

## Village Guide

**Current Series:** Outcasts

**Texts:** Luke 16.19-31

**Core Value Focus:** Peacemaking, Inclusion

**Big Ideas from the Message:**

- The Kingdom of Reversals
  - The kingdom of God is upside-down compared to the patterns of this world. What society places in the centers of power, God reverses to bring in outcasts. All are in because of this great reversal.
- The Characters in the Parable
  - Lazarus: poor and sick in first life; comforted in the afterlife
  - Rich Man: great luxuries in first life; tormented in afterlife
  - Abraham: Father of Israel; nurturer in the afterlife
- This is a parable, it must be read as such.
  - Genre is so important. Too many people have assumed that Jesus gives a picture of what the afterlife, specifically hell, is like. This couldn't be further from what Jesus attempts to do in this parable. He is not recording history. He actually refers to a well-known folktale of the time and gives his own unique twist to demonstrate a truth about his Kingdom.
- The parable exposes the hypocrisy of certain Pharisees.
- Some people are so comfortable with their positions of power that they twist the Scriptures to justify themselves.
- Some people are so comfortable with their positions of power that not even a miracle will persuade them.
- What about Hell?
  - This parable is not about a place called hell. Hell, as often conceived as a place of eternal torment, isn't found in the New Testament. The end for those who persist in their unbelief will likely be something like death, the end of existence, what the Bible often calls "perishing." For more on hell, listen to the podcast series "The Invisible World."
- We will be held accountable for the 'hells' we create on earth.
- Are we attuned to what Jesus wants to reverse in our hearts and lives?

**CONNECT (5 min)**

- Question chosen for open group discussion or someone pre-invited to share their story.

**HEAR (5 min)**

- Spend some time in your group sharing what you recall from Sunday's message. Give a loose theme or subject of the sermon to jumpstart everyone's thoughts and recollections. (Example: "On Sunday, Kurt continued our series, Outcasts. Who was there on Sunday? Could you recap the content for us?" What struck you, and what questions did it leave you with?)
- Read Luke 16.19-31. What did Kurt say that this passage reveals about God? About us? Do you see anything differently or that wasn't mentioned in this particular sermon?

## TALK (20 min)

*Note: This format is intentionally less linear in an effort to generate discussion. It is not meant to be followed left-to-right, nor do all the questions need to be asked. As a facilitator, stewarding good discussion means modeling **true listening**, which also means a conversation without an agenda. Use your discernment to see what your group needs to talk about.*

<i>Conceptual</i>	<i>Practical Implications</i>	<i>Spiritual Formation</i>
<p align="center"><b>Outcasts in Scripture</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Outcasts and regular life</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Outcasts and Transformation</b></p>
<p>What does it mean to be an outcast in the gospels? Why does Jesus seem to make so many statements of “reversal”?</p> <p>How have you heard this parable taught in the past (assuming you are familiar with it)? What do you think or feel about the interpretation of this story as Parable rather than a forecast for the nature of the afterlife?</p>	<p>When we think of Jesus’ interactions and teachings that are ‘great reversals’ (such as Zaccheus or the parable of the rich man/Lazarus), what comes to your mind about our lives today? Where have you seen a “reversal” happen, big or small? What comes to mind about your personal sphere, society as a whole, populations you do (or do not) come into contact with regularly? Do you feel like there’s any possibility of changing that? Why or why not?</p> <p>Jesus uses this parable to warn the Pharisees that their love of money and overall posture of hypocrisy is contrary to God’s kingdom movement. They have not used their power and influence for the least of these. Can you name ways in which you are powerful? (Examples, if needed: power of reading and writing, access to education, a full-time job, knowing English, US citizenship, straight white male, etc etc)</p> <p>Can you name ways in which you are powerless? (Examples, if needed: person of color, no job, no home, female, low income, etc etc).</p> <p>What are ways, that reflect the love of Jesus, that we can use our influence or power to come alongside those who are neglected in society? [Leader note, after some conversation, add...] Try, then to move from broad abstract categories, to your regular day-to-day life. Try also, to think outside of individual effort to a more collective mindset.</p>	<p><i>Take a few minutes of silence to think of what your current experience of life these past couple weeks have been like. (Give a few minutes for reflection before asking the question).</i></p> <p>As you look inward, is there an area in your heart (inward life) or lifestyle that God may be inviting you to make a reversal? This might be drastic for some, but allow it to also be some small things that could make a real difference in your formation in Christ.</p> <p>If you were to consider your own life story, where have you made ‘great reversals’ that you can look back on and say, “that was kind of a big deal!”? In other words, do you have evidence from your own life that you can affirm? Notice what God has already done in your heart and life. Feel free to share this with the group.</p>

At Pangea Church, we take a high view of the Scriptures believing that in some mysterious way, God inspired/influenced the biblical writers. Talk about the difference between being attuned to “genre” when we read the Bible as opposed to simply dismissing a passage as non-authoritative or “outdated”?

Why do so many people try to make the Bible say whatever fits their preconceived values or lifestyle? Do you think you fall victim to this tendency? If so, where? Wrestle with this without succumbing to judgement or shame, or self or others.

What is one step you might take this week to explore what God might invite you to reverse? Do you trust Jesus in being this vulnerable with him? What is one spiritual practice that might help you attune to Jesus’ Spirit?

(Space for your own questions or notes)

**LIVE (20 min)**

- How might this conversation impact you this next week? What are you taking with you?
- How might we pray for each other based on this conversation and other highs/lows in life?