

First Sunday after Trinity

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 June 2025

Preacher: Seminarian Matthew Stuart

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. Please be seated. If I were asked to sum up today's Gospel reading in one word, that word would be awareness.

Awareness of our neighbors, our spiritual state, and the life that stretches beyond this present world. Our Lord paints a clear picture for us today.

Two men, one rich and one poor. There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. This story is not just a record of what happened long ago. It is a call to each of us today.

[1 : 05] How often do we pass by the Lazaruses in our own midst? Not just those poor in money, but the lonely, the sick, the hurting, and the forgotten.

How often are we so wrapped up in our own comforts and concerns that we fail to truly see those who are in need of our help?

Yet no matter our wealth or our status, death comes to all. And at that moment, the true measure of our lives is revealed.

Now, death comes to both men. So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

And being in torments and Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue.

[2 : 18] For I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and likewise Lazarus evil things.

But now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed. So that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.

Now there is a serious lesson here. We all must stand before God's judgment. The choices we make here in this life.

Especially how we treat others matter for eternity. Recognizing the gravity of this situation, the rich man makes one final plea.

He begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers. Then he said, I beg you, therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house.

[3 : 25] For I have five brothers that he may testify to them. Lest they also come to this place of torment. Abraham said to him, they have Moses and the prophets.

Let them hear them. Abraham's words remind us that God has already given us all we need in scripture to guide our lives.

So why do we struggle to live as we ought? St. Augustine offers insight. Our desire for sin often dulls our hearing of God's truth.

We allow pride, selfishness, and fear too much room in our hearts. St. Paul puts it plainly in Romans 7, verses 19 through 20.

For the good that I will to do, I do not do. But the evil I will not to do that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

[4 : 50] In other words, Paul is describing the internal struggle we all face. He said, my heart and my actions are at war. If I fail to do good things that I truly want to do, while I keep doing the evil things that I hate.

When this happens, our inner self, the one who wants to obey God, is not in charge. It's sin. Our powerful, imperfect nature that takes over.

It's not an excuse for our behavior, but an explanation of why we can't win this fight alone. But how do we daily open our hearts to God's word and allow it to change us?

Thankfully, as Christians in the Anglican tradition, we have the book of common prayer. Our prayer book is meant to shape our days and our hearts.

In morning and evening prayer, we are reminded daily to confess our sins, to pray for others, to hear God's word, and to ask for his grace and strength to live in holiness and righteousness.

[6 : 07] Consider the collect for grace that we pray each day. O Lord, our Heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who has safely brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us in the same with thy mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings being ordered by thy governance may be righteous in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. So this prayer acknowledges our weakness and our daily need for God's protection and grace. It reminds us that holiness is not a one-time achievement, but a daily walk with God's help in the face of temptation and trials.

Dear people of God, if we would not be like the rich man who only saw Lazarus too late, let us open our eyes now to the needs of those around us, to the word of God and to the Holy Spirit working in us.

Let us pray the daily prayers of the church with sincerity and devotion. Let us live the Christian life with intentionality and love, loving God, loving our neighbor, even when it costs us something.

In doing so, we prepare ourselves to hear those blessed words from our Lord on the last day. Well done, good and faithful servant.

[8 : 02] Enter into the joy of your Lord. May God grant us the grace to be those servants today. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Amen.