



MARCH 15, 2026 | Dr. Jimmy Stewart

Jesus Changes Everything

Hell → Heaven

Scripture: Luke 16:19–31; Matthew 25:46

Spotlight: Every person will spend eternity somewhere—only Jesus determines where.

Summary: This week we are reminded of one of the most sobering—and hope-filled—truths in Scripture: **every person will spend eternity somewhere**. Jesus spoke plainly about both eternal separation from God and eternal life with Him. Through the story of the rich man and Lazarus and through His teaching about the final judgment, Jesus calls us to consider our eternal destination. The good news is that Jesus changes everything—even where we spend eternity. Because of His death and resurrection, anyone who turns from sin and trusts in Him can move from condemnation to forgiveness, from lost to saved, and from hell to heaven. Today is the day to make sure of your eternity and help others discover the hope found only in Jesus.

I. Two Eternal Realities - Hell and Heaven

Luke 16:19-25

19 Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. 20 At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. 21 As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. 22 "Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and

was buried, 23 and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

24 "The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.'

25 "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish.'

Jesus begins with a powerful contrast between two men whose earthly lives could not have been more different.

The Rich Man

- Wealthy, respected, and comfortable
- "Splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen"
- Lived in luxury every day
- Had everything the world values

Lazarus

- Poor, sick, and forgotten
- Covered in sores
- Begging for scraps from the rich man's table
- Had nothing the world values

The Great Reversal: Death changes everything.

- Lazarus is carried by angels into comfort
- The rich man finds himself in torment
- Earthly status disappears
- Eternal reality is revealed

Important truths from this passage:

- Death is certain for every person.
- Eternity begins immediately after death.
- Earthly success does not determine eternal destiny.
- Spiritual condition determines eternal destiny.

The rich man had *everything in life* but ***nothing in eternity.***

II. The Eternal Divide - The Gulf Between Hell and Heaven

Luke 16:26-31

26 And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.'

27 "Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home. 28 For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.'

29 "But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.'

30 "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.'

31 "But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

- Jesus reveals a terrifying truth: after death, *destinies are fixed*.
"There is a great chasm separating us."

What this teaches us *about eternity*:

- Eternity is irreversible.
- There are no second chances after death.
- No one crosses from hell to heaven.
- No one falls from heaven into hell.

The rich man suddenly becomes concerned about evangelism.
"Please warn my brothers..."

But Abraham's response is striking: "They have Moses and the prophets."

In other words: **God has already given enough truth for people to respond.**

Powerful implications:

- The problem is **not** lack of evidence.
- The problem is unwillingness to believe.
- Even a resurrection would not convince hardened hearts.

And ironically, Jesus would soon rise from the dead, and many still refused to believe.

III. Your Eternal Home - Hell or Heaven

Matthew 25:31-34; 41,46

31 "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.'"

41 "Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.'"

46 "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."

Jesus teaches that a final separation is coming.

When Christ returns:

- All nations will stand before Him.
- Every life will be examined.
- A final separation will occur.

Jesus describes it like a shepherd separating two groups: sheep from goats.

Sheep

- At His right hand
- Blessed by the Father
- Inherit the Kingdom

Goats

- At His left hand
- Under judgment
- Sent into eternal punishment

Jesus concludes with one of the clearest statements in the Bible about eternity:

"They will go away into eternal punishment, but **the righteous will go into eternal life.**" (Matthew 25:46)

The same word - **eternal** - describes both destinies.

Which means:

- Heaven is forever.
- Hell is forever.

- Eternity is not temporary.

Where will you spend eternity?

Next Steps: If you're not sure heaven is your eternal destination, today you can know—turn from sin and trust Jesus.

Life Application:

1. **Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus reveals that eternity reverses many assumptions of this life.** In what ways might comfort, success, or busyness today be distracting people from preparing for eternity? How can we guard our hearts from becoming spiritually indifferent like the rich man?
2. **Luke 16 shows that the rich man became concerned about eternity only after it was too late.** What warnings does this passage give about procrastinating spiritual decisions? What steps should a person take today if they are unsure about their eternal destiny?
3. **Matthew 25:46 teaches that eternity involves two permanent outcomes—eternal life or eternal punishment.** How does the reality of eternal consequences challenge the common belief that all spiritual paths eventually lead to the same place?
4. **In Luke 16, the rich man asks for someone to warn his family.** If we truly believe eternity is real, how should that shape our urgency in sharing the gospel with family, friends, and neighbors who do not yet know Christ?
5. **Revelation 21 describes heaven as a place where God dwells with His people and every tear is wiped away.** How should the promise of this future change the way believers face suffering, loss, or hardship in the present?
6. **The Spotlight says that only Jesus determines where we spend eternity.** What does it practically mean to trust Jesus—not just intellectually, but personally and completely—with your eternal future?
7. **If eternity is real and every person will spend forever somewhere,** what changes should it produce in your priorities, conversations, prayers, and daily choices this week?

NOTE: Sections of this sermon outline were created in part by using professional ChatGPT March 11-12, 2026 and edited for First Baptist Church Gulfport by Dr. James M Stewart. The scripture quotes are from the New Living Translation.