

"OK, SO NOW I GUESS WE'VE BEEN WARNED"

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

In his sermon on Sunday, Pastor Mark addressed the profound challenge presented in the scripture readings from **Psalms 146, 1 Timothy 6, and Luke 16:19-31**. He suggested that it took a bit of courage, humility and wisdom in attending church, especially when confronting difficult biblical teachings about wealth and poverty.

Pastor Mark began by acknowledging that going to church requires courage — particularly when the scriptures challenge our values and behaviors. He reflected on the rich man and Lazarus and said that it might be better to be like Lazarus, who lived in poverty, than the rich man who ignored the suffering at his gate. The pastor warned against the dangers of loving money, citing the epistle's assertion that the love of money is the root of all evil.

He suggested that attending church and engaging with scripture was also an act of humility, because in this, we are implicitly admitting our need for our Lord's direction in our lives. By doing so, we open ourselves to correction and direction from God, who desires to save us from misplaced trust in wealth.

Throughout the message, Pastor Mark highlighted the wisdom in allowing God to influence our decisions and urged us to trust Him rather than wealth. He referenced the teachings of Moses and the Prophets regarding the treatment of the poor and emphasizes that true wealth lies in generosity and compassion. The sermon ended with a challenge to the congregation to reflect on their own lives and consider how they might embody the spirit of generosity, ultimately affirming that trusting God instead of money leads to a more fulfilling and righteous life.

GOSPEL READING: LUKE 16:19-31

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

"The time came when the beggar died, and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony.

And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

"'No, Father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

1. **Courage in Faith:** What fears or hesitations do you feel when confronting challenging biblical teachings, and how can we support each other in facing them?
2. **Wealth and Generosity:** Reflect on a time when you felt compelled to share your resources. How did that experience impact your perspective on wealth and generosity?
3. **Role of Humility:** In what ways can admitting our need for God's guidance transform our daily lives and relationships?
4. **Lessons from Lazarus and the Rich Man:** How does the story of Lazarus and the rich man resonate with your understanding of justice and compassion in today's world?
5. **Personal Reflection on Money:** How do you personally navigate the balance between enjoying financial stability and ensuring that you are not overly attached to wealth?
6. **God's Perspective:** What does it mean to you personally to seek God's perspective on issues of wealth and poverty? How can that change your actions?
7. **Action vs. Inaction:** Have you ever felt a nudge from God to act on behalf of those in need? How did you respond, and what was the outcome?
8. **Living Generously:** How can our church community better embody the spirit of generosity that Pastor Mark encourages, and what steps can we take to support those in need?

PROMPTS FOR ACTION & RESPONSE

1. **Generosity Challenge:** This week, identify someone in need—whether financially, emotionally, or physically—and find a way to offer your support. Reflect on how this act of kindness impacts both you and the recipient.
2. **Scripture Reflection:** Spend time this week reading and meditating on the passages cited by Pastor Mark. Consider journaling your thoughts and feelings about how these scriptures challenge you to reassess your relationship with wealth and generosity.