

The Call to Serve

26th Week of Ordinary Time- September 25, 2016- Luke 16: 19-31

This week's gospel really challenges us to realize that there are deadlines and limitations to our earthly life. We only have so much time. What we do in this life matters as it has a direct effect on our eternal life. Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus the poor man. They are characters in this story of opulent wealth and adjunct poverty. Jesus contrasts the disparity between their lives to illustrate the disparity that will come to those who fail to meet the call to serve before their lives run out.

The rich man of this story doesn't even provide Lazarus with the scraps from his table. He is so oblivious to the needs of the poor that he fails miserably in his humanity. **"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."** Here in lies the challenge for us. Who do we not see in our lives who need our help?

The story continues with the death of both men. Lazarus **"was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham."** God's mercy is poured out on Lazarus who now spends eternity in the constant care of that mercy under the protection of the patriarch, Abraham.

"The rich man also died and was buried, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at this side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of this finger in water and cool my tongue.'"


In his torment and pain the rich man has not realized a thing. He has failed to recognize his mistakes, his failure to serve the least. In fact, as scripture scholars point out, he still thinks Lazarus is a servant. He commands Abraham to send Lazarus to quench his thirst. The rich man has failed to recognize his role in this relationship. Abraham explains that God is not at his constant call, Lazarus is not his servant. In fact, the opposite is true for all of us.

We are called to serve God by serving others. We only have so much time to fulfill this call. Again, the rich man does not understand this teaching. He asks that Lazarus be sent to warn his brothers of the deadline with death that all face.

Abraham points out to him that the Law was there for him to know. The call to serve others has been written in the scriptures and proclaimed by the prophets since the beginning of time. Yet, the rich man failed to head this call. **"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.'"**

For us as Christians, we believe in someone who has risen from the dead. The call to serve the least among us is the hallmark of Jesus Christ. Are we prepared to hear it and then respond?

Blessings!


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