

Luke 16:19-31

Choose Whom You Will Serve!

Scripture: Luke 16:19-31

Memory Verse: Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters....you cannot serve God and money.” (ESV)

Lesson Focus: While in this chapter Jesus warns us of the dangers of putting money above God, He also gives us a vivid “sneak-peek” into the afterlife with the story of the rich man and Lazarus. We pray the kids will hear and respond by ensuring Jesus is the One they love and serve above all else!

Activities and Crafts: Memory Verse Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: God Above All Else Kite

Starter Activity: “What Am I” Riddles

Consider getting the lesson started with a few “What Am I” riddles for the kids to answer. Start out with some easy one’s and then progress to some harder one’s. You can find several online, but below are a few that rhyme:

EASIER:

- 1) I have a long, floppy tongue and make a great pet. You know one named Clifford, I bet. (dog)
- 2) Some say I smell, but I’m actually quite clean. If you mess with my mud, I might get mean. (pig)
- 3) I’m something you read when sitting in a pew. I have two testaments, an old and a new. (Bible) *
- 4) Instead of going to Nineveh, I decided to “bail”. After being thrown overboard, I was swallowed by a whale. (Jonah)

HARDER:

- 5) Whether you wash the dishes or your face, in both cases you’ll be using this space. (sink)
- 6) I am a veggie with 3 letters in my name. Take away the last two, and I still sound the same. (pea)
- 7) I have 100s of legs, but I can only lean. You make me dirty, so your house can be clean. (broom)

TRICKY:

- 8) I can never be thrown, but I can be caught. Ways to lose me are always being sought. (cold)
- 9) This might seem unseen, but with me you “go with red” and “stop at the green”. (watermelon)
- 10) I help you from your head to your toe. The more I work, the smaller I grow. (bar of soap)

Afterwards, be sure to transition into the lesson with one last riddle:

People make me, save me, exchange me, and crave me. What am I? MONEY!

As we continue in our study of Luke, money features once again. Let’s see what Jesus has to say this time!

Bible Study:

Jesus is about to tell us a story about a very rich man and a very poor man, but before we get to that let's review something we learned a couple of weeks ago.

Luke 16:13: Jesus is pointing out how impossible it is to have two opposing masters or rulers. In this case, the two are God and money ("mammon" refers to wealth/money/stuff). **Teachers:** To help kids understand this, invite a volunteer up to be the "servant" and have you and another volunteer start barking out opposite orders (i.e. stand up vs. sit down, touch your head vs. touch your toes, etc.). *

Q: What are some ways that we serve God? A: Trusting in Him, praying to Him, listening to His Word and obeying what He says, loving Him first and then loving others, etc.

Q: But what might it look like to "serve" money/stuff? * A: Do **whatever** it takes to get it. You might steal it, envy those who have more, and mock those who have less. *

Read 1 Timothy 6:9-10. Money itself is not evil, but the "love of it" ruins people both in this life and the next.

Now with this backdrop, let's see how this plays out in the story that Jesus has for us.

Luke 16:19: The first character is someone described as living "sumptuously" every day. There are times when all of us may be treated to "sumptuous" meals (like at a wedding), but those times are special. This was his life EVERY DAY. This man is the richest of the rich. *

Luke 16:20-21: But then there is this other man named Lazarus who was the poorest of the poor. He was sick and had to beg for food and longed for crumbs among the leftovers from the rich man's table.

Now Jesus doesn't tell us anymore about the lives of either of these characters.

Q: But what should we expect of the rich man? A: To joyfully share * some of what he has been given! Living "sumptuously" every day he most certainly had means to help Lazarus. But that didn't happen! The only ones who gave Lazarus attention were dogs!!

Q: So who do you think the rich man served, God or money? A: Definitely money!!

Jesus doesn't tell us anymore about Lazarus's life, but it is implied that he was a man who loved and served God for the name Lazarus means: "*God is my helper*". Despite his abject poverty and suffering, Lazarus trusted in God, not money.

Luke 16:22a: Lazarus passed away and is taken to this place called "Abraham's bosom" which refers to heaven. * For believers in God like Lazarus, "*to be absent from the body, is to present with the Lord*" (**2 Corinthians 5:8**).

Luke 16:22b: Notice the rich man also dies and is buried.

Q: Were his wealth and riches able to keep him alive? A: NO! That is still true today despite all of man's efforts to try and cheat death. * (**Hebrews 9:27**)

Q: Have you ever asked or wondered what happens to you after you die? The rest of this story gives us some of the most detailed answers in the Bible!

Luke 16:23: Yikes! The rich man is in a place of punishment and torment! Jesus has described this place earlier in the gospel as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. He is there not because he was rich, but because of what he served and loved: **money!** He said “NO” to God with his life on earth and God now honors that choice forever! *

Luke 16:24-25: Not only is the rich man suffering, but he is somehow able to see Lazarus with Abraham and talk with them. The place that Abraham and Lazarus are in is described as a place of “comfort”. Later in the gospel, Jesus calls it “paradise”. * Lazarus is not there because he was poor, but because of who He loved and served: **God!** He said “YES” to God with his life on earth and God now honors that choice forever!

Luke 16:26: Notice Abraham describes this great chasm in between the two places and that it is impossible to “jump” from one to the other. (**Teachers:** Consider putting two strips of tape on the ground far enough apart to create a “chasm” that can’t be crossed and invite a few volunteers to try jumping across)

This teaches us something very important: There are no second chances after we die! *

Luke 16:27-28: Notice how the rich man still disrespects Lazarus as if he is someone that should be assigned chores to do for him! Notice also that the agony of the rich man is so great that he wants Lazarus sent to warn his family so that they can be saved. *

Luke 16:29: But Abraham says that they already have everything they need to be saved. Q: Where can we hear what “Moses and the prophets” had to say? A: The Word of God! Abraham says that they need to hear the word of God and respond to it in faith if they want to be saved from the punishment they deserve for their sin! (**Romans 10:17**) *

Luke 16:30: The rich man thinks that if his family just sees a dead man like Lazarus come back to life, then they will repent (turn from their sin) and believe (turn to God). *

Luke 16:31: But Abraham says that miracles themselves cannot break hard hearts! * And you know what? He’s right! Jesus has performed miracles and will soon die on the cross and rise again, but the crowds mostly abandoned Him and did not repent/believe.

Key Point: We’ve learned some very serious truths in this story. God’s Word has pulled back the curtain a little and given us a peak into the mystery of what happens after death. There are only two options: eternal suffering in hell or eternal paradise in heaven.

The eternal suffering in hell is the place the rich man went not because of his riches, but because of his sin. For him, his sin worked itself out in his love of money. * What about you? What is it that you love and serve more than anything else? If it is not God, learn from the rich man and beware! Remember you cannot have two masters!

Jesus loves you * and He offers eternal life * to all (both rich and poor!) who will repent of their sin and turn to Him in faith! Choose whom you will serve today!

BRING IT HOME

Read 1 Tim. 6:17-18
Most of us in America
are rich! What does this
passage teach us?

Parent Signature:

Parent Challenge:
People make me, save me,
exchange me, and crave me.
What am I?

Read Luke 16:29-31
What do people need most
of all in order to be saved?

