

a Bible Lesson from LUKE 16:19-31:

WHICH KINGDOM ARE WE SUBJECTS OF?

Robert Baral
2/04/2008 AD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. INTRODUCTION - WHICH KINGDOM ARE WE SUBJECTS OF?
- II. ONE FOOT IN GOD'S KINGDOM AND ONE FOOT IN THE WORLD'S
- III. IS OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH FALSE OR TRUE?
- IV. THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS
- V. FAITH WITHOUT GOOD WORKS IS DEAD
- VI. SAVED ONLY BY GRACE, FAITHFUL TO THE WORK GOD CALLS US TO!
- VII. TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW CHRIST!
- VIII. THE CHRISTIAN WORKS OF MERCY
- IX. IN CONCLUSION
- X. REFERENCES

I. INTRODUCTION - WHICH KINGDOM ARE WE SUBJECTS OF?

Which Kingdom are we subjects of – GOD’s Kingdom or the world’s? How we handle money and possessions reflects which Kingdom we belong to and the state of our souls before GOD. Are we members of The Kingdom of GOD now on earth now, that we may be members of His Kingdom in Heaven forever? Or are we members of the kingdom of the world now, which desires that our souls be forfeited to the kingdom of hell for all eternity?

QUESTION:

****Which Kingdom are we subjects of – The Kingdom of GOD or the kingdom of the world?**

II. ONE FOOT IN GOD’S KINGDOM AND ONE FOOT IN THE WORLD’S

Randy Alcorn, in “Money, Possessions and Eternity,” observes that many in The Church seem to have one foot in GOD’s Kingdom, but wish to keep their other foot in the kingdom of the world, the flesh and the devil:

“Far too many evangelical Christians have succumbed to the heresy that this present life may be lived disobediently [against GOD’s Commandments] without serious effects on their eternal state. Never have so many Christians believed the lie that their money and possessions are theirs to do with as they please. Never have so many thought that as long as they affirm with their lips a certain doctrinal statement [or prayer], they may live their lives indifferent to human need and Divine Command, and all will turn out well in the end!” [emphasis added] ¹

QUESTION:

****Do we have one foot in the service of The Church and the other foot firmly planted in the service of the world, the flesh and the devil?**

III. IS OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH FALSE OR TRUE?

A. W. Tozer observes the gross inconsistency of such Christian hypocrisy:

“The man of pseudo faith will fight for his verbal Creed but refuse flatly to allow himself to get into a predicament where his future [earthly and eternal] must depend upon that Creed being true. He always provides himself with secondary ways of escape so he will have a way out if the roof caves in. What we need very badly these days is a company of Christians who are prepared to trust GOD as completely now as they know they must do at The Last Day!” ²

QUESTION:

****Is our Christian faith false or true to our Lord and Saviour?**

¹ 1, Alcorn, “Money, Possessions and Eternity,” p xv, paragraph 4 – p xvi. “Introduction.”

² 1, Alcorn, “Money, Possessions and Eternity,” p xv. “Introduction.” Quote of A. W. Tozer.

IV. THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

From LUKE 16:19-31, consider the parable of our Lord JESUS CHRIST of Lazarus and the rich man: The rich man in this example thought that how he employed the material wealth that GOD blessed him with, in this life in the face of the need and suffering of his fellow man, would have no effect on his eternal destiny. But he was apparently sadly mistaken! Consider:

LUKE 16:19-31

¹⁹ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

²³ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. ³

QUESTION:

****What lessons do we hear The Lord speaking to us in His parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus?"**

³ 2, KJV, LUKE 16:19-31.

V. FAITH WITHOUT GOOD WORKS IS DEAD

What does Saint James say in JAMES 2:14-20? That Faith without works is dead! What point is mere intellectual ascent without a living Faith in JESUS CHRIST that brings forth good works?

JAMES 2:14-20

¹⁴ What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one GOD; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ⁴

QUESTION:

**Do we understand that a profession of Christian Faith that lacks Good Works is dead?

VI. SAVED ONLY BY GRACE, FAITHFUL TO THE WORK GOD CALLS US TO!

What does Saint Paul say in EPHESIANS 2:8-10? That a living Faith of salvation in CHRIST is indeed by His Grace, but that if our Faith is true, we will embrace the good works which GOD has set before us to do!

EPHESIANS 2:8-10

⁸ For by Grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of GOD:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them. ⁵

QUESTION:

**Do we understand that, though we are saved only by The Grace of GOD at The Cross, ---we are being unfaithful to Him

---- if we do not embrace the Good Works which He as ordained for us to serve in?

⁴ 2, KJV, JAMES 2:14-20.

⁵ 2, KJV, EPHESIANS 2:8-10.

VII. TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW CHRIST!

Lying in bed on Sunday morning and crying “O GOD!” from the comfort of your pillows and blankets does NOT constitute going to Church! Mumbling “The Our Father” once every so many years at a Christian funeral does NOT constitute study and knowledge of The Holy Scriptures! Saying sorry for being caught in a sin because you have been caught does NOT constitute confession and repentance to The LORD! And tossing a dollar bill at a bum begging for money from your car window to get him to move out of your way as you speed on to the shopping mall does NOT constitute Christian Mercy!

We have established, that if we are in CHRIST JESUS, our lives should show forth more than mere lip service to His Lordship. We are called by The Saviour to be more than mere intellectual disciples of The Cross. So we read in MATTHEW 16:24, “Then said JESUS unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me!”⁶ GOD The Father gave up His only begotten Son on The cruel Cross to redeem us back to Himself because of His great Love for us! Do we call ourselves disciples of The Messiah JESUS? Should we not have some sense of desiring to return Love to Him by loving our fellow man?

QUESTION:

**Are we taking up our Cross daily and following CHRIST?

VIII. THE CHRISTIAN WORKS OF MERCY

Let us then take what money and possessions we have been blessed with by the very hand of GOD and put some portion of it to the work of The Kingdom of GOD on earth, The Church! The Catechism of The Catholic Church speaks of Christian “Works of Mercy,” those “charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbour in his spiritual and bodily necessities.” These are the flowing of The Divine Love in the Christian life, by the power of The HOLY SPIRIT, serving CHRIST our King by serving in His Kingdom - The Church.

They are The Gifts of The Spirit that enable us to keep The First Table of The Ten Commandments and thus The Second. They are the results of living Faith that desires to produce Good Works. They are The Fruits of The Spirit working in us - loving GOD and thus loving our fellow man - by Divine Grace. They are “spiritual” for the souls of others in need and “corporeal” for the bodies of others in need:⁷

⁶ 2, KJV, MATTHEW 16:24

⁷ 3, Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 2447, p 648.

“The Spiritual Works of Mercy:”⁸

- **Admonish sinners.
- **Instruct the uninformed.
- **Counsel the doubtful.
- **Comfort the sorrowful.
- **Be patient with those in error.
- **Forgive offenses.
- **Pray for the living and the dead.

“The Corporeal Works of Mercy:”⁹

- **Feed the hungry.
- **Give drink to the thirsty.
- **Clothe the naked.
- **Shelter the homeless.
- **Visit the imprisoned.
- **Visit the sick.
- **Bury the dead.

QUESTION:

- **Are we faithfully daily seeking opportunities to live out Christian “Works of Mercy
---both spiritual
---and also corporeal?
- **And what must we seek from The Almighty to become more faithful to The Cross of
our Redeemer JESUS CHRIST?

⁸ 4, Kosicki, “I Demand Deeds of Mercy,” p 13, “Spiritual Works of Mercy.”

⁹ 4, Kosicki, “I Demand Deeds of Mercy,” p 13, “Corporeal Works of Mercy.”

IX. IN CONCLUSION – LET US PONDER SOME QUESTIONS

So before we leave here today, we are called by The LORD to consider certain not uncommonly uncomfortable questions:

- **Which Kingdom are we subjects of – The Kingdom of GOD or the kingdom of the world?
- **Do we have one foot in the service of The Church and the other foot firmly planted in the service of the world, the flesh and the devil?
- **Is our Christian faith false or true to our Lord and Saviour?
- **What lessons do we hear The Lord speaking to us in His parable of “The Rich Man and Lazarus?”
- **Do we understand that a profession of Christian Faith that lacks Good Works is dead?
- **Do we understand that, though we are saved only by The Grace of GOD at The Cross, ---we are being unfaithful to Him
---- if we do not embrace the Good Works which He as ordained for us to serve in?
- **Are we taking up our Cross daily and following CHRIST?
- **Are we faithfully daily seeking opportunities to live out Christian “Works of Mercy
---both spiritual
----and also corporeal?
- **And what must we seek from The Almighty to become more faithful to The Cross of our Redeemer JESUS CHRIST?

X. REFERENCES

1. "Money, Possessions and Eternity." Randy Alcorn. Tyndale House Publications, Inc. Carol Stream, Illinois. 1989, revised Edition 2003.
2. "King James Version [Bible]." Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
3. "Catechism of The Catholic Church." United States Catholic Conference. Doubleday of Random House, Inc. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland. 1995.
4. "I Demand Deeds of Mercy – How JESUS Called St. Maria Faustina to Live The Works of Mercy." The Reverend George W. Kosicki. Marian Press. Marians of The Immaculate Conception, Stockbridge, Massachusetts. 2000.