

Luke 16:19-31

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[0:00] I am heading off towards holiday this week and I want to start by telling you this wonderful news.! I practice at home a song to sing in Bulgaria in karaoke with my father. It's a Bulgarian anthem of the foreigners abroad, immigrants who are returning home and hugging their moms and rejoicing.

So, when I practice the song, I actually start crying and I try it a second time and I start crying because my mom passed away and we are going to celebrate one year. This is our month anniversary.

But what I am going to do is I can hug my father. And imagine this story would have turned a completely different way if my mom hadn't repented and had the same story like the rich man. So, notice the audience at the beginning of chapter 16, verse 1, are the disciples. But when you go down and look at the parables, in verse 14, we already see the Pharisees.

So, Pharisees were thinking that they are certainly doing well and not going to hell. Very similar to what a rich man thought. He is blessed and that means he is not going to hell.

[1:24] But what God says is this, you are those who justify yourself before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is abomination in the sight of God.

So, the key to understanding the parable is simply this, we look at the external aspects of our lives where God looks at our hearts. We look at the material aspects where God looks at the spiritual. And so, this story is about false religion. It is a genius story. It is a story about contrast and reversal. And so, let me run a few contrast and reverses.

There is a rich man and there is a poor man. The rich man becomes horribly poor and the poor becomes rich. There is a rich man on the inside and there is a rich man on the outside and that changes.

And then there is a rich man who feasted sumptuously and there is a poor man who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. And then there is a poor man at the feast and there is a rich man who can't even find a drop of water.

[2:36] There is a poor man with immense needs and there is a rich man with no needs. And there is a poor man with no needs and a rich man with great needs. There is a poor man who has nothing and desires everything and there is a rich man that has everything and desires nothing.

And a poor man that has everything and desires nothing.

So, there is a poor man licked by dogs and there is a rich man surrounded by dignitaries. And then there is a poor man surrounded by dignitaries and a rich man surrounded by worst of dogs. And there is a poor man who suffers and a rich man who is satisfied. And then a rich man who suffers and a poor man who is satisfied. There is a poor man who is honored and a rich man who is humiliated.

There is a poor man who seeks help and a rich man who gives none. And there is a rich man who seeks help and a poor man who can't give any. there is a poor man who is nobody and a rich man who is somebody and then there is a poor man who is somebody and a rich man who is nobody a poor man who has a name and a rich man who hasn't even got a name a poor man with no dignity in life becomes somebody dignified and the opposite for the rich man so there is a poor man with no hope and a rich man with hope and a poor man whose hope is realized and a rich man who has none and I found this contrast helpful and look at the rich man he is described as what he wore what he had and what he had what a way to describe a person he wasn't a teacher with profound

wisdom he wasn't contributing anything to the society but how would the Lord describe us do we love the Lord do we serve Him do we know Him personally are we a blessing to other people are we humble people are we good people are we people who find against our sins do we use our money for ourselves only or are we people of value and helpfulness and purity notice that the poor man is silent in heaven in heaven in the story he is only there for the contrast but the story is not about heaven it is a story about rich men in hell only the rich man speaks to Abraham and he is the main character in the story he gives a personal testimony of what it is to be in hell the Lord gives a wonderful name to Lazarus which means somebody to whom

[5:58] God helps we see that God gives him access to heaven grant him salvation no one in hell has a name there are no relationships in hell but everyone in heaven has a name and his story breaks into three parts life death and life after death what I really like about the story is that the Lord paid unforgettable images the rich man was clothed in purple in that time to dye clothed in purple was extremely expensive who does he think he is a royalty in purple indulgence and splendor was his activities daily on the other hand we see Lazarus extremely poor and sick he was covered in sores he had probably had some crippling disease which and because of that he was laid at the gates and the rich man was like the Pharisees detestable to God and so the rich man gives Lazarus no help does he know him of course he knows him he is laid everyday in his gates licked by the dogs and at that time the dogs were not pets but what happened what is in verse 22 they both died and everybody dies there is one event in our lives that is absolutely certain we may or we may not achieve our dreams the life may or may not turn the way we want it but it is one thing which is certain we will die it is irreversible that they say that every single second somebody dies in this world and yet vast majority of people are not prepared for it there is so many people in London today who have only a vague idea what is hell and heaven and they would meet with God one day unprepared

Lazarus probably did not have a proper burial most likely he was in common grave or dump but the rich man though has a certainly proper burial with lots of guests who were honoring him but the shock is that Lazarus is being carried by angels where in heaven and that takes us to life after that the rich man is in torment in hell this is completely opposite of what the Pharisees would expect to hear God sends angels to take care of one of his own to be a companion of Abraham the Jewish hero remember the father was their pride the father of faith a friend of God and the Pharisees wonder how can a poor and cursed man become a guest of honor in heaven extreme reversal on the other hand the rich man is in hell or in

Hades he had everything in life but now is in hell and there is no transition from hell there is no purgatory this is a snare delusion when I was younger I watched a movie which confused me so much I lived probably 10 years with this movie in my head because this movie was about people who were stealing they lived 50 years in purgatory and eventually end up in heaven and there were murderers who lived 150 years and they eventually said their sins are forgiven what a lie I was so confused with this until I got really converted and find out the truth and so this is the experience of the rich man he is in torment the way Jesus explained is gnashing of teeth wailing fire and for the sake of the example rich man is allowed to look at heaven and here is the shock sometimes we become so superficially familiar with the bible that we miss to see the shock and instead of saying the rich man say oh

Lazarus please forgive me I got it all wrong he ignores him he doesn't even speak to him instead he speaks to Abraham he assumes because he is a child of Abraham he would have to take care of him have mercy on me he is playing his Jewish race card now notice that he was the one that never showed mercy to Lazarus and asking for mercy now Lazarus was a beggar but now the rich man is begging the rich man cannot give him give up his self importance send Lazarus to dip his finger to cool my tongue not a glass of water just to dip in other words he demands mercy from somebody to whom he never showed mercy he never even gave him dog food there is no repentance here the suffering and pain in hell is so severe that one tiny drop will make a huge difference for him but there is no relief in hell once no crumbs for the poor man but now no drop for the rich man and

Abraham answered him yes generically speaking you are my child but during your life you received the good things and Lazarus in like manner bad things but now he is comforted here and you in anguish and it's true believers could die poor and unbelievers could die rich like some billionaires die one can enjoy the providence of God in common grace and go to hell and spend eternity without God's presence there instead of going from providence to faith in God we see him going into self indulgence you might wonder how Lazarus got to this state in life so maybe physical disability is the reason we don't know but in that time we must have it must have been really tough for disabled people not like what we have now and Abraham answers this

[13:46] Lazarus is comforted now and you are in agony the Lazarus was temporarily and you are going to be eternally miserable what you did not provide for Lazarus he cannot provide for you now and it's never going to change and besides this between us and you is a great chasm has been fixed and in order those who pass from here to you may not be able and none may cross from there to us and mark the words of Jesus when you are in hell you are not going to heaven and when you are in heaven you are not going to hell it's fixed forever no relief no hope there is no love in hell there is no friendships no tenderness there are no smiles there is no laughter no music can you imagine life without music no craft no science nothing good only fear and hatred once you die and pass into eternity and if you have not established a relationship with God you stand before Christ not as a savior but as a judge and you hear guilty and it's too late you've left it too late a great sorrow and fear will grip your soul and you'll hear no more gospel you'll hear no more earnest appeal from preachers or from

Christian friends or from Christian parents husbands lives relatives you'll hear no more appeals turn to Lord be safe repent for your sins believe in Christ and he will freely forgive you you'll never hear anything like this again no more pleading no more movements in the spirit of your heart urging you to come to Jesus Christ no one will invite you to church on Sunday or for Christmas carols or mowed wine and lunchtime talks you are going to eternity it's too late you only hear the voice of the judge sending you into this terrible place of punishment and all that you know is I deserved it you would hate to say but you deserve it you rejected him and now he is rejecting you don't you want to be persuasive that there is a savior a redeemer who will save your soul and forgive your sins and make you his own and change your life and bring you to love him and walk with him in this world doesn't creation persuade you that there is a wonderful divine creator one day you would have to look him in the face and there is nothing more scary to look at the Lord with sins not forgiven don't your instincts tell you that there is a life after that and you better be ready for it haven't you spoken with other Christians and they say oh of course it's real I'm experiencing this every day it's real to know him it's real to walk with him and it's real to love him can nothing convince you not the words of God in the Bible is your heart so hard or you better pray tonight Lord soften my heart Lord take these chains away from me which bind me in the way to hell and for your heart to be softened that you may see the truth and may see reality don't go just looking at the external look at the spiritual things you must come to him don't throw your life away Satan is pulling you down as each day goes by do you want to be described like the rich man what you had what you had what you wore seek the Lord and ask him for his wonderful love and mercy why you still here and it's possible and he would forgive you and he would bless you and make you his own child he would change your whole character and make himself known to you and if you mean this prayer he will but the rich man is not satisfied he has now one more request then I beg you father verse 27 to send him to my father's house for I have five brothers so that he may warn them lest they also come to this place of torment if he ever hit any redeeming value that was it and I like this about this about him although some people disagree with that but he knew that his brothers were like him and they were coming so in order to prevent that he says if I knew what horrible place the hell is I would never have come here but do you know what his problem was he did not listen to the word of God and that's exactly what people do Jesus says you hear but you don't understand they have Moses and they have the prophets let them hear from the old testament they would have learned about the creator the lawgiver the judge the true God they would have known about their sinfulness and need for repentance they would have heard about salvation by

faith alone in Christ alone they would have understood that substitution the way that God deals with sin is substitution they would have understood that there is a

[20:43] Messiah coming he would crush the head of the Satan the redeemer would provide redemption for his people and he would be the suffering substitute and then he would establish his throne finally they would have understood the need to repent and believe to forsake their other gods and if they listened and understood the prophets they would have known that Jesus is this Messiah who has been promised so let them hear the scripture salvation comes by hearing the word of God if they don't hear the scripture there is no hope and it's so much easier for us we have because we have not only the Old Testament we have the New Testaments we have all the Gospels all the prophecies fulfilled we have the epistles that the apostles wrote to the churches established in first century we even have the revelation of

God and the second coming of Jesus we have everything what else we need but no said the rich man father Abraham you are wrong once he was a rich man then he became poor man now he becomes a theologian let me correct your theology if you somebody goes from that they would repent father Abraham scripture is not enough I had the scripture Pharisees had the scripture and they didn't understand and they were heading the same direction like the rich man and that's the point of the story and he goes on my brothers knew this wretched Lazarus and if they see that this poor guy come back from heaven and tell them about heaven and hell they would certainly listen and avoid the torment but who was raised from the dead

Jesus did they did everybody believe him no in fact in the interesting divine coincidence Jesus raised from a man called Lazarus and the rulers knew that and that's one of the reasons they wanted to kill him if you don't want to go to hell be warned religion will not protect you going to church will not rescue you having friends and relatives who are Christians will not help you only the true gospel will help you and only sincere faith and believe in Jesus Christ Jesus Christ went to the cross to take the punishment we deserve for our sins all we have to do is believe and ask for forgiveness and like Lazarus God will send angels to escort you to heaven into the fellowship rejoicing with all the saints and the faithful including

Abraham Abraham and in my conclusion I want to say this remember I told you the beginning of the story about my mom the reason between the difference between me and my father who is non-believer is that I know that I will see her she loved dancing and singing and we will dance and sing again together with her but my father has only memories that connect him to her like Hollywood movies he goes to the grave and talks to her he even I'm not sure some of you don't even remember but we used to have this not tapes but big round circles with huge tape so they were going like this and so playing using recording that was in 70s and my father even restored this machine that is like antique and ancient in order to hear her voice when he was recording her in 70s but one day if we believe we will all meet together and we all sing together and let me give you a glimpse of what

God has given us in the revelation about heaven God will wipe away every tear from people's eyes that shall be no more neither shall there be mourning no crying no pain anymore there would be not even need of sun because God's glory will shine in heaven and Jesus says surely I'm coming soon come Lord Jesus may the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you amen Thank you.