

You Don't Have to Go to Hell Outline

Luke 16:19-31

- I. Death as natural—a fact of life!
 - A. Nothing surprises us more than death.
 - B. For the Christian. Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ should be our primary concern.
 - 1. There is nothing material in this life worth ANYTHING the moment you die.
 - 2. Those with no hope in the Gospel will die spending eternity in hell.
 - a. Most people, even Christians do not believe in a literal hell—Hell is real!
- II. The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)
 - A. The parable is a warning to the lost: Two parts to the warning
 - 1. What is hell like?
 - 2. How you get there.
 - B. Jesus is speaking to the 12 disciples—but it is directed to the Pharisees.
 - 1. The rich man represents the Pharisees.
 - C. The parable's structure:
 - 1. Two lives.
 - 2. Two destinies.
 - 3. Two requests.
- III. Two Lives.
 - A. One—the rich man
 - 1. Not just rich, but extremely rich.
 - a. He was “habitually” dressed in purple garments.
 - Habitually= daily dressed in opulent clothing.
 - Status was often determined by how white one's clothes were.
 - b. He **joyously lived in splendor** = “A partier”.

- B. Two—the poor man: As poor as the rich man was wealthy.
 - 1. Lazarus was a common name in that day meaning *Whom the Lord saved*.
 - a. Lazarus was paralyzed, starving (hoping for crumbs from the rich man's table) and had sores over his body.

IV. Two destinies: Both men die (16:22).

- A. The poor man has no funeral but goes to heaven.
 - 1. **The bosom of Abraham**—a picture of a celebration (party) in heaven.
- B. The rich man was just buried: Most likely buried with his wealth.
 - 1. He is in Hades: The place of the dead.
 - a. Apparently two parts to Hades: Heaven for the saved and a place of torment for the lost. The rich man in in the place of torment.
 - b. Much of the torment is the ability of the rich man to see in heaven where Lazarus is (16:23)

V. Two requests: Both from the rich man

- A. *“Have mercy on me!”* (16:24)
 - 1. He still sees Lazarus as lower than himself (16:24).
 - 2. Lazarus has been healed and restored!

For lost people—all the good they are ever going to have is in this life...when they die, it's all over.

For the saved person—all the bad things they will ever experience will be in this life...when they die, it's all over! No more bad things!

- 3. Request denied! Salvation is available only during one's lifetime.

- B. *“Send a messenger to warn my family!”*

- 1. Request denied—They have the Word but refused it.

VI. Take aways.

- A. A parable of comfort to the suffering Christian.
- B. A confirmation of the reality of Hell.

C. For the Christian, a reminder of our great mission—share the gospel to a lost world.

You Don't Have to Go to Hell Pastoral Notes

Luke 16:19-31

This morning I want to start with something positive... I don't know what your week was like... but mine was one dealing with a lot of negative things... I spent about six hours in Washington DC on Tuesday morning with a few of our congressman.

And I came home with much disturbing news regarding the geopolitical condition of our world... the situation in the Mid-East... One of the many disturbing take-aways was that the news we get from any media source is nearly void of any truth, reality...

Regardless of your political flavor... if you're right of center or left of center... the news source that you feed on for information is most likely focused on feeding your anger, your emotions rather than delivering to you the truth of what is really happening.

So... I was ready for something positive... some positive true, truth.... So here it is... *We're all going to die!*

I am positive about that!...

If you were born you will die... unless Jesus takes you home in a rapture...this is positively absolute truth... yet death surprises us even when it is expected... one of the reasons the death of someone is such a shock.. such a tragedy to us is because we forget that dying is a part of living as is eating and sleeping...

A few years ago the Huffington post commented on this:

You would think after the supposed millions of years we have been "evolving" or adapting that we would be as surprised by death as we are by eating and [sleeping]. You would think that if it were just another natural process that it would be as shocking as summer following spring, as stunning as another morning coffee.

On 9/11...America and the world was stunned... an attack on American soil...just under 3000 people... expecting to live life on that day as every other day... killed...Days after the attack... America looking at death...Shocked...horrified...

Just a few days after John MacArthur was on Larry King for the first time of what would be many times...These are MacArthur's word:...

When he (Larry King) sat across from me about three feet away from my face, and he said, "What is the lesson of 9/11?" I said, "The lesson is you're going to die, and you're not in charge of when or how; that's the lesson."

But death surprises us...

Which for the Christian should remind us that sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ should be our primary concern and activity... for in the gospel of Jesus Christ is eternal life... and only in the gospel of Jesus Christ is there eternal life in heaven ...

Without the truth in the gospel...the person Jesus Christ... one perishes in eternal damnation... and there are too many who are dying without the gospel... that is why Jesus's final marching orders to His disciples were to **go into all the world and preach the *WHAT?*...gospel *WHY?*... to make disciples...** Share the gospel to others to get as many into heaven as possible!

There is nothing material in this life worth ANYTHING the moment that you die... except your embracing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.... **NOTHING ELSE MATTERS!**.... I am **POSITIVE ABOUT THIS!**

Ephesians 2:12 is a reminder to those of you/us who were once unsaved but now through the blood of Jesus Christ... now making Him Lord of your life... have an eternal salvation with Him in heaven....says this:

Remember that you were at that time without Christ... alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise... having no hope and without God in the world...

That's a tragic place to be... no hope and without God in the world.

No hope...*those who die with no hope will spend eternity in hell...* that should make you cringe... just the word hell.... Those words I just said make people not just uneasy but often angry.

Because nobody **REALLY** believes they might go to hell... most people ... even an overwhelming majority of Christians do not believe in an actual hell.... According to Barna... only 34% of all Christians believe in an actual literal hell.

Many believe that hell is where we are now!... the fact is... hell is a real place... and it is full of surprised people... and that is exactly what our parable for this morning is all about....you know... so many times we look at the complexities in theology here on Sunday mornings...

sometimes we need to just look at the basics... the simple truth...even if they are extremely disturbing.....

The simple truth is that there is a heaven and a hell... all of us are going to one or the other...and it doesn't have to be hell..... we're going through some of the parables of Jesus... we come to what is called **The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus...** it is found in Luke chapter 16:19-31.

There is so much in this parable.

I want to look at the main message of this important story told by Jesus to His disciples... it's a story about two men... the main character is a rich man without a name... the other man is a pathetically poor man who has a name... it is Lazarus...

I suggest that he has a name because everyone in heaven has a name... and the rich man goes to hell... you don't have a name in hell....This parable is a serious vital warning... hell is a real place... and your religious lifestyle isn't going to keep you out...

Christians are to deliver the truth of this warning to a lost world... the warning is centered on two parts.... 1. What is hell like? And 2. How you get there....

It is a warning... a warning to who?... to everyone still on earth... remember a few weeks ago I said that to get people to really hear what you say have them think they are eavesdropping on your conversation?... Jesus is speaking to His disciples but He wants the Pharisees who are straining to hear.... Hear what He's saying... for this is for them to hear!

Read Luke 16:19-31

Jesus had just finished chastising the Pharisees in chapter 15 for so visibly embracing the Law... the Law of God... through Moses.... Yet in actuality... in their hearts were compromising the Law... Looking good on the outside but were rotten in the inside... this is the situation we've run into repeatedly in these parables.

The rich man represents the Pharisees... the rich man is a symbol of the *God blessed life in Israel*"...at least that is what the Pharisees thought... remember they were lovers of money on the inside...keepers of the Law on the outside... they truly believed that God blessed them with their wealth for being so religious and good.

The Pharisees believed in life after death... they believed in God's judgement... they were very religious... they believed in heaven and even in hell... **AND NOT ONE OF THEM EVER EXPECTED TO END UP THERE. ...**

The structure of the parable is simple... three twos... 2 Lives...2 Destinies...and 2 Requests.... So we begin by contrasting the two lives.

Two Lives

Read verse 19

This was not just a wealthy man... this was an extremely wealthy man... we know this because it said **he was habitually dressed in purple...** habitually here means ALWAYS... every day... dressed in purple...

That would be like saying this man wore a Brioni Tuxedo every day... Brioni tuxedos begin at \$48,000.00... He would wear this all the time!... It says **purple and linen** which says a lot... the wealthiest people in that day would wear outer garments made of wool... and under garments of linen.

This would not be just wool... but the finest wool... called “Fulled Wool”...Ever hear of that?... wool was placed in a basin... mingled with clay... one would laboriously by hand blend the two... like kneading dough for hours... the final product was a brilliant white fabric... very.. very expensive... only the elite could afford garments made of “Fulled Wool”...

You could tell one’s status in Israel by how white their garments were... this brilliant white wool was not from bleach... it was all from that arduous techniques of producing wool with the clay....if you were past elite... elite of the elite... you would take this “Fulled Wool” and garment and dye it with a Tyrian Purple Dye...

This is an amazing dye... made in the coastal town of Tyre in northern Israel... the dye was extracted from sea snails... a shellfish called a *murex*...because it was so labor intensive...it was the most expensive of all dyes.

Remember Lydia in the Acts?... She was “**a merchant of purple dye**”... some say she was a very wealthy woman because purple dye was so expensive... others say though... in that she was from Thyatira... inland from the ocean... her purple dye was made from beets... if that is the case... she wasn’t all that wealthy....[just an aside!].

So this very rich man dressed to the nines... it also said he was **joyously living in splendor...** the same word used in other places in the Bible for being a partier... every day he drank and was merry...

Remember in the parable of the Prodigal Son... when the son returns home to his father... they “Party”... same word... they went and got the fattened calf... the prize, most valuable of the livestock only used on the most special occasions.... Well... this man killed the fatted calf everyday.... For himself!

Get the picture?... He's got it all!... so in contrast to him... the second live is the extreme the other way... Lazarus.

Read verse 20

As rich was the rich man...as poor is this poor man... "Poor" here is the same word used for Jesus in 2nd Corinthians 8:9

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

"Poor" here in the original language is the same for "beggarly worthless"... pitiful...he didn't have little...he had nothing!... He was most paralyzed for it says he was **laid at the rich man's gate**...the idea that perhaps this rich man might help him.

He had sores over his body... probably like bed sores in that he was unable to move... this man is at the bottom of his life...he has nothing...dumped in front of the gate of one who has everything...

There's even a hint at the rich man's wealth with the word used for gate... it is "*pulona*" which means "big gate"... such as the type of gate used for the entrance to a large mansion...the gate may have been up to a mile from the actual entrance to the house... revealing the vast amount of property the rich man had.

What a contrast between the two men!...a rich man who has everything but a name... and a wretchedly poor man with a name... Lazarus... His name has no connection to the Lazarus that was the brother of Mary and Martha.. Jesus's good friend...

Lazarus was a very common...popular name in that day...Lazarus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Eliazer which literally means *Whom the Lord saved...whom the Lord helped*... and that is exactly what happens here.

Now... Lazarus being at the gate implies that every time the rich man would leave his house and returned... he would have seen this helpless man lying there... passing him daily NEVER DOING ANYTHING ABOUT IT!...never helping the man...just goes to and fro from one luxury to the next... oblivious to the needs of this one at the gate.... Keep in mind that Jesus is pointing all this to the Pharisees...

They too despised outcasts... sinners and tax collectors... they were the defiled... the unclean... they knew that they were the ones in God's favor.

Read verses (20) 21

This crumb thing is interesting... it's not the picture of the rich man being a sloppy eater where the crumbs of his food fell to the floor under his table... and the poor man longing to get to eat them...

In the writings of Jaconius Jeremias... an ancient historian we can get a peek at what the crumb thing is about... during dinner... the diners would eat with their hands.... They would dip their hands into the bowls scooping out the food...they would take a piece of flatbread... dip it into a stew...or a thick soup and eat the bread...

The Last Supper was eaten this way... the diners reclined at the table... table being low to the ground.. they would literally lay down on their side at the table... they would lean on their left elbow and eat with their right hand..... [*normal people are right handed*]

SO... they would get soup or stew on their hands... there would be this stale, dry bread on the table... not for eating... they would break off a piece of the bread... rub it in between their hands to clean their hands... crumbs would fall to the floor.... The clean up crew would clean them up.

Who were the clean-up crew?.... the dogs!

Seriously! Over in Matthew 15:26 Jesus is speaking to the Canaanite woman with the demon possessed girl... remember?... He says **it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs...** Jesus was talking about the "good" bread... the bread for eating... then it says:

But she said, 'yes Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs that fall from the master's table....the clean up crew are the dogs!... and these same dogs...after licking up all the crumbs under the table.... Go outside and lick this man's open sores!

By the way these aren't your cute little cuddly dogs named Mitzi and Fido... these are the skinny wild dogs that scoured the streets for anything they could eat....all this is to see the great contrasts between these two men while they were living on earth.

Those are the two lives... now we see the two destinies...both men die and the two men's destinies are as contrasting as were their lives.

Two Destinies

Read verse 22

He's so poor... there is nothing mentioned about a funeral or a burial...we're not told what happened to his body... most likely it would have been thrown in the city dump...Gehena... that's where bodies of the poor usually ended up.

But this man... the poor man it says is taken up by angels directly to **the bosom of Abraham...** what in the world is the “*Bosom of Abraham?*” ... kind of a strange term...but you’ve all heard it...remember the old spiritual:

*Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Oh, rock-a my soul!*

Let’s sing it so you will never forget this sermon!... at least this part!

What does that mean?... it is describing a banquet... again...people gathered around a banquet table... what we just talked about... eating and drinking...celebrating... a joyous time... it would be tight quarters... people leaning against each other... well... the one in front of another person was in the bosom of that person.

Remember **the disciple who Jesus loved?**...John... at the Lord’s Supper... it says **the disciple whom Jesus loved reclined in the bosom of Jesus...** John’s back was against Jesus’s chest... the bosom of Jesus.... To be in the bosom of someone is a place of honor!

So picture this... this pauper... is all of a sudden at this great banquet... and he’s the guest of honor!...in the bosom of Abraham... the father of the Jewish people!... what a lofty position!... Abraham was considered by the Jews to be the most righteous man...

There’s all sorts of speculation about what all this means... what happened to the poor man... bosom of Abraham and everything... I think it means that this man... at the moment of death went to the same place righteous Abraham went... heaven.

Oh... don’t think the Pharisees didn’t understand what Jesus was saying!... this poor pathetic man when he died went to HEAVEN.... OUTRAGEOUS!... and then what about the rich man?... all it says is... *oh... the rich man died and was buried.... THAT’S IT!...DEAD... BURIED.*

Now to Jesus he was just buried... but we know that if he was buried... there was a funeral... most likely a pretty elaborate funeral...by the way... the man’s wealth would have been buried with him...

You never know... after he’s dead he might find something to buy?... someone said “**rich people get the most out of their dollars EVEN AFTER THEY DIE!**...ever hear of Jeremy Bentham?...I don’t think anyone ever got as much with their money after they died than Jeremy

Bentham... Bentham was a great philosopher and social reformer in Great Britain back in the early 1800's. A very, very wealthy man.

Just before he died... He willed his entire estate to the University of London... with one stipulation... one condition... that his physical body would be present at every meeting of the board.

No problem for educators wanting that money!...they scraped the flesh off his skeleton... they stuffed the skeleton... put clothes over it.. a flashy suit... they decapitated his head and using a process developed by South American head hunters.... Shrunk it.

They made a wax replica of his head before shrinking and put it on the skeleton... they attached him to a grand chair... one of his hands on an arm of the chair... the other holding a cane... between his legs they put the shrunken head of Jeremy Bentham...they put him in a telephone booth looking thing on wheels... they would wheel it into every meeting they had and opened the doors... I'm serious... I have a photograph of this!...

That's getting the most out of every dollar... even after your dead!

So the rich man was buried with his wealth... but he doesn't stay with his wealth... or his body... where does he go?... **everyone lives forever with only two possible eternal destinations...heaven or hell**... he's not in heaven... it tells us here that he is in Hades.

In the Old Testament... it's called Sheol... in the New Testament Hades...it means "the place of the dead" or "the place of departed souls/spirits."... hades is divided into a place of blessing where Lazarus was... and a place of torment where the rich man was.

Read verse 23

Hades seems to be a temporary place where souls are kept as they await the final resurrection. The souls of the righteous... at death, go directly into the presence of God—the part of Hades called "heaven," "paradise," or "Abraham's bosom".

Revelation 20:11-15 explains what Hades is for the damned... it is the place they go before they actually get their judgement from God... Revelation tells us the damned are in Hades waiting for their judgement and sentencing... then will go to the eternal lake of fire.

So here... Jesus is giving us a picture of hell...I think most of us picture hell as this big flaming pit... flames billowing out and black smoke everywhere... and all these tormented people trying to climb out of the pit... but can't get out... so they are in this eternal flaming oven... continually being burned... and that goes through eternity.... It's so much more than that!

The rich man in the parable can see into heaven... Jesus is just doing that to make a point... nowhere else in the Bible does it say people in heaven and hell can see each other... he's making a point.

The rich man cannot believe this poor beggar is up in heaven and he's in hell... He's in torment! Two lives... two destinies... now two requests...

The Two Requests

The first requests:

Read verse 24

Have mercy on me!... interesting... catch part of his request?... **send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool off my tongue...**

1. He still sees Lazarus as lower than himself... as a servant... *send him over to me!*
2. Lazarus has been healed... restored... otherwise how could he have "sent for Lazarus to come over here"?.. Lazarus could walk.

Read verse 25

Someone said *This seems as though Jesus is saying rich people go to hell and poor people to heaven!*... Rich man... *You received your good things in your life so you go to hell... Lazarus... you lived a pitiful poor life so you go to heaven...*

Of course that is NOT what Jesus is saying... what Jesus is saying is... now get this:

For lost people—all the good they are ever going to have is in this life....when they die, it's all over...no more goofness.

For the saved person—all the bad things they will ever experience will ONLY be in this life... when they die... it's all over!... no more bad things...only good things!

Read verse 26

After death... There's this unpassable chasm... it is fixed... there's no changing anything now... no second chances... no possible salvation now... those who are saved... they are over there... they so wish they could come and get their loved ones and pull them over to their side... but they can't!

It's too late... **salvation is only available during one's lifetime!**

Death permanently fixes our destiny...nobody is going from one place to another... if you end up in hell... you will be there forever...and all the material things you thought were so precious here on earth will be destroyed by rust and moths...

Have you ever wanted something so bad... and when you got it... a month later you forget all about it... I think that's what it will be like after we die... all the stuff we worked our lives so hard to get... achieve... will be forgotten in a nano-second after we're dead.

Request denied...

There is a second request from the rich man in hell... but before we see that... why was the rich man in hell?... He was Jewish, one of God' chosen people... was it his money that sent him to hell? Of course not... there's a lot of wealthy people in heaven.... Abraham is one of them!

Was it sin?... well... there's nothing in the story that implies that the man sinned at all... even though we know that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... but that isn't what Jesus wants us to see....

Was it because he was selfish?... he never gave any crumbs to Lazarus... isn't it true that everyone in hell was selfish on earth?... of course... .but so was everyone who's in heaven! There is salvation for sinners... for selfish people... listen how this plays out.

The second request

Read verses 27-28

Please send a messenger to my family while they are still living so that they won't have to end up here!....get the message to them!... these of course would have been the other Pharisees. ...

Read verse 29

Moses and the Prophets is a term for the Old Testament... which was the entire Bible at that time... Abraham is telling the rich man... *No one needs to go tell them ANYTHING!... they've had the message right in front of them... and they still do!...it's right in front of their noses!...GOD'S WORD!.... yet they ignore it!*

Salvation is in God's Word!.... that's the truth that will save them!...It's the only thing that will save them!...

No! No! They need more!... show them a huge miracle... that will do it!

Read verse 30

Send them someone who was resurrected from the dead... let them see him!...send Lazarus!. then they will be convinced of the truth.... Send them some miraculous proof.... That'll will do it!

Of course... Jesus in telling this part of the story is pointing to His own future death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.... Which did nothing to convince the Jews of who He was...

Read verse 31

So what's the point of all this?

It's really a simple message in all this...

1. This parable is a great comfort for the Christian in this life—who sometimes feel the injustice of life... for those of us who've had it very tough... for those in life who have been dealt a bad hand... this life is but a blip... not even a blip on the eternity time line!
2. Jesus through this parable confirms that hell is a reality... it is a place that truly exists... it gives us a vague glimpse of what hell will be like... and it suggest to us that you don't have to go there!... accept as your Lord and Savior while you have time... it will too late after the heart stops ticking!
3. For the Christian... it reminds us of our mission... to deliver the gospel of Jesus Christ to a perishing world... for it is only through the Word of God that we find salvation...[that's why I so appreciate what Kirk and the Gideon's are doing!...]

Only through the Word of God is salvation... through the person and God of Jesus Christ!