

The Rich Man and Lazarus

**Theme:**

Salvation

Object:

An alarm clock with a "snooze" button

Scripture:

"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.' Luke 16:19-24 (NIV)

Do you use an alarm clock to wake you up in the morning? A lot of alarm clocks have a button on them called a snooze alarm. When your alarm goes off, you can hit that button and go back to sleep. In about ten minutes, the alarm will go off again. You can just keep on doing this and go right on sleeping.

Maybe it is nice to get that extra sleep, but there are two problems with snooze alarms. The first is that if you keep on hitting the snooze alarm, you may be late or miss out on something completely. The second problem is that if you keep hitting the snooze alarm, you may get so used to the sound of the alarm that you don't even hear it at all and you will sleep right through the alarm.

Did you know that God sometimes sounds a "wake up" alarm in our lives? He speaks to our heart and says, "It is time to wake up and follow me." Some people hit the snooze button and say, "Not now Lord, call me again -- a little bit later." Some people hit that "snooze button" so many times that they get to

where they don't even hear God's voice. When they finally wake up, they find out that it is too late. That is what happened in our Bible story today.

Jesus told a story about a rich man who wore the finest clothes and lived in luxury. A beggar named Lazarus lay outside the rich man's gate. Lazarus was hungry and his body was covered with sores. He was hoping that the rich man might have pity on him and that he might be able to satisfy his hunger with the leftovers from the rich man's table. But every day the Rich man passed by Lazarus without even giving him a thought. I imagine that he passed by Lazarus so many times that he eventually got to the point that he didn't see him at all.

The Bible says that Lazarus died and went to heaven. The rich man also died, but he went to hell. In hell, he looked up and saw Lazarus in heaven with Abraham. He asked Abraham to let Lazarus dip his finger in water and come and touch it to his burning tongue, but Abraham said, "No." Then he reminded the rich man how he had enjoyed such good things on earth while Lazarus had nothing.

The rich man then asked Abraham to allow Lazarus to go back to earth and warn his five brothers so that they would not end up in hell with him, but again, Abraham said, "No." The rich man finally woke up, but it was too late.

God is still sending "wake up" calls to people today. Let us pray that they will listen to his voice and follow him before it is too late.

Dear Father, when you sound the alarm telling us it is time to wake up and follow you, may we never be guilty of hitting the snooze alarm saying, "Later, Lord." Instead, let us rise up and follow you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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