

Rev. George Miller
March 30, 2025
Luke 16:19-31

On Wednesday we discussed the embodiment of Jesus, focusing on the gift of taste.

We noted that Luke's Gospel features more scenes of Jesus going to, coming from, or at a meal, *or* talking about a meal.

It is said that Luke uses meals as moments to confront social norms, reveal the identity of Jesus, and show the inclusive nature of God's Kingdom.

Today's text features Lazarus laying on dirt, hungry, while a lounging man lavishly eats.

This is a story that could be used as a "clobber verse" to hurt those who have wealth.

Some of us here qualify as wealthy. According to the UBS Global Wealth Report, if you have \$140,000 in *net* assets, you're among the world's top 2%.

But we are not here to clobber anyone, but to lift up, for we know that when wealth is used wisely, it can do beautiful things. Throughout the Gospel of Luke we see people- women, men who use their treasures for love's reward.

Throughout Luke we see weakness met with mercy.

We see compassionate saints share so sinners can experience Heaven on earth.

-Simon allows Jesus to use his house to lay hands on the sick and rebuke evil.

-A woman with an alabaster jar who anoints the feet of Jesus, using precious ointment to bless him.

-Those who willingly part with their 5 loaves and 2 fish so Jesus could feed 5,000.

-Let us not forget the M&M sisters who opened their home to Jesus, or the many female benefactors of Jesus, like Joanna and Susanna, who funded Christ's ministry of mercy and comfort.

It's as if Luke is saying- when all is said and done, there is one thing that matters- how did we live our life for God; what are the things we joyfully, compassionately did for the Kingdom of God?

In conclusion, let us share a story. A few days ago my brother was admitted to Mercy Hospital on Ballas.

After visiting him with a cold soda, fried chicken, and hot tater tots, I made my way to the first floor.

In the hallway are plaques devoted to Catherine McAuley, a wealthy woman deeply affected by the poverty of Dublin's women and children; dreaming about them at night.

Seeing her dreams as a sign, she used her inheritance to minister to the poor and hungry, opening a school, committing her life to caring for them.

Not giving a wit what her wealthy neighbors thought, she welcomed a steady stream of people in need.

Just like Mary Magdelene and the M&M Sisters, she and other women came together to serve, calling themselves the Sisters of Mercy.

Hower, Catherine and her crew became known as the "*Walking Sisters*" because they walked wherever they were needed, daily going to the streets to address needs.

These wonderful Walking Sisters of Mercy used their resources, finances to create, build, and form their own Heaven on Earth.

When Catherine McAuley had just a few hours left to live, she gathered her Sisters to say "Make sure you have a comfortable cup of tea for them when I am gone."

The gift of comfort via a cup of tea, so tangible, so full of taste, became their tradition.

Today's text focused on a person who had a chance to do something good, and did not. We end with a dreamer who decided that comfort and mercy is the way to go.

When all is said and done- how do we live knowing that we are Citizens of Heaven? How do our treasures and our hearts measure up?

Do we live our life for Truth; do we live our life for God? Amen.