

- The word 'bdelygmia' (abomination) is also used in Scripture to designate:
 - a) sham outward worship (Is 1:13 / 66:3)
 - b) immoral financial dealings (**Deut 25:16**)
 - c) re-marrying a divorced wife! (**Deut 24:4**)

16:16 **THE WORD OF GOD STANDS IN TESTIMONY before us:**

- Stage 1 = the Law and the Prophets
 - Stage 2 = preaching of Jesus: **NEW LAW** and **NEW PROPHET**
- Jesus urges **all** – everyone – to enter the K.O.G.
 - He acknowledges that it is **NOT easy** to convert: it's **a struggle**

He told us back in Lk 13:24, ***“Try your best to enter by the narrow door because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.”***

- ⓃB ∴ Jesus is saying that we have to put **effort** into it.
- only the **bravest** and the **most** persevering **succeed in overcoming themselves** and surrendering to the Will of God for them.

16:17 **The Word of God is everlasting and will not FAIL**

- ⓃB → it is **God's** truth – **not** man's word
- so we can rely on it and guide our lives by it.

16:18 **Mosaic Law allowed divorce:** Deut 24:1-4 Jesus forbids divorce, allowing no exceptions.

The Rich Man and Lazarus: Lk 16:19-31 (only in Luke)

- ⓃB This parable **CONTRASTS** the Two groups being dealt with in chap 15 and 16.
- **this shows the future for both groups: the two sons of God.**
 - Both characters are given in **their extreme** form
 - a) **The Rich Man** (Dives is the Latin for Rich Man)
 - here represents Scribes and Pharisees and the Rich of Society: the highest level
 - b) **Lazarus** = God is my help: represents the materially poor, the destitute, the lowest level of society **materially**...
 - The parable reflects the **BEATITUDES: Lk 6:20-25**
Blessed are the poor, the hungry – those who weep now
Woe to the Rich, filled with earthly things, pleasures / gratification

THE RICH MAN : is super-rich and super-self-indulgent: Cf. Amos 6:4-7

THE POOR MAN : is crippled and seriously ill – **the OUTCAST** who watches the wastage of food and money as he lies there dying from destitution...

DEATH : is the moment of Truth / THE ETERNAL DIVIDER

- **Death** sorts out the spiritual condition of each man
→ the **material** condition no longer applies in the spirit world.
- Death reveals **which one is 'Rich' or 'Poor' in God's sight...**

16:22 **Angels** carry the soul of Lazarus to **"Abraham's bosom"**.

The idea is that he is on Abraham's **lap** – happy as a child in his father's arms.

- His earthly funeral would have been quick: a hole in the ground and the body dumped unceremoniously.

16:23 **The Rich Man** would have had a great funeral on earth – but he was **buried in Hell...**
far away from Abraham!

16:24 **The Rich Man** begs **for mercy** (love given to one who does not deserve it) from Abraham - **TOO LATE!**
He asks for the very thing he **REFUSED LAZARUS!**

- It is **too late** to ask for Mercy. He should have turned to God during his life on earth
Cf. **Lk 17:13** (lepers) and **18:38** (Blind Man).
But, the mercy given would **depend** on **HIS CONVERSION**

16:25 Simple Justice meted out by "Father Abraham": **The REVERSAL theme again!**

The Divine Reversal {

- The Rich Man had 'good things in his lifetime... sufferings now'
- The Poor Man had sufferings in his lifetime... happiness now.

→ (NB) This is what Jesus **SAID** in The Beatitudes! **Lk 6:20-25**

16:26 **THE GREAT GULF** that exists between the Blessed and the Damned

- There is a definite 'us' and 'them' here...
- There is no crossing over **this** divide! It is eternal!

- Jesus alone can bring us safely to the other side for he is **THE PONTIFEX** → **the BRIDGE**
- we walk over **Him** to Heaven.

16:27 Lazarus requests **sending a witness** from the dead to **"my Father's house"- Israel.**

16:28 → (ie) Israel - But **Jesus** is the **Only Person** who ever rose from the dead
and they did not accept **His** witness or that of the Early Church!

16:29 The reply from Heaven applies to us all in **every age.**

→ **They have THE SCRIPTURES – THE WORD OF GOD**

→ They can read, pray, study God's Word **AND OBEY IT** anytime, for it is available to everyone

16:30 The **lost rich man** thinks that Israel will **repent** (ie) change its way of thinking if a witness from the dead came to them... **but God Himself came to them in the Incarnation and they refused to accept Him!**

16:31 Heaven's reply is that if they do not listen to and obey God's Word they will not be OPEN to any witness - as happened after the Resurrection of Jesus.

Summary: In life the rich man put a **gulf of merciless indifference** between himself and Lazarus.
In death **God put a gulf of justice** between him and Lazarus.

In life the gulf between Dives and Lazarus was NOT material... the poor man was physically present.
... **it was moral and spiritual**

In death **the gulf was spiritual** but the rich man had not even entered the spiritual realm before death - he remained on the material!

In life, if the rich man had taken care of Lazarus, **the spirit of love** would have been born in him...
Instead the rich man took his selfishness to Hell with him and wanted TO USE Lazarus as a servant!

In life Lazarus endured the mystery of suffering, keeping his faith, trust and love alive.
- his challenge to trust God to come to his help (the meaning of his name) was extreme.

Final Note: This text is NOT referred to as a PARABLE ∴ it was a real event!

The writings of Maria Valtorta reveal the rich man to be one of the most powerful Pharisees
– who owned lots of land and had many servants whom he mistreated.

The Lazarus figure was one of the Bethlehem Shepherds who had seen Jesus on Christmas Night and remained a faithful follower of Jesus...

Jesus and the Apostles bought him from the Pharisee when he was dying and brought him to Nazareth, where he died in Joseph's bed!

Like Joseph, this man had Jesus and Mary at his side in his last moments!

In Lk 13:25-30 the rich man misses Heaven unintentionally
– he did not expect to be on **the wrong side** of the gulf in 16:26
as they didn't expect to be on **the wrong side** of the closed door!

Both groups in chap 13 and here in chap 16 **pleaded for relief**... but found that it was TOO LATE!

Why did the Rich Man go to Hell?

Because of his self-indulgence?

Because of his lack of love for his neighbour?

- he was a 'good' Jew! Blessed with wealth which was seen as a reward from God
Prov 10:22; Ecclesiastes 5:19; Deut 8:18

But the Great Commandment was to Love God, (Deut 6:5) and your neighbour (Jer. 19:18)

Shema Israel Deut 6:5 ***"you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul"***
Lev 19:18 ***"you shall love your neighbour as yourself"***

The rich man loved no-one – not even himself.

He **presumed** he would go to Heaven... but only Love can enter Heaven!

Because God is Love 1 Jn 1:7

CHAPTER 17 of Luke

The Problem of Scandals in the Church } = 17:1-19
and the Demands of Discipleship

(A) 17:1-3 : **Scandals** : Because of the sinfulness of human beings, Luke says that
“scandals are sure to come” : - impossible to avoid

- ‘Skandalon’ means **a trap** that makes people stumble and fall on their Christian journey:
Cf. 1 Cor 8:13; **Rom 14:12, 21**

Rom 14:13 *“you should make up your mind never to be the cause of your brother tripping and falling”*

17:2 This is **the FIRST WOE** of Jesus **TO HIS DISCIPLES**!

It is better to have them **executed**! (millstone around neck / cast into sea!)

- this is to prevent **too much loss of souls** as a result.

- Jesus shows great concern for *“a single **ONE** of these little ones”*
“Little ones” usually refers to new disciples who are vulnerable. It also refers to children and any vulnerable person. Remember Lk 15:4-7? The parable of the lost sheep...

Example: Cf. Matt 10:42 *“If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.”.*

Example: Cf. Mk 18:14 *“It is never the Will of your Father in Heaven that one of these little ones should be lost”.*

17:3 **Watch Yourself!**

Be on your guard that **you** don't **set a trap** for anyone else **for judgement will be severe.**

17:4 Here Jesus deals with the **sins of others** and orders us **to forgive if** they are repentant. The reason for this is that God forgives **us** when we are **repentant**: Cf. Lk15: Prodigal Son; Lk 1:4

17:5 Forgiveness demands a **lot of real, active faith** so the apostles ask the Lord **to increase** the gift of Faith already given to them.

17:6 Powerful Faith in Jesus: **Mustard seed faith**!

Jesus says that the **smallest** amount of **real faith** and **trust** in God works miracles!
Mustard **SEED** = smallest seed known.

ⓔ In the future, when their faith in Jesus is more real and deeper, they will be able to plant
THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE SEA!

- The sea usually refers to the Gentile territories.
ⓔ they will be able to bring the Gospel to foreign lands.

B. **Humble Service: 17:7-10**

Luke uses the Master / Slave image, so prevalent in his day...
to illustrate on attitude to God and His Service.

- It was normal for the slave to come in from the fields, serve the Master, and eat himself later...
the Master **does not thank** the slave for doing his duty – that is what he is there for!
- So, when we have done our **duty** to God, we don't deserve thanks.
- Jesus reminds us here that God does not need **us**. **We need Him!**
God has millions to call to His service.
- It is our privilege to serve Him and we should be **humble** and **grateful** for the opportunity to
serve **the all-powerful and omnipotent God**.

C. **The Ten Lepers: 17:11-19**: **God's goodness and our ingratitude** illustrated by Jesus

- Jesus continues His fateful journey to Jerusalem and all that awaits Him there. He travelled along the **border** between Samaria and Galilee – this route makes for the Jordan Valley on the way to Jericho (18:35). Jesus begins **the final leg of his journey** to Jerusalem from there.
- Why did He take such a circuitous route?
 - a) Because He wanted to cover as much territory as possible.
 - b) God reads our hearts and the Good Shepherd seeks those souls who are lost **but ready to be found**, e.g. Zacchaeus (19:1-10).
- **There are 10 lepers** 10 = fullness of anything on earth ∴ all souls on earth
 - 9 Jewish lepers and 1 Samaritan (ie) 9 from Chosen people / 1 outsider
 - 9 from Church / 1 outsider
 - lepers **represent** sinners; Jesus wants to save **all** of them.
 - all humans are alike in sinfulness...

Jesus is the Universal Saviour:

- Jesus treated them all the **same** way and offered healing to all of them, disregarding social class or nationality (the foreigner)
- Jesus gave all of them the command to **"go and show yourselves to the priests"**. This was because no leper could return to his / her village unless examined and passed by the priests in Jerusalem and the correct sin-offering given in the Temple: Lk 5:12-16

- ⓃB The command is the same for all time. He orders us, sinners, to present ourselves to the Priests in Confession, repent and do penance.
- ⓃB All 10 were cleansed **as they obeyed the word of God through Jesus...**
they were cleansed **before** they reached the Priests.
- ⓃB The Mercy of God is so great that He forgives the moment He finds us open to Him. Cf. **Prodigal Son**
confessed **after** the **Father accepted him**, clasped him in His arms, etc.