

### Leader's Corner

The Rich Man, Lazarus, and the People at Our Gate

Luke 16:19-31

One of the dangers of Christian leadership is becoming so focused on meetings, tasks, and responsibilities that we stop seeing people. In this parable, the rich man's greatest failure wasn't wealth—it was indifference. Lazarus was close enough to see every day, yet he remained unseen.

As leaders, we are called to cultivate the eyes of Jesus. Leadership begins by noticing. Who is hurting? Who feels overlooked? Who is standing at the gate of our everyday lives? Before asking your group to discuss this passage, spend a few moments asking God to reveal who might be at your own gate right now.

**Main Scripture:** Luke 16:19-31

**Main Idea:** Jesus' parable is less concerned with satisfying our curiosity about the afterlife and more concerned with confronting how we live today.

The rich man's problem wasn't that he possessed wealth; it was that wealth possessed him. He became blind to the suffering sitting at his gate. Lazarus, whose name means "God helps," reminds us that God sees those whom the world overlooks.

**Main Practice:** The question Jesus places before us is simple - Who is at your gate, and what will you do about it while there is still time?

### Prayer and Praise

**Guided Prayer Experience:** "Who Is At My Gate?"

Take a few moments of silence and invite everyone to sit comfortably, place their hands open in their lap, and become aware of God's presence.

#### Step 1 – Gratitude

Reflect on a person who has cared for you, encouraged you, or shown you kindness during a difficult season. Thank God for them. Lord, thank You for the people You have placed in my life who have reflected Your love and care. Help me never take those gifts for granted.  
(Pause)

#### Step 2 – Lament

Bring to mind an area of suffering, disappointment, grief, or burden you are currently carrying. Offer it honestly to your Heavenly Father. Father, You see my pain, my fears, and the burdens I carry. I bring them to You today. Help me trust Your presence even when life feels difficult or uncertain.  
(Pause)

#### Step 3 – Compassion

Ask God to bring someone to mind who may be "at your gate"—someone who is hurting, overlooked, lonely, struggling, or in need. Sit quietly and pay attention to who comes to mind. Lord, open my eyes to the people around me. Give me the compassion of Jesus. Help me notice those I may have overlooked and give me courage to respond in love.  
(Pause)

#### Step 4 – Availability

Pray this simple prayer together as a group: Lord, make us an instrument of Your peace. Show us who You want us to love this week and help us take one step toward them. Amen.

#### Worship Song Suggestions:

1. The Blessing
2. Build My Life
3. Make Me a Blessing

## Group Discussion

1. What details about the rich man and Lazarus stand out most to you in Jesus' description of them? What do those details reveal about their very different realities?
  2. Why do you think Jesus intentionally places Lazarus right outside the rich man's gate? What significance does proximity have in this story?
  3. The sermon suggested that all of us can identify with both characters at different times. In what ways do you relate to the rich man? In what ways do you relate to Lazarus?
  4. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach through the "great reversal" that occurs after both men die? How does that challenge common assumptions about success, comfort, or blessing?
  5. The rich man's character appears unchanged even after death. What does this teach us about how our daily choices shape who we are becoming? Why is the question, "Who am I becoming?" so important?
  6. James K.A. Smith writes, "You are what you love." What habits, rhythms, or practices are currently shaping your heart? What are they forming you into?
  7. The rich man was "too late" to act. Which of these strikes you most personally?
    - Too late to care for Lazarus
    - Too late to repent
    - Too late to change
    - Too late to influence others
- Why?
8. When you hear the question, "Who's at your gate?", who immediately comes to mind? Consider family, neighbors, coworkers, classmates, friends, strangers, or people who feel overlooked.
  9. What keeps us from seeing and responding to the needs around us? How do comfort, busyness, fear, distraction, or self-focus sometimes hinder compassion?
  10. If this parable is ultimately about life on mission with Jesus, what is one practical step God may be inviting you to take this week? What would it look like to move from noticing to acting?

# Practice

## Group Practice:

As a group, identify one person, family, ministry, or community need that is “at your gate.”

Discuss one tangible way your group could serve, encourage, support, or bless them within the next month.

Make a plan before leaving tonight.

## Individual Practice:

Begin each day this week by praying:

“Lord, help me notice the people at my gate today.”

Ask God to place one person on your heart each day and intentionally take one action:

- Send a text
- Make a phone call
- Offer prayer
- Provide a meal
- Give generously
- Listen intentionally
- Encourage someone who feels unseen

Keep a simple record of what God brings to your attention throughout the week.

# Further Study

## God’s Heart for the Vulnerable

- Deuteronomy 10:18-19
- Isaiah 58:6-10
- Psalm 146:5-9

## Wealth, Compassion, and Stewardship

- Luke 12:13-21
- Luke 16:13-15
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19

## Formation and Character

- Romans 12:1-2
- Galatians 5:22-25
- James 1:22-27

## Living on Mission

- Matthew 25:31-46
- Galatians 6:2
- Ephesians 2:10

## Reflection for the Week:

Spend a few moments each day reflecting on these questions:

1. Who was at my gate today?
2. Did I notice them?
3. How did I respond?
4. Who am I becoming?
5. What is God inviting me to do while it is still not too late?

## Closing Thought:

The rich man’s tragedy was not that he lacked opportunity. Lazarus was at his gate every day. The invitation of Jesus is to become the kind of people who see, care, and respond while there is still time. As followers of Jesus, we gather each week so that we can scatter into the world as instruments of God’s peace, compassion, and hope.