

In today's Gospel, Luke 16:19-31, Jesus Christ tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the poor man, who lay at his gate. When Lazarus died, he was "carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom." When the rich man died, he found himself in Hades, being tormented. The rich man tried to plea with Abraham to relieve his torment even momentarily, and when this wasn't possible, he asked for a warning to be sent to his brothers so that they can be warned and not make the same mistake he had made in life. Abraham told him that if they did not hear Moses and the prophets, then they surely would not be convinced if someone would rise from the dead.

Dearest ones, Saint John Chrysostom spoke much on this piece of Scripture in his sermons on wealth and poverty. He said, "Let us learn from this man not to call the rich lucky nor the poor unfortunate. Rather, if we are to tell the truth, the rich man is not the one who has collected many possessions but the one who needs few possessions; and the poor man is not the one who has no possessions but the one who has many desires. We ought to consider this the definition of poverty and wealth. So if you see someone greedy for many things, you should consider him the poorest of all, even if he has acquired every one's money. If, on the other hand, you see someone with few needs, you should count him the richest of all, even if he has acquired nothing."

He continues, "If it is possible for you, remember everything I have said. If you cannot remember everything, instead of everything, I beg you, remember this without fail, that to fail to share our own wealth with the poor is theft from the poor and deprivation of their means of life; we do not possess our own wealth but theirs. If we have this attitude, we will certainly offer our money, and by nourishing Christ in poverty here and laying up great profit hereafter, we will be able to attain the good things which are to come, by the grace and kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom be glory, honor and might, to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, now and every and unto ages of ages. Amen."