



LC STUDY GUIDE

“Life Beyond”

The Passage: Luke 16:19-31

May 27 – June 9

How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method. In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

We are nearly finished with our spring series “Life Beyond,” where we are exploring some of the bigger questions about life that the Scriptures raise. Questions like, “What is this life really about?” and “What can we know about the next one?” and most importantly, “What did Jesus say about it?”

Today we approach the topic of the “afterlife” in hopes of growing in our understanding of *life beyond this life*. Today we will explore the complicated and amazing parable of the “Rich Man and Lazarus” and how Jesus illustrates the “intermediate life” as in, the life after this one and before the one to come.

We’ll do well to remember that Jesus is telling a story and not giving a lecture on organized theology but we’ll also do well in keeping our hearts and eyes open to what the Lord is saying.

¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ 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.’

²⁵ “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. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

²⁷ “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

²⁹ “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

³⁰ “‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

³¹ “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.’”

Luke 16:19-31

○ – This passage covers a lot of ground. In reading it, what brought you a moment of peace? Were there any moments that brought you a sense of dread? What other feelings, fears, and hopes does this passage raise for you?

Pastor Bryan mentioned the show *The Good Place*, which is about a woman who finds herself in what appears to be the “Good Place.” What pop-culture movies, shows, or classic literature have influenced your views on heaven, hell, and the afterlife? Are there any commonly held beliefs of the afterlife that you have bumped into that you feel are contrary to what the Bible is describing?

(If you need help getting a conversation starter, it’s been noted that the theology for some between the ages of 35-50 was informed by cartoons like Tom and Jerry and its poor depictions of heaven and hell. In addition to cartoons, there have also been many movies like “What

Dreams May Come” with Robin Williams and Cuba Gooding, Jr., offering a vision of the afterlife, and of course, Dante’s “Inferno” has contributed to the American psyche of heaven and hell.)

O – What can we learn about “Abraham’s side”? What can we deduce from the description of Hades?

I – Pastor Bryan mentioned that neither Abraham’s side nor Hades were the final destinations of either character. Further, he described the “Not Good Place” with the characteristics, of “separate,” “unhappy,” “unrepentant” and the “Good Place” with the descriptions of “personal,” “relational,” “physical,” “transformational,” and “In God’s Presence.” Keeping in mind these are descriptions of what we can see in the parable, which of these ideas concern you most? Which excite you most? Do any of these change your understanding of the afterlife or of the character of God?

I /A– Luke places this story immediately after the amazing telling of the “Prodigal Son” story. Part of the connection is Luke pointing out that Jesus is confronting the Pharisees in both of these stories. In the story of the Prodigal Son, the Pharisees are acting similarly to the Older Brother. And in this story, they are similar to the Rich Man, who is pre-occupied by wealth and status and has a disregard for the poor.

Further, Abraham telling the rich man that his family will not listen to Moses and the Prophets or someone who has been raised from the dead makes a prophetic point to the Pharisees. All of this raises a few questions. One is, what is Jesus trying to communicate to the Pharisees and to all religious followers, particularly in the “Lazarus and the rich man” parable? And two, despite our financial status, who are the Lazaruses around us? How can we show Christ’s love to them? (As this answer unfolds, consider other forms of poverty in addition to material poverty. They might include relational poverty and systemic/generational forms of poverty.)

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
 - b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
 - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
 - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
 - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.