

Avoidance

“People who don’t want to work say,
‘There’s a lion outside!’

Or they say,

‘I’ll be murdered if I go out into the streets!’”

Proverbs 22:13 (New International Readers Version)

- **Avoidance: trying to evade or stay away from something**
- **What are some good things that we try to avoid? Why?**
- **The problem: Our avoidance is sometimes the very thing that harms us!**

Pray: God, please help us (with great kindness...)

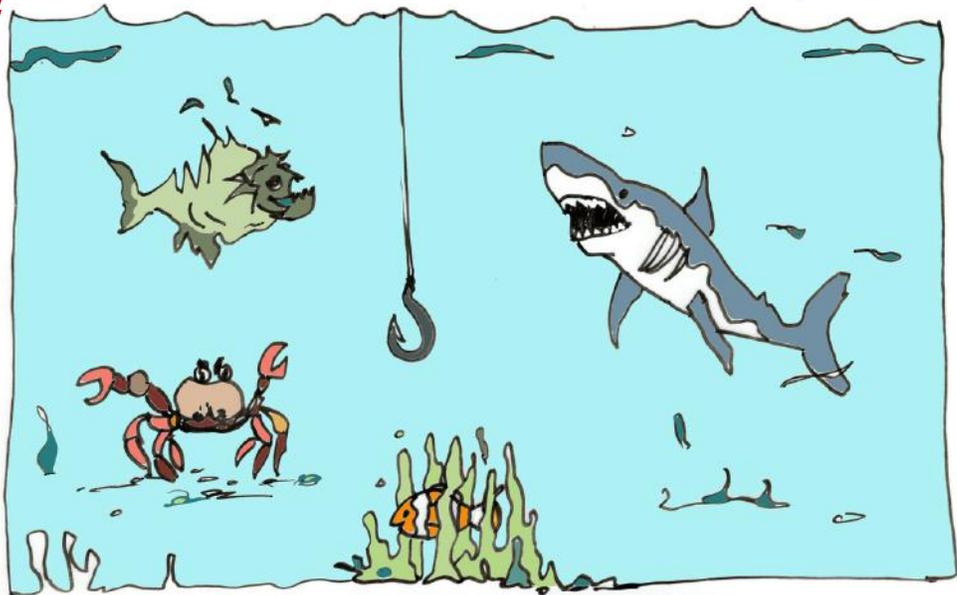
with how we respond to our own shortcomings and failures

1

The Powerlessness of Miracles

Luke 16:19–31

bib.ly/Lu16.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts



2

Luke wants his readers to pay attention to the audience of Jesus' teaching...

Jesus asked the **Pharisees and experts in the law**... (14:3)

Jesus told the **guests** at the feast... (14:7)

Jesus said to the **host**... (14:12)

Jesus talked to **one of those at the table** with him... (14:15)

Jesus talked to the **large crowds** traveling with him... (14:25)

Pharisees and teachers of the law muttered about the people
Jesus was with, so Jesus told them... (15:1–2)

Jesus told His **disciples**... (16:1)

The **Pharisees** (important religious people who loved money)
sneered at Jesus. He said to them... (16:14)

Jesus said to his **disciples**... (17:1)

sneered = mocked, judged

3

What Luke tells us about the Pharisees

“Jesus said ‘...**You cannot serve both God and money.**’”

“The Pharisees, **who loved money**, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, ‘You are the ones who **justify yourselves** in the eyes of others, but **God knows your hearts**. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.’”

Luke 16:13-15

Maybe Luke was thinking of people like us in the early church...

4

Did they know that

God expects those with money and food to care for those who are poor?

“If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, **help them** as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you.” *The Law in Leviticus 25:39*

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”

Is it not to **share your food with the hungry** **Without a doubt!**
and to **provide the poor wanderer with shelter**—
when you see the naked, to **clothe them**,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

The Prophets in Isaiah 58:6-7

“But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,
and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, **you will be repaid
at the resurrection of the righteous.**” *Jesus in Luke 14:13-14*

5

Luke 16:19-21

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine
linen and **lived in luxury** every day. **What the Prodigal son’s father did**
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.

In the Jewish Bible, they mainly ate dead bodies in the streets!

Rich man was extremely rich

Poor man: Lazarus (“God has helped him”) was extremely poor

They were living right next to each other

And the rich man never showed Lazarus even a little mercy

6

Luke 16:22-24

“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. **Place of judgment for the dead**

The rich man also died and was buried. In **Hades**, 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.’

**After death, Lazarus is honored and fed in a joyful feast!
The rich man is in torment, asking for mercy (through Lazarus!)**

7

Luke 16:25-26

“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 set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

Lazarus’s comfort and the rich man’s torment is...

- **Extreme: wonderful for Lazarus and horrible for the rich man**
- **Just: Rich man did nothing to help Lazarus. Now he gets no help.**
- **Unchangeable...by God’s design**

8

Luke 16:19-31

19-26: Life after death brings justice, which will often bring **reversal** of what we see and experience before death

- In this life, the rich tend to stay rich and the poor tend to stay poor
- Money and property are both...
 - literal: gold, buildings, bank accounts, ...
 - figurative: honor, power, health, comfort, pleasure, ...
- In death, God often brings **reversal**
- And our condition at death is **‘fixed and final’**
 - Be careful about conclusions from secondary things in parables. Ex: Conversations between heaven & hell
- Responsibilities & reversal of wealth fit Jewish ideas

27-31:

- And Jesus affirmed it

9

Looking at his disciples, Jesus said:

“**Blessed** are you who are **poor**,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who **hunger** now, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who **weep** now, for you will laugh.

...

“But **woe** to you who are **rich**,
for you have already received your comfort.

Woe to you who are **well fed** now, for you will go hungry.

Woe to you who **laugh** now, for you will mourn and weep.

Luke 6:20-21, 24-25

10

Luke 16:19-31

19-26: Life after death brings justice, which will often bring **reversal** of what we see and experience before death

27-31:

11

*Luke 16:27-31***The rich man**

“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 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 knew that this reversal was not primarily about money**

“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.**’”

12

Luke 16:19-31

19-26: Life after death brings a justice that will often bring reversal of what we see and experience before death

27-31: We all know enough already to repent before God

- The rich man **did not** say...
 - “The rich don’t have to help the poor!”
 - “But I didn’t know I should have helped Lazarus!”
 - “No one ever told me that justice would come!”
- Rather: he didn’t take seriously what he knew
 - So... **“Someone should have done more to convince me to do what I knew I should have done.”**
- Failure to repent is NOT because of lack of miracles or convincing. **We just don’t want to!**

13

Luke 16:19-31

19-26: Life after death brings a justice that will often bring reversal of what we see and experience before death

→ So the rich who do not DO mercy for the poor must repent or expect judgment

27-31: We all know enough already to repent before God

14

The Big Idea

**Heaven's joy
comes through real repentance in Jesus
when we realize we aren't as good as God**

15

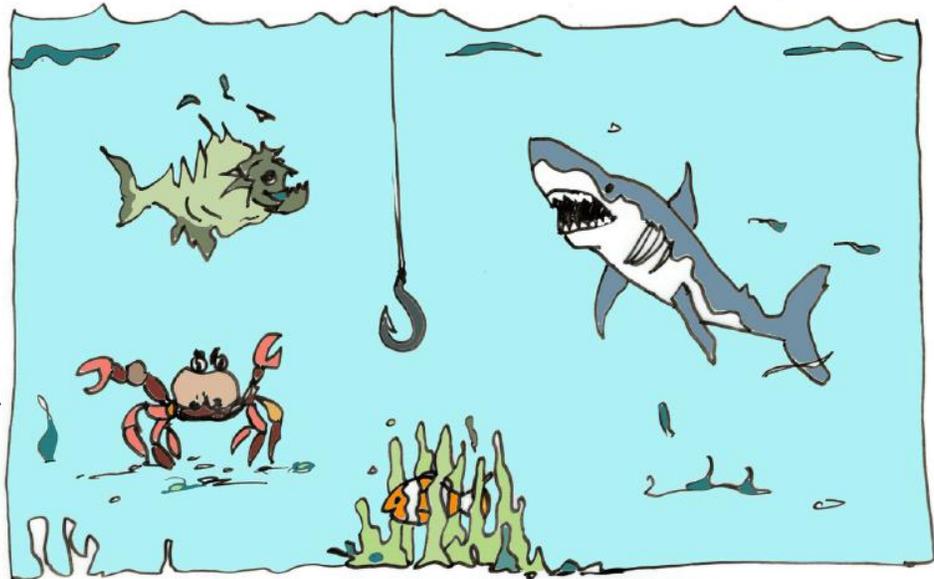
What do we tend to do when we meet something we don't like?

Run and hide!

**Or we act tough
and fight!**

**This is what we
so often do when
we are confronted
with our sin**

→ Fight or Flight



16

When we realize we are being (or have been) bad (or less good) than we know we should be, we so often...

- check to see if anyone saw us
- try to hide it
- pretend we didn't know any better
- tell ourselves and others "it isn't that bad" or "everyone does it"
- hate ourselves for it and conclude that's just the way we are
- point to our good that we claim makes up for it
- attack the person who told us
- point to people who are worse
- expect God to just "forgive and forget"
- analyze the problem or ourselves or the situation
- say we needed more proof or a better rebuke or ...

We do anything except taking seriously the wrong we have done

17

What should we do when we realize our wrong?

Admit our trouble to someone who can help (or judge...)

It can be painful or costly but **we are willing to do it for our physical problems!!**

To avoid genuine repentance is to bring harm to ourselves and everyone around us



18

Miracles are powerless in bringing us to God!

What we need to do is accept what we already know:

- **God is good**
- **We are not**
- **Our only hope is in His mercy**
- **Which God gives overwhelmingly in Christ!**

19

The Big Idea

**Heaven's joy
comes through real repentance in Jesus
when we realize we aren't as good as God**

20

Application

When we realize our sin, repent

- Sin=attitudes, words & actions that are **immoral** or **disloyal** to God
 - **Choosing anything** before God, or **withholding anything** from God
 - From Luke 16...
 - Money (we can't serve two masters)
 - Anything contrary to God's design for sexuality and marriage: one man and one woman for life (with few exceptions for divorce...)
 - Career or success
 - Family/relationships, or being accepted or praised by people
 - Nation or race or ethnicity or people group
 - Power or freedom
 - Self-fulfillment or pleasure or ...

21

Application

When we realize our sin, repent

- We must resist the temptation to run and hide, or to fight
- Instead, we must submit to God and **repent**
 - Admit that God's ways are the good ways, not ours
 - Admit that **we** failed to follow his good ways
 - NOT pointing at others as the reason we did wrong
 - NOT claiming that we were in a hard situation
 - NOT claiming that at least we are better than others
 - Experience the sorrow of spoiling God's good creation
 - Our wrong hurts us and others and the world
 - Ask God for mercy
 - Submit to everything He then says

22

The Amazing Gospel (Good News): the steps of repentance

God created a good and beautiful world

But we keep going our own ways, spoiling that good world and bringing harm to us, to others, and to the world

What reasonable person can look at our world and deny it!

But God, in His astounding love and mercy, sent Jesus to take the harm of all our wrong onto Himself, to suffer, and to die for us

And we are invited to be rescued through Jesus simply by trusting Him and accepting His exchange: our sin for His life

And God begins the work to make us good and beautiful like Jesus! And He calls us **to join that work with Him**

23

Application

When we realize our sin, repent

- When we repent and trust in Jesus...
 - We are **cleansed** from our broken ways
 - We are **adopted** as loved children of God forever
 - We **receive the Spirit of God** in us to begin the work of transforming us to be more and more like Jesus
- **And this only comes by admitting our sins and the mess we've made, and going to God to seek mercy through Jesus**

24

Application

When we realize our sin, repent

Which awakens in us a heaven's joy!

- The great sinner who repents experiences great joy!!
 - “Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven— as **her great love has shown**. **But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.**” *Luke 7:47*
 - **Those who repent little have little joy**
- “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that **times of refreshing may come from the Lord.**” *Acts 3:19*

25

Application

When we realize our sin, repent

Which awakens in us a heaven's joy!

My sin, oh, the joy of this glorious thought!

My sin, not in part but the whole,

Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

- Salvation comes once and forever for those who turn to Christ
- **Yet the joy of salvation comes over and over again!**
 - When we realize yet again the ugly reality of our brokenness and **the amazing love of God that washed it all away in Christ!**

26

The Big Idea

**Heaven's joy
comes through real repentance in Jesus
when we realize we aren't as good as God**

- **How are you responding to awareness of your failure to be as good as God?**
- **Stop avoiding repentance! Stop hiding your sin!**
- **"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." *Acts 3:19***