

TEXT Luke 16:19-31

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that once a person is in Heaven or Hell, there is no changing places. They will recognize that eternity is forever.

MEMORY VERSE These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. — Matthew 25:46

The Rich Man and Lazarus

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

THESE SHALL — Point to an imaginary group of people on your right.

GO AWAY INTO — Point with both index fingers to the right, snapping your wrists as you point.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT — Extend both hands, palms up, and wiggle fingers as you move your hands in small circles (fire).

BUT THE RIGHTEOUS INTO — Extend left hand, palm up; place tips of right fingers on lips and move right hand down until back of right hand touches left palm.

LIFE ETERNAL — Wave arm left to right, point up, looking up.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Cut apart the two figures representing a sad person surrounded by flames and a happy person surrounded by clouds, along with the base piece giving the Scripture reference. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) As your students learn each portion of the verse, put up the corresponding pieces one at a time.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring a full piggy bank to class. Pour out the change in front of your class. Talk a little about what you could buy with this much money. Then tell them that today's story is about a man who was very rich. But he found out that money wasn't all that important.

1. Describe the earthly circumstance of the rich man. Introduce Lazarus, and explain his contrasting situation.

2. Explain where each man went when he died.

3. Describe how the rich man could see Lazarus, but there was no way to get to him.

Climax: The rich man wanted to send word to his brothers, but even this was impossible.

Conclusion: The rich man did not go to Hell because he was rich, nor Lazarus to Heaven because he was poor. Lazarus made preparation for Heaven and the rich man did not.

Response: The students should be able to contrast the eventual destination of the two men, and to conclude that after we leave this world there is no longer any choice about where we will spend eternity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is a story told by Jesus which clearly illustrates that our conduct on earth determines our future and the temporary pleasures or trials of this life will be completely overshadowed by our eternal state.

In Luke 16:22 it says that the rich man died and Lazarus died, but this is not the end of the story. Jesus, the One who holds the keys of death and Hell (Revelation 1:18), pulls back the veil for us and gives us a glimpse of life beyond death.

If this story is a parable it is the only one in which we are given the name of one of the characters. Neither Jesus nor Luke called it a parable. It should also be noted that Jesus used this story to confront the Pharisees who, as it says in Luke 16:14, "were covetous" just as the rich man in the story. And just as Abraham told the rich man in Hell that his brothers would not believe even if one rose from the dead, neither did the Jews believe when Christ rose from the dead.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring to class several seeds: corn, mustard, or others such as from fruit (plums, peaches, apples). Tell the children what kinds of seeds they are and ask the class what will grow from each seed. Plant the seeds in soil, even if only in a paper cup. Ask them again what will grow and after they answer tell them, "Well, I don't like corn (or whatever seed you have) so I want peaches to come up instead." Ask them if that will work, and of course, they will tell you "No." After we plant seeds in our garden, it is too late to decide what we want to grow, that must be done when we get the seeds. Use that to explain that what we "plant" here on earth will decide where we will spend eternity. If we plant evil deeds we will reap evil and spend eternity with the

devil; if we plant Christian deeds we will spend eternity with God in Heaven.

Have two paper dolls and paste a heart on the back of each, on one a clean heart and on the other a dirty heart. Use the dolls to act out events, showing helpful and sinful actions by the dolls. The class decides where each will spend eternity. If file folders were made, one indicating Heaven and one Hell, the children can place the dolls in the appropriate places.

Start off by giving examples of some things we cannot change. Once we have a birthday we cannot go back to the age we were before we had the birthday. (To better illustrate this, have a cake with candles on it.) Once you eat a cookie you can't "un-eat" it. Once you spend a dollar it is gone. Once your choice of where to spend eternity becomes final, you will not be able to change it after you get there.

Take to class a doll dressed in scraps of velvet or brocade to represent the rich man. Use sparkling pins and a coin purse full of change to illustrate his wealth. Show a picture of an elaborate house. Have another doll with rags tied around it to represent Lazarus. Put on some small pieces of adhesive tape painted red with a marker to represent sores. Show a dry crust of bread to represent his food. An empty tin cup could illustrate his begging. These will all help to illustrate your lesson.

Before class time, draw a large circle on a piece of posterboard. Connect the lines carefully so it is not discernible where you began. Ask the students if they can point out the beginning and end of the circle. Compare this to an unending eternity.

Draw something with a ball point or marking pen on a piece of paper. Make the following application: Once ink from a pen is on the paper, it cannot be returned to the pen. It is permanently out of the pen. Once we go into eternity, we cannot go back to get saved. Our choice made while we are on earth, is forever.

QUESTIONS

What happened to Lazarus? The rich man?

Who told this story (parable)?

How long will Lazarus be in Heaven?

How long will the rich man be in Hell?

Where do you want to spend eternity?

When Lazarus died and went to Heaven, how do you think he felt about the problems of his life on this earth?

When the rich man found himself in Hell, how do you think he felt about his grand life on this earth?

The rich man must have had plenty of time to make money. What didn't he take time for?

How does Jesus want us to treat poor or sick people?

Would you rather have been friends with Lazarus or the rich man when they were on this earth? Why?

List some reasons why the rich man's brothers would not have believed in Jesus even if Lazarus had risen from the dead to warn them.

Do all people now believe in Jesus? What will happen to those who do? What will happen to those who do not?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Bring a toy airplane or rocket ship to class. Talk a little bit about how far and how fast they can go. But, did one ever go to Heaven? Noooo! (Pass the toy around so each youngster can hold it for a bit.) Then in telling the lesson story, explain that Heaven and Hell are very far apart. Once Lazarus was in Heaven (or the rich man in Hell) there was no going back to earth; and what we do in this life dictates where we will go. It is important that we love Jesus and do what He wants us to do in order to go to Heaven.

Show the children the picture of the rich man and Lazarus (see Patterns). Ask them which man is ready for Heaven. Let them open the "heart door" of each one to see that it's what is inside that counts. Have a drawing of money in the rich man's heart and Jesus in Lazarus' heart.

REVIEW IDEAS

To portray the rich man, dress one of your students in wise-man robes from your Christmas costumes. Seat him on a throne or lounge and have servants come in, pretending to offer him food, etc. Hold up signs behind him to show what he is thinking of: money, himself, rich new robes, fine foods, etc. Then show another scene, this time with a student in ragged robes holding out a cup. (Can you stage a dog coming in?) Hold up signs behind him to show what he is thinking of: Jesus, Heaven, etc. Announce that the rich man died. Have him walk away from all the fine things, take off his robe, and lie down. Put cardboard flames around him. Have Lazarus lie down, and put something representative of Heaven around him (mansions, soft music, etc.).

Use two-sided stick puppets to dramatize the story of the rich man and Lazarus (see Patterns). The figures will be: the rich man/heart with self inside, Lazarus/

heart with Jesus inside, sacks or piles of money/outstretched hand with one or two coins on it, lavish display of food/dry bread crust, flames in Hell/ mansions in Heaven.

Begin your review by talking about opposites. Ask students if their teacher at school ever asks them to come up with opposite words. Do some examples. You might wish to show some pictures of things that are opposite. Today's lesson talks about two men who were oppo-

sites. Have them help you mention a number of ways in which Lazarus and the rich man were different (home, food, clothes, friends, activities, etc.). Then point out that the greatest contrast of all came after they died — a contrast between where each of them is spending eternity.

COORDINATING SONGS

"The Countdown Song"

MEMORY VERSE SONG

These shall go away in - to ev - er - lasting punishment: But the righteous in - to
life eter - nal. life eter - nal.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

These shall go away into everlasting punishment:
but the righteous into life eternal.
Matthew 25:46