

*TWENTY SIXTH SUNDAY - C - SEPTEMBER 25, 2016*

*LET ME BEGIN WITH A STORY: SHOEMAKER STORY*

*COMPARE IT TO OUR LAZARUS STORY - ONE COLD WINTER DAY A WEARY,  
HUNGRY TRAVELLER WAS PASSING THROUGH A CROWDED CITY.*

*HOPING FOR SOMETHING TO EAT, HE KNOCKED ON THE DOOR OF A RICH  
MAN.*

*THE HOUSE WAS LIT UP AND WARM AND HE COULD SEE SOMEONE CLOSE  
THE CURTAINS AGAINST HIM, BUT NO ONE ANSWERED THE DOOR.*

*HE KNOCKED AGAIN....*

*THE LIGHT TO THE HOUSE WENT OUT AND THERE WAS NO FURTHER  
RESPONSE.*

*APPEALING IN VAIN FOR HELP ONE LAST TIME, THE TRAVELLER WENT  
ON HIS WAY.*

*A PASSER-BY NOTICED THE INCIDENT AND WARNED THE TRAVELLER  
THAT THIS RICH MAN WOULD NEVER GIVE ANYTHING AWAY.*

*INSTEAD, HE DIRECTED THE STRANGER TO THE HOME OF THE LOCAL  
SHOEMAKER, WHO WAS WELL KNOWN FOR HIS GENEROSITY.*

*AND THERE, IN THE SHOEMAKER'S HUMBLE DWELLING, THE TRAVELLER  
WAS WELCOMED.*

*HE MET THE SHOEMAKER'S FAMILY AND SHARED THEIR MEAL,  
ENTERTAINING THEM WITH HIS TRAVELLER'S TALES.*

*WHEN NIGHT FELL, HE SLEPT ON THE FLOOR BY THE FIRE, AND WHEN  
HE LEFT THE NEXT MORNING THE SHOEMAKER GAVE HIM TWO SILVER  
COINS FOR THE ROAD.*

***TIME PASSED, AND EVENTUALLY THE RICH MAN DIED. NO ONE CARED.***

***EVERY ONE REGARDED HIM AS A MEAN AND NEARTLESS NEIGHBOR.***

***PEOPLE KEPT ON GOING TO THE SHOEMAKER, HOWEVER, WHENEVER THEY NEEDED HELP - BUT THEY NOTICED THAT HE NO LONGER INVITED THEM IN OR OFFERED HIS CUSTOMARY HOSPITALITY.***

***THE LOCAL PASTORL NOTICED THIS CHANGE, AND ONE DAY HE ASKED THE SHOEMAKER WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO CHANGE HIS ATTITUDE.***

***THE SHOE MAKER ADMITTED THAT ACTUALLY HE BARELY HAD ENOUGH TO FEED HIS OWN FAMILY....***

***HIS FORMER GENEROSITY HAD BEEN POSSIBLE ONLY BECAUSE THE RICH MAN HAD ALWAYS BEEN WATCHING OUT FOR ANY SIGN OF SOMEONE IN NEED....***

***WHEN HE HAD NOTICED SOMEONE WITH A PROBLEM HE HAD BROUGHT THE SHOEMAKER THE MEANS TO HELP THEM...***

***BUT HE NEVER WANTED ANYONE TO KNOW OF HIS SECRET GENEROSITY..***

***AFTER HEARING THE SHOEMAKER'S STORY, AND THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DECEASED RICH MAN, THE PASTOR CALLED THE TOWNSPEOPLE***

***TOGETHER TO TELL THEM THE TRUTH.***

***HE TOLD THEM THAT MANY PPEOPLE WERE NOW LIVING GOOD AND HAPPY LIVES BECAUSE OF THE RICH MAN'S SECRET KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY.***

***AND FROM THAT DAY ONWARDS, DAY AFTER DAY, FLOWERS AND TRIBUTES APPEARED ON THE RICH MAN'S GRAVE.***

***WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT STORY.....***

***HOW DOES IT COMPARE TO OUR GOSPEL STORY OF LAZARUS?***

***IN MANY WAYS, THE EXACT OPPOSITE, ISN'T IT?***

***WITH THE ADDED NOTION THAT WE NEED TO RESIST JUDGING***

***WEALTHY PEOPLE - RIGHT???***

***WE NEED TO RESIST JUDGING ANYONE FOR THAT MATTER!!!***

***WHICH STORY IS YOUR STORY, MY STORY?***

***WHICH RICH MAN ARE YOU MORE LIKE???*** RICH MAN IN THE STORY OF

***LAZARUS OR THE RICH MAN IN THE STORY WITH THE SHOEMAKER???***

***OUR STORY MAY NOT BE AS DRAMATIC AS THE RICH MAN IN THE***

***SHOEMAKER STORY OR AS DRAMATIC AS THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN***

***WITH LAZARUS.....***

***AND OUR STORY IS PROBABLY A LITTLE BIT OF BOTH....***

***WE MAY BOTH IGNORE LAZARUS AT TIMES AND AT OTHER TIMES REACH***

***IN CARE AND SUPPORT***

***I KNOW WITH A DOUBT THAT WE ARE FORTUNATE AS A COMMUNITY TO***

***HAVE SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS AMONG US WHO RESPOND TO THE NEEDY-***

***TO LAZARUS MUCH LIKE THE RICH MAN IN THE SHOEMAKER'S STORY....***

***I THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATE YOU.....***

***SPEAKING OF RICH MEN.....***

***MANY OF YOU REMEMBER DAVID LETTERMAN, RIGHT?***

***THE HOST OF THE LATE NIGHT SHOW WHO RETIRED RECENTLY.....***

***AND PRETTY MUCH DISAPPEARED....***

*I HAPPENED TO READ A BRIEF STORY ABOUT HIM IN THE MOST RECENT ISSUE OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC...(SOMETHING MORE THAN SI) IT TURNS OUT THAT AFTER HIS 33 YEAR RUN AS A LATE-NIGHT TELEVISION HOST AT THE AGE OF 69 HE WANTED TO TRY SOMETHING NEW...*

*HE HAS JOINED THE SECOND SEASON OF "YEARS OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY" - A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SERIES ON THE IMPACT OF AND SOLUTIONS TO - CLIMATE CHANGE.*

*FOR THE SHOW HE TRAVELED TO INDIA, WITH ITS POPULATION OF 1.3 BILLION, TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORLD'S ENERGY FUTURE...*

*PICTURE OF HIM WITH A FULL BEARD AND INTERVIEW OF THREE QUESTIONS....*

*ONE QUESTION: YOU WENT TO REPORT IN INDIA. WHAT WAS THAT LIKE? EVERYTHING SURPRISED ME. IT WAS JAW-DROPPING.*

*I LOOK AT 1.3 BILLION PEOPLE AND SAY, "WELL, THAT'S THE PROBLEM" - AND THEY LOOK AT IT AS THE SOLUTION.*

*IT'S A POPULATION THAT'S QUITE YOUNG, AND THEY SEE THAT AS A HUGE RESOURCE.*

*HONESTLY, I'VE NEVER SEEN POVERTY LIKE I SAW THERE.*

*I SAW PEOPLE LIVING IN THATCHED HUTS AND MUD HOMES, BREATHING COAL AND KEROSENE FUMES. BECAUSE I'VE BEEN LUCKY IN MY LIFE, I'VE COME TO THE OBSERVATION - AND I'M EMBARRASSED TO SAY THIS - LATE IN MY LIFE.*

*I FEEL LIKE THESE PEOPLE DID ME A TREMENDOUS FAVOR.*

**AMAZING - ME....**

**IT CERTAINLY WAS NOT AT HIS DOOR STEP BUT THIS RICH MAN -HAVING  
TRAVELED TO INDIA AND AT THE AGE OF 69 - DEFINITELY STOPPED AND  
REALLY LOOKED AT LAZARUS....**

**AND HAS COME TO THE REALIZATION THAT HE CAN LEARN A LOT FROM  
LAZARUS.....**

**LAZARUS HAS DONE HIM A GREAT FAVOR - WOW!**

**THAT IS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE OF THE GOSPEL STORY ALSO....**

**HOPEFULLY, LAZARUS AT SOME TIME IN OUR OWN LIVES HAS ALSO  
DONE FOR EACH OF US A GREAT FAVOR**

**OR WILL IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE...**

**LET'S PRAY FOR THAT THIS MORNING FOR EACH OF US....**

**THAT WE MAY STOP AND REALLY LOOK AND SEE LAZARUS AT OUR  
DOORSTEP AND BE OPEN TO THE TREMENDOUS FAVOR LAZARUS CAN DO  
FOR EACH ONE OF US....**

**AND THEN WE CAN SAY THAT INDEED LAZARUS DOES US A TREMENDOUS  
FAVOR..**