

The King of His Own Life

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

There's a man who lives in a gated community, drives a luxury car, and never eats the same meal twice in a month. He works hard, but he plays even harder. His schedule revolves around his desires, such as gym in the morning, gourmet lunch, business meetings, and evening parties. His calendar is full, but his heart is empty of others. He hardly notices the struggling families in his city or the elderly woman at the bus stop. He lives like a king in his own world, with himself as the only subject.

In today's Gospel, Jesus presents a man very much like this: clothed in fine linen, dining sumptuously each day. Outside his door lies Lazarus, poor and covered in sores, longing for the scraps from the rich man's table. But Lazarus is invisible to him. The rich man sees only himself.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus offers a stark warning about the spiritual blindness that can accompany wealth and self-absorption. As St. Gregory the Great wisely noted, "Banquets can scarcely be celebrated blamelessly, for almost always luxury accompanies feasting; and when the body is swallowed up in the delight of refreshing itself, the heart relaxes to empty joys." The danger isn't merely in possessing wealth; it's in the kind of life that forgets others, that becomes numb to suffering, that turns in on itself with self-satisfaction and indulgence.

Jesus isn't condemning wealth. Rather, He's exposing a heart that refused to love. The rich man's sin wasn't what he wore or what he ate—it was what he ignored. He had every opportunity to see Lazarus, to help him, to restore his dignity. But he chose comfort over compassion, pleasure over mercy. After death, their roles are reversed. Lazarus is carried to the bosom of Abraham, a place of peace and comfort. The rich man, in torment, finally sees Lazarus, but it's too late. The chasm between them can no longer be crossed. The choices we make in this life echo into eternity. There is no promise of another chance after death.

Even then, the rich man doesn't ask to be forgiven. He asks for Lazarus to serve him and for a warning to be sent to his brothers. Abraham replies: "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them." In other words, God has already given us everything we need to choose the path of life and love.

In a world where it's easy to be consumed by our own needs and desires, this parable calls us to open our eyes. Who is at our doorstep? Who have we overlooked? Do we use our blessings to build a kingdom for ourselves or to serve those in need?

The Gospel challenges us to recognize that the path to eternal joy begins now, in compassion, mercy, and self-giving love. The real feast is not the one laid for ourselves, but the one we share with others, especially those who have nothing.

Yours in Christ,

Father Rudy