead. The language echoes early Christian preaching, the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection.

- Adapted from The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Vol IX, p. 318-19

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. Have you ever really wanted something (as a child at Christmas or perhaps as an adult at another time) but once received, it was not as satisfying as you thought it would be? Explain.
2. Why do you think the rich man lived so lavishly to the apparent neglect of those in his neighborhood who were in great need? Do you think he ignored Lazarus intentionally or was he just so caught up in his own pursuits that he didn't notice? Explain.
3. Instead of sending Lazarus on an errand to warn the formerly rich man's brothers, Abraham tells him that his brothers should listen to Moses and the prophets. What Scriptural message might Abraham be referring to? How might the brother's lives' change if they did listen?
4. Practically speaking, how might we respond to Jesus' call to live more simply than others might simply live?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Reflect with your loved ones and/or LIFE group about how you might be more aware of and generous toward those in need as the holidays approach.
3. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Luke 16:31 *He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'*