

The Faith of Our Fathers

We are all beggars before God. Lazarus is a beggar who shows us how the repentant sinner truly appears before God—in need of mercy with nothing to give. The rich man, however, shows us how we often are—unmindful of God and His Word, living only for ourselves. So the story warns us to live before God and man in humility. At the same time, Our Lord reminds us that He sees and remembers the contrite, poor and needy and richly rewards them with His generously and unlimited mercy.

People engage in pretense and say, “Sermons are old hat; but if someone rose from the dead, then people would believe.” In the same vein, if the gospel were proclaimed by the high and mighty, like princes, kings, or rulers of the world, or by angels from heaven, then people would believe. That’s easily said, but basically it’s of no count, for it is not the person of the preacher that makes the difference in bringing a man to faith but the Word of God. Devout believers, therefore, need to cling to the truth of God’s Word as proclaimed in the church by faithful pastors. (Luther) ❧❧❧

All believers are like poor Lazarus; and every believer is a true Lazarus, for he is of the same faith, mind and will, as Lazarus. For we all must, like Lazarus, trust in God, surrender ourselves to him to work in us according to his own good pleasure, and be ready to serve all men. And although we all do not suffer from such sores and poverty, yet the same mind and will must be in us that were in Lazarus—cheerfully to bear such things, wherever God wills it. Abraham had the mind and will to bear what Lazarus did. Therefore he recognized Lazarus as one of his own and received him into his bosom. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

All believers are like poor Lazarus; and every believer is a true Lazarus, for he is of the same faith, mind and will, as Lazarus. And whoever will not be a Lazarus, will surely have his portion with the rich glutton in the flames of hell. For we all must like Lazarus trust in God, surrender ourselves to him to work in us according to his own

For *Trinity 1*. These excerpts are intended as mediative pieces for the Day’s pericopes. They have been edited and abridged for style, sense and space.

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“You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” And so it is in the parable Our Lord tells in today’s Gospel. Lazarus is praised and held up as a fine example, not because of his poverty, but because of his reliance on the rich grace and mercy of Our Lord. For you can be poor economically, and still be quite rich spiritually; just as you can be poor economically and be even poorer still in relation to our Lord. (Blessed Martin Luther)



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