

Homily on the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, by Metropolitan Avgoustinos Kantiotes



The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus ([source](#))

Homily on the Fifth Sunday of Luke (The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus - Luke 16: 19-31), by [Metropolitan Avgoustinos Kantiotes of Florina \(+2010\)](#)

"Life beyond the Tomb"

Many things, my beloved, make man afraid. But that which frightens him more than anything is death. Even the word "death" alone brings trembling. Death is a great mystery!

Everyone, more or less, has the question: what happens after death? Is there anything beyond the tomb, or does life end there, and man is extinguished?

The question is an important one. If we believed that life ends in the tomb, then man would be free to do whatever he wishes: to sin, to fornicate, to commit adultery, to break the greatest rules, as long as he evades the eyes of the police and justice. If, however, there is life beyond the tomb, then man must count how he lives in this life, according to the voice of his conscience and the will of God.

To the question as to what is there after death, the answer is given us by today's Gospel, the beautiful Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, which you just heard. What does it tell us?

There was a rich man, who had all of the good things from God. But all of these (houses, fields, everything else), he used for himself alone. He was a selfish self-seeker, and a worshipper of the flesh. He had the best clothes, wore expensive outfits, which only kings would wear, and ate the best food and drank the best wine, and spend his days in his great home. There were people

playing music every night there, and sinful women danced unethical dances. Thus he spent his life, "rejoicing radiantly every day" (Luke 16:19). He did not give meaning to anything else.

At his door lay Lazarus, a poor and sick man, alone and abandoned, whom no one gave even the shelter of a roof, or medicine, or any other human help. The rich man never opened his door to show him hospitality, and he tried to survive on the crumbs that fell from the table of the rich man. He was full of wounds, and the dogs licked his wounds. Thus he lived.

But one day, the rich man, who thought that he would live as long as the mountains, heard a knock at the door. Who was it? Death! This is the dark visitor, who comes at an hour that we do not expect him, and seizes old and young, rich and poor, and leads them to the other world. He died, therefore. And his body became the food for worms and odor, and his soul went to Hades, where he sensed the reproaches of his conscience. And he would have preferred, as the Blessed Chrysostom says, to be stung by a scorpion, rather than experience the sting of the conscience. This he learned, when he was in the other world.

Where he was, the rich man sensed a far away other place, a place of light and beauty and joy: Paradise. And he sees in the heart of Paradise, in the bosom of Abraham, whom? Lazarus, the poor man, together with the righteous. Then his soul cried out and said: What did I suffer, why did I believe that there was not another world? And he entreated Abraham for two things. One, to send Lazarus to refresh him with one drop of water, for as he said, he was burning in that abyss. And the other, for Lazarus to go to the world below, to inform his five brothers, that they should remember their ends. But Abraham did not answer his entreaties. He said that there was a chasm between them: "between you and us there is a great chasm that was set" (Luke 16:26). There is no bridge to join the abyss with Paradise, and furthermore, there is no need for anyone to go to the world below, because they have the Scriptures, which bear witness to the other world.

Therefore, my brethren, there is another life. If someone would ask this today, he would find that the majority of so-called Christians do not believe these. What years we are living in! In years past, there were no radios or televisions, and people lived in huts. But within these huts they lived like angels, like holy men, like Lazaruses. Now, God has given them money. Those blessed years, each would wish each other "Good Paradise". Today, does anyone hear anyone say to another "Good Paradise"? Now, we don't believe. Children get such an education from schools. In one village, there was a 90 year old woman, who was in danger of dying. Her good spiritual father went to her and told her: "My good Lady, have you ever confessed?" "Never," she replied. "Have you communed?" "A few times." "Do you go to church?" "Not much." "Why, because you are getting ready to go to the other world." "Bah," the woman said, "these are myths." "My Lady, who told you that these are myths?" "My

one grandson, who went to university in Thessaloniki, came and told me that there is nothing after death, that man is just physical, flesh and bones...”

Thus faith in the other world is uprooted. To such, the Gospel confirms that that world exists. “And who saw it?” you might say. But have you seen America? Have you seen Australia? Have you seen Canada? Someone else told you that they exist, and you believe. If someone then told you that they did not exist, you would laugh. Thus, as surely as there is an Australia, as there are stars, as this place exists, there is surely the other life, for which man was fashioned. Who confirmed this for us? Christ Himself. And if we do not believe in Christ, who should we believe, the devil?

Therefore, as it is certain—utterly certain that there is another life, what should we do?

First, we should think that the souls will continue to live on there, and that there will come the day when the Lord will stand in judgment inexorably of all, and “those who have done evil” will go to the eternal abyss, but “those who have done good”, to eternal Paradise (John 5:29). You should believe this. You don’t believe this? You are not a Christian, you are a naturalist. You only speak of physical things, and that there is only matter that exists. But man, however, is not just matter.

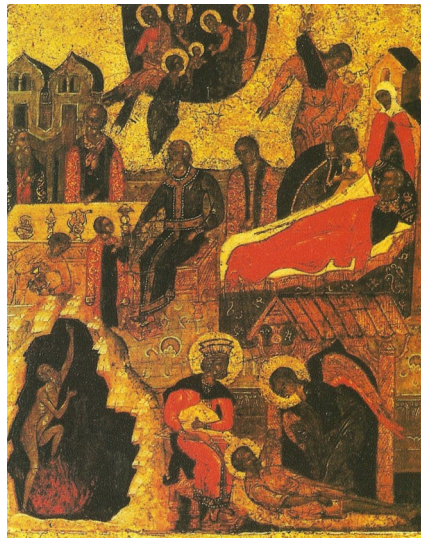
Second, we should prepare ourselves, we should be ready. We do not know the hour of our death. As the thief does not inform when he will come to break in, it is unknown when death will take us. And when it is time to travel, it is important to have prepared beforehand, and have your ticket in your pocket for when they ask it of you, for without a ticket, you are going nowhere. Our ticket is what? Faith in Christ, our good works, love, philanthropy, showing compassion, whatever is good and beautiful.

I will end with a story. Once, there was a king who had the mindset of the Rich Man in today’s parable. He did not believe in the other world, he partied, wasted time, participated in orgies. In that palace, there was a court jester. What does this mean? They did not have theaters and movies back then, so they had jesters for entertainment. He made the king laugh with the jokes that he said. And he was part of his personal entourage. One day, the king told him: “Take this cane, and I give it to you like a prize. If you ever find someone more senseless, more ridiculous, more wretched than you, give it to him...” He kept the cane. After some years, the king got sick, and was bedridden. He called the doctors, nothing. He took medicine, nothing. He was approaching death. Then, the jester came to him for the last time. “King, what is going on?” he asked. “I am not well. I am leaving for a great journey,” he replied. “And when will you return?” he asked. “I will never return again.” “Have you made any plans, have you prepared?” “No.” “Then, I have found the most wretched one in the world. Take the cane!”

Because of this, my beloved, let us close our ears to the faithless, and let us believe what our Church tells us: “I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen” (The Creed) Let us be ready, wherever we are, for death, that we might go to the other world, where are the saints and the angels, and where is Christ, the King of the Ages. Amen.

+Bishop Avgoustinos

(preached in the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul, Petron-Amyntaios, 10/30/1983; amateur translation of text from [source](#))



Icon depicting the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus ([source](#))

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us! Amen!

Source: <https://full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.com/2014/11/homily-on-parable-of-rich-man-and.html>