

SermonIndex Announcements :: A rich man and a beggar.. CH Spurgeon (Devotional)..... J. C. RYLE..

A rich man and a beggar.. CH Spurgeon (Devotional)..... J. C. RYLE.. - posted by EAGLEFLYING (), on: 2018/9/19 17:17

Spurgeon's 'EVENING by EVENING' for September 19

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A rich man and a beggar!

(J.C. Ryle, Riches and Poverty, 1878)

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.

At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores." Luke 16:19-21

The Lord Jesus begins the parable by telling us of a rich man and a beggar. He says not a word in praise either of poverty or of riches. He describes the circumstances of a wealthy man, and the circumstances of a poor man; but neither condemns the temporal position of one, nor praises that of the other.

We must take heed that we do not draw lessons from the parable which it was never meant to teach. The rich are not always evil men, and do not always go to Hell. The poor are not always holy men, and do not always go to Heaven. We must not rush into the extreme of supposing that it is sinful to be rich. We must not run away with the idea that there is anything wicked in the difference of condition here described, and that God intended all men to be equal. There is nothing in our Lord Jesus Christ's words to warrant any such conclusion. He simply describes things as they are often seen in the world, and as we must expect to see them.

Many in every age have disturbed society by stirring up the poor against the rich. But so long as the world is under the present order of things, universal equality cannot be attained.

So long as . . .

some are wise, and some are foolish;

some are strong, and some are weak;

some are healthy, and some are diseased;

so long as children reap the fruit of their parent's misconduct;

so long as sun, and rain, and heat, and cold, and wind, and waves, and drought, and blight, and storm, and tempest are beyond man's control--so long will there be inequality in this world.

Take all the property in England by force this day, and divide it equally among the inhabitants. Give every man over twenty years old an equal portion. Let all share alike, and begin the world over again.

Do this, and see where you would be at the end of fifty years. You would just have come round to the point where you began! You would just find things as unequal as before!

Some would have worked--and some would have been idle;

some would have been always careless--and some always scheming;

some would have sold--and others would have bought;

some would have wasted--and others would have saved.

And the end would be, that some would be rich--and others poor.

We might as well say . . .

that all men ought to be of the same height, weight, strength, and cleverness;

or that all oak trees ought to be of the same shape and size;

or that all blades of grass ought to be of the same length

--as that all men were meant to be equal.

Settle it in your mind that the main cause of all the suffering you see around you, is sin. Sin is the grand cause . . . of the enormous luxury of the rich--and the painful degradation of the poor; of the heartless selfishness of the highest classes--and the helpless poverty of the lowest.

Sin must be first cast out of the world;
the hearts of all men must be renewed and sanctified;
the devil must be bound;
the Prince of Peace must come down and take His great power and reign
--all this must be before there ever can be universal happiness, or the gulf be filled up which now divides the rich and poor.

Beware of expecting a millennium to be brought about . . .
by any method of government,
by any system of education,
or by any political party.

Labor to do good to all men; pity your poorer brethren, and help every reasonable endeavor to raise them from their low estate; do not slacken your hand from any endeavor to increase knowledge--to promote morality--to improve the temporal condition of the poor.

But never, never forget that you live in a fallen world--that sin is all around you--and that the devil is abroad.

And be very sure that the rich man and Lazarus are emblems of two classes of people which will always be in the world until the Lord comes!

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You may want to read the whole of Ryle's insightful article: Riches and Poverty.