
Narrative Lectionary

Year 3 | The Year of Luke

Scripture Readings

March 14, 2021

*The Fourth Sunday
in Lent*

..... **About the text**

HOW EASY IS IT to make the main character of today's story someone who is not like us?

It is safe to say that very few of us are being chauffeured around town, flying to ski or golf weekends in exclusive resorts, surrounded by an entourage of assistants. Personal wealth so vast that spending it doesn't hurt accrues to just a few people in our world.

A related question: How easy is it to make the Lazarus of this story someone who also is not like us? If the rich man is a mirage, Lazarus is a cautionary tale to Jesus' listeners. Don't mess up, or you'll end up like Lazarus.

The challenge of this well-told story is subtle. It is easy to *say* we're not like them. But each is closer than we'd like.



Luke 16:19-31

19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ 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.’ ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ 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.’ ²⁷ He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ ²⁹ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ ³⁰ He said, ‘No,

19 “There once was a rich man, expensively dressed in the latest fashions, wasting his days in conspicuous consumption. ²⁰ A poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, had been dumped on his doorstep. ²¹ All he lived for was to get a meal from scraps off the rich man’s table. His best friends were the dogs who came and licked his sores.

²² “Then he died, this poor man, and was taken up by the angels to the lap of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell and in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham in the distance and Lazarus in his lap. ²⁴ He called out, ‘Father Abraham, mercy! Have mercy! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool my tongue. I’m in agony in this fire.’

²⁵ “But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that in your lifetime you got the good things and Lazarus the bad things. It’s not like that here. Here he’s consoled and you’re tormented. ²⁶ Besides, in all these matters there is a huge chasm set between us so that no one can go from us to you even if he wanted to, nor can anyone cross over from you to us.’

²⁷ “The rich man said, ‘Then let me ask you, Father: Send him to the house of my father ²⁸ where I have five brothers, so he can tell them the score and warn them so they won’t end up here in this place of torment.’

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father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

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.'"

The Message

29 "Abraham answered, 'They have Moses and the Prophets to tell them the score. Let them listen to them.'

30 "'I know, Father Abraham,' he said, 'but they're not listening. If someone came back to them from the dead, they would change their ways.'

31 "Abraham replied, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the Prophets, they're not going to be convinced by someone who rises from the dead.'"

Psalm 41:1-3

1 Happy are those who consider the poor; the LORD delivers them in the day of trouble.

2 The LORD protects them and keeps them alive; they are called happy in the land. You do not give them up to the will of their enemies.

3 The LORD sustains them on their sickbed; in their illness you heal all their infirmities.

1 Dignify those who are down on their luck; you'll feel good—that's what GOD does.

2 GOD looks after us all, makes us robust with life—· Lucky to be in the land, we're free from enemy worries.

3 Whenever we're sick and in bed, GOD becomes our nurse, nurses us back to health.

The Narrative Lectionary presents the story of God's work in humanity through a single Gospel each year. This is Year 3: The Year of Luke.