

Message #80

Luke 16:19-31

Money cannot buy anyone what they really long for in life!
Money can buy you a bed, but it cannot buy you sleep.
Money can buy you food, but it cannot buy you an appetite.
Money can buy you medicine, but it cannot buy you health.
Money can buy you amusements, but it cannot buy you happiness.
Money can buy you a Bible, but it cannot buy you spirituality.
Money can buy you a majestic house, but it cannot buy you heaven.
Money can buy you prosperity, but it cannot buy you peace.

The hard core reality is that there will be many people burning in hell forever who had lots of money, but they would not humble themselves to respond to the word of God and believe on Jesus Christ. There will be many people who will end up in eternal agony and pain, who devoted themselves to making and hoarding huge sums of money. They will have lived in mansions of splendor and will forever burn in everlasting fire because they would not face their sin and believe on Jesus Christ.

There is no question from analyzing the Scriptures that the vast majority of people in heaven will not have been millionaires and billionaires, who devoted their lives to making money. It will have been those who saw themselves honestly as sinners and in view of that, committed their lives to Jesus Christ.

That point is clearly the point of this passage:

THE ONE WHO DEVOTES HIS LIFE TO MONEY AND MATERIAL THINGS AND REJECTS JESUS CHRIST AND THE WORD OF GOD, WILL REMEMBER IT AND REGRET IT AS HE BURNS IN HELL FOREVER.

In this part of Scripture, Jesus Christ tells a story of a rich man who was never right with God. He never responded to the word of God or to Jesus Christ and the proof was he ends up burning in hell forever (16:23). The rich man did not end up in hell because he was rich, but because he made a “god” of his riches and would not believe in Jesus Christ. This is what Pharisees did.

While he was here on earth, he lived for money. His idol was money. His happiness was found in his wealth. He was not right with God in his heart and the proof was the way he used his money. He hoarded it even when faced with those who had great need.

This very rich man knew a man named Lazarus and actually saw him almost every day. Had his heart been right with God, he would have tried to do something for him, but he was too much in love with his own life and his own money. **Perhaps there is no greater evidence of our heart being right with God than in our use of and attitude toward our money.** That is a critical theme that clearly develops in this text.

Jesus develops this point by telling this story. He is the only Person who would actually be able to tell this story because only He is able to see what eternally happened to these two men. The story He tells is comprised of five different parts:

STORY PART #1 – Jesus gives a description of a rich man in this life. **16:19**

Before we analyze this, we want to observe that the actual noun “man” is in the Greek text. This is a gender word. When someone dies, whatever God made them, either man or woman, goes into eternity. There are no gender changes. It won’t matter if one pretended to be another gender on earth; when they die, they will face God in their real gender He gave them.

There are four observations we want to make about Christ’s description:

Observation #1 - He was extremely rich. **16:19a**

The word “rich” (πλουσιος) is a word that means this man was extremely rich. This word describes one who was abundantly wealthy and rich (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 366-367).

Observation #2 - He wore expensive clothing. **16:19b**

This rich man wore the best clothes habitually every day. In fact, the words “purple and fine linen” describes clothing of the elite rich. The fine linen indicates that even his undergarments were very expensive. This would have been the finest clothing money could buy in the first century (Est. 1:6; Rev. 18:12).

One of the most expensive tailor-made men’s suits today is the Alexander Amousa suit that is made of rare wool. It has nine buttons of 18 karat gold and diamonds. The cost is \$101,860.

This man was wearing this kind of clothing every day.

Observation #3 - He was extremely successful. **16:19c**

The text says he lived joyously and in splendor every day. Every day of his life was another day of success. He lived a life of ease and pleasure every single day. He was flamboyant about his wealth and displayed himself that way every day.

Observation #4 - He is eternally known and eternally nameless.

He is obviously known in eternity, but the truth is we don’t know his name. He must have been a real amazing man in his time, but we don’t know his name.

STORY PART #2 – Jesus gives a description of a poor man in this life. **16:20-21**

There are six facts that Jesus brings out about this man:

Fact #1 - He was extremely poor. **16:20a**

In complete contrast to the rich man, Lazarus was very poor. This word means he was at a poverty level in which he had to even beg.

Fact #2 - He is eternally known and eternally named. **16:20b**

It is clear that this man was also eternally known and he was also eternally named. His name was Lazarus.

Fact #3 - He was totally helpless. **16:20c**

The verb “was laid” indicates Lazarus was totally incapable of moving himself and the pluperfect/passive verb indicates that he had been moved in front of this man’s gate for some period of time. He had to be carried and dropped off at the gate of this man’s home.

The Bible seems to recognize two different types of people, when it comes to work:

- 1) Those that can work but are too lazy to work, in which case we are not to help them-
II Thess. 3:10.
- 2) Those that cannot work because they are physically incapable and we are to help them.

Lazarus fell into this second category.

Fact #4 - He was very sick. **16:20c**

Jesus says that Lazarus was “covered with sores.” This particular word used by a medical Dr. Luke describes a very serious ulcerous type of sore that was very visible. Lazarus was a very sick man.

Fact #5 - He was desperately hungry. **16:21a**

Lazarus was so hungry that he would actually sit at the gate of the rich man’s home, hoping to get any leftovers from any meal. **The irony is that he was separated from this rich man by a gate, but eventually the rich man will be separated from him by a great gulf or gap.** He would literally take the “crumbs” off this guy’s table.

We want to observe that Jesus Christ knew Lazarus and He did not change the social conditions of Lazarus types. **His mission the first time was not to change the physical welfare of the world; it was to spiritually change the world.**

The next time He comes, these social injustices will be made right. He obviously expects people of means to do what they can to help these poor people.

Fact #6 - He was totally alone. **16:21b**

The only friends he had were dogs. The dogs would come to this man and lick his wounds. It would not surprise me if he got some crumbs, he probably shared it with the dogs.

STORY PART #3 – Jesus gives a description of both dying and leaving this world. **16:22**

Eventually, it came time for both men to die. Death does not play favorites and is the great equalizer of all men. Sooner or later, whether one is poor or rich, men die. Regardless of wealth, social status, or achievement, all die.

When the rich man died, the text says he “was buried.” This would indicate he had a very impressive funeral. He would have had a lavish funeral, with business associates and powerful people coming to mourn the loss of this business tycoon. There were probably lots of tributes and donations and flowers to honor this wealthy entrepreneur.

Perhaps there were moments of silence at gatherings and social events, like one would have for Kobe Bryant.

STORY PART #4 – Jesus gives a description of what Lazarus experienced after death.
16:22, 23, 25

The description of what happened to Lazarus after death is wonderful. There is no question that Lazarus did go to a real place when he died. There are three observations we may make about it:

Observation #1 - He was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom. **16:22a**

Lazarus did not get a lavish funeral, but he did get an angelic ride. Angels were there to escort him to a wonderful place called “Abraham’s bosom.”

Abraham’s bosom is not heaven but it is a heavenly type place. It was the place where O.T. believers went when they died. It was a place of intimate fellowship and comfort for O.T. believers.

Observation #2 - He was in a place of enviable existence. **16:23b**

This is a very enviable place to be. The rich man wanted to be there and he wanted his brothers to go there. It is interesting to note that no angels escorted him to this enviable location. He was just found to be in hell.

Observation #3 - He was in a place of total comfort. **16:25**

Life for Lazarus at this point was no longer sad; he was in a complete place of comfort. There was an instant change of condition for Lazarus.

STORY PART #5 – Jesus gives a description of what the rich man experienced in hell.
16:23-31

The rich man went to “Hades.” Hades is a hellish place of fire where unbelievers go when they die until they are sentenced to the eternal Lake of Fire at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:14). When Jesus Christ speaks of hell, you better take it seriously because He speaks of a literal hell more than any other Person in the Bible (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 7:19; 8:12; 10:15, 28; 11:22, 24; 13:40-42, 50; 18:7-9; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30, 46; Mark 9:42-49; Luke 12:46-47; 13:28-30; 16:23-31; 17:26-29; John 15:6). **There are five facts Jesus Christ brings out about hell:**

Fact #1 - Hell is a place of horrible fire torment. **16:23, 24, 28**

The words “torment” (**16:23, 28**) and “agony” (**16:25**) are scary. If ever there are two words that should scare people to believe in Jesus Christ and escape hell, it is these two words. The word “torment” describes a pain that is torturous. The word “agony” describes a pain that is at a deep, suffering level.

Combined, these two words describe hell as a horrible place of eternal burning pain and suffering. This is excruciating pain that never ends.

Hades is a place where the burning never ceases. It is a torturous pain. The fire never burns a person up because it is a place where “the worm does not die” (Mark 9:47-48).

Fact #2 - Hell is a place of total consciousness. **16:23b**

There is a very real consciousness for one who is in hell. There is no such thing as soul sleep. The rich man was very much aware of his presence and pain. He was well aware that he was being tormented and Lazarus was not. What irony. In life, he saw Lazarus, who needed his help, and in eternity, he sees Lazarus, and he needs his help.

Fact #3 - Hell is a place of no mercy. **16:24**

Hell is a place of no mercy. Once one is in hell, there is no chance of experiencing the grace or mercy of God. Crying out to God for grace and mercy will not work and will be of no avail.

What good was the money this rich man had now? He would trade all the money he had for one drop of water on the tip of someone’s finger. In hell, you do not even mercifully get one drop or drip of water.

The irony is that one drop of living water can keep you out of hell. One drink of living water will guarantee you will never burn in the fires of hell. Invite Jesus Christ into your life and you will escape forever the eternal fire of hell (John 4:10). Now is the time to experience God's grace because there will be no grace or mercy in hell.

Fact #4 - Hell is a place of complete memory. **16:25, 27-31**

A person in hell has a very real and vivid memory. There is no such thing as Dementia or Alzheimer's in hell. Every person's memory will be as sharp as a tack. There are three memories this rich man had:

(Memory #1) - He remembered his previous life. **16:25**

A person in hell will be able to remember all of the good things he had in life. He will remember his home, wealth and success. He can remember but he can't shake the pain of the fire.

The pain of the fire in hell is so intense that he was not focused on the good life he had, so Abraham reminded him.

(Memory #2) - He remembered his lost family. **16:27-28**

Every unbeliever in hell remembers his relatives and he never wants any of them to end up where he is. This man had five brothers and he begged Abraham to send someone back to tell them to believe so they would not come there to the place of torment.

Now you would think that if Lazarus went back from the dead the brothers would believe. But there was a Lazarus who did come back from the dead and instead of the people believing in Christ, they wanted to kill Him (John 11:43-53).

(Memory #3) - He remembered God's word. **16:29, 31**

People burning in hell will not be laughing or scoffing at the Bible. They will be fully aware of the fact that God's word was written and God's word was in existence.

Fact #5 - Hell is a place of no possible escape. **16:26**

A person who goes to hell will never get out. There is no such thing as purgatory or second chances. A person's destiny at the moment of death is irreversible. No one can call a person out of hell; no one can pray him out; no candles will get him out. One in hell burns there forever.

Now one liberal theologian asked what kind of God would put people into a place of endless fiery torture. The same God who put His Son on the cross to die, so you don't have to go there. One who ends up in hell refuses to trust Jesus Christ. In fact, the Pharisees trusted their money and would not trust Jesus Christ or the word of God.

This rich man had a lot of money but he did not have a relationship with Jesus Christ and he ended up in hell. Jesus Christ does not even name him. Wicked people aren't remembered in eternity; they are forgotten (Ps. 9:5; Eccl. 8:10).

Verses 29-31 make it very, very clear that **the key to staying out of hell is what is found in the writings of Moses and the writings of the Prophets.**

In the writings of Moses is the law of God that condemns every single person on this earth. In the prophets is a description of one who would come that would be wounded for our transgressions and would be led like a lamb to slaughter so that we might be saved.

You either respond to Moses and the prophets, and believe in Jesus Christ, or you will end up in hell like this rich man.

We have said many times in this church that when a person dies, the Bible does not teach annihilation, oblivion or reincarnation. The Bible teaches instant relocation. When you die you will go to one of two places immediately. There are no in-betweens and there are no second chances. You will either die or go to hell or you will die and go to heaven.

If you will take one drink of the living water found by faith in Jesus Christ, when you die the angels of God will escort you into heaven. That is what Jesus taught in Luke 16.