

A Great Gulf Fixed
Gospel According to Luke
By Ken Wimer

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Shreveport Grace Church
2970 Baird Road
Shreveport, LA 71118

Website: www.shrevegrace.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech

If you will, look with me in your Bibles to Luke 16. I'm going to read from verse 19 down to verse 31. The title of this message is taken right from this text and that is "A Great Gulf Fixed." There is a great gulf fixed. What is that gulf and how is it fixed? Who fixed it? I'll give you some of the answers, I hope, to deliver and for us to see by God's grace from this text.

Now, it says in verse 19,

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

This is what I want us to consider together concerning God's judgments, concerning what it is to be saved and what it is to be condemned. I've been reading in Matthew 25, that's where we see other Scriptures speak of this important subject, but my title is taken from verse 26 and it sounds pretty definitive, doesn't it? It doesn't sound to me like this matter is something that's left up to man. That's pretty clear in reading this story, the inspired word here that the Lord gives.

He states here that, "there is a great gulf fixed between us and you so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot." Notice the word "would." It's not based on man's free will. If it were, then they would be able to say, "Well, okay, I'm going to go from here to there or there to here." It says from hence to you, it says, they cannot; it talks about inability. Even the Lord said that, "that no man can come unto me except it were given him of the Father." "Neither can, there is inability again, they pass to us, that would come from thence."

So that word "fixed" that we have in verse 26 is an important word in Scripture. It means "to set fast," and this is the part where men will not have God to determine what is and what isn't, but when it says "fixed, set fast," it actually means "to turn resolutely in a certain direction which you cannot unturn." Here then is where men today in their depravity don't know God because they believe right up until the end that God can be manipulated and just with enough begging, determining on man's part, we can get God in our favor. People have prayer chains while people are alive and that's why they have praying for the dead. They think somehow they're going to be able to help a person's outcome but if I had no other Scripture text than this here in Luke 16:26, I would have to conclude and with the Spirit of God I say, gladly conclude that this matter is in the Lord's hands. He's the one that determines these things. Those that are the Lord's don't have a problem with a God who determines all things. In fact, I get up every day thinking that he's the one who ordered the day. Can you imagine if this world really were based upon random events? How could anybody even expect to live.

So a great gulf fixed. Now, one of the big questions that you'll find with people that argue and debate with the word is whether or not this is a parable or whether this is a true story, and the reason why people argue is because they don't like the content. Somehow, I don't know why they would even conclude that if they say, "Well, if it's a parable, you can't make a parable walk on all fours," so what they're implying in a very deceitful way, deceptive way is that somehow some part of this is not true. I will tell you our Lord would not be stating it were it not true. Let's mark that down.

Number 2: it does not say it's a parable. Now, you might have in your title somewhere in your Bible someone has put "A parable concerning the rich man and Lazarus," but a parable was given, when our Lord gave a parable, Scripture is pretty clear it calls it a parable whereas here our Lord is just simply stating a truth and so when I read it, if the Bible says, "There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day," I can only say that there was a certain rich man and the word "was" means this rich man had died, and likely somebody there in Israel that everybody knew about. Just like in our day there are things that take place, there are

events that occur but these are not random events; these are taking place according to God's determining.

Today everybody is remembering 15 years ago on 9/11, but I have yet to hear anybody say God did it. Can you imagine on national tv if there was someone brave enough to stand up and say, "This is God's work"? I've heard some say, "God did it because he's judging America," and they approach it from that standpoint, but there is not one event that takes place but what God does, but until we by his enlightening and teaching come to see that, we're just rebels by nature. There is not a death that occurs but what God did it. He gives life, he gives death. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Job was brought to say that, "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

The reason people don't want to confess that is because they will not have such a God. That's the bottom line. In fact, now with internet, you can go out and read people's comments even about Scripture passages. People like to jabber, they like to give their view, and I came across one, I was just interested to see what some would say about this, being a parable versus not being a parable and the number 1 thing that I kept seeing is, "What kind of God would torture somebody like this? And have it in such a way as that these in hell can see those on the other side and just that alone would be torture. What kind of God would do that?" And people jumped in, "Amen! That's not God." Well, it's not their God.

You see, this is the problem today is that people are being told a lie about who God is. The number 1 thing that people are being told even as we stand here or sit here, whatever the case may be, while others are in their places of worship is that God is love. That's what they're told over and over again and so when things occur, just like the death of this rich man or the death of this poor man, when things occur, they say, "Well, that wouldn't be God. That's just, it's too bad." Or, "As luck would have it." There is no part in this story about luck. It is our Lord Jesus Christ telling us the way it is.

And you have to understand a little bit about the culture here because when it says, "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day," likely a Pharisee, because in Christ's day, the Pharisees were the ones that lived sumptuously and fared sumptuously and clothed themselves in fine linen every day. In fact, the preaching of prosperity preaching is not new. Their view was that if you are a child of God and truly blessed, then you will be rich. That's how they judged who was blessed and who wasn't so in their eye, when it says here in verse 20, "there was a certain beggar named Lazarus," in the men's minds of the day, they were already seeing Lazarus as a condemned sinner.

Not only a beggar but "full of sores," verse 20, "was laid at his gate," at the gate of the rich man. Why were beggars laid at the gate? Well, it's because these rich men and they lived off the backs of the people, they were the religious leaders, they gathered money and tithes and other things from the people and then they would give back in what they called alms. That's why our Lord said there in Matthew not to do your alms before men, do your righteousnesses, supposed, to be seen of men. So everything in this is about a

certain rich man that would have been one of these Pharisees that died, but this certain beggar lay at his gate simply to be able to eat, have provision, that the rich man would have given thinking that somehow his deeds would have recommended him to God. How many people alive today are still of that mindset? "I could just pay for it. Just give this to this person. I'm blessed." People like to say that today. "I'm blessed," and they feel that because of that, they must be God's children.

Here it says, "And desiring to be fed with even the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table." That shows that even though this rich man would have been one who considered himself to be the Lord's, yet he wasn't very generous. Rich people aren't. They hold with a tight fist and especially religious rich people can be some of the meanest in the world. They act like they're giving so much and yet their whole goal is to take. I say that because if it were otherwise you'd read here in verse 21, "desiring to be fed with the loaves," which this rich man out of compassion would have come and given him and even brought him in to sit at his table.

You see, all of this our Lord condemned in his teaching against the Pharisees, "Woe unto you." He said, "You say that you love your neighbor but you hold your feasts for those that can pay you back." And they love to do that, but these beggars, this one here particularly full of sores, crumbs. Give him the crumbs. I'm thankful that our Lord Jesus Christ is not like this rich man described here. "He who was rich yet for our sakes became poor." And he does not just give of the crumbs from the table, he calls us to his table just like he did when he was on this earth and these described here by this rich man, poked fun at him, mocked him. He was called the friend of sinners because he sat at meat with them and drew them to him.

I'm thankful that he's such a Savior, a Lord, aren't you? Because here the question is asked: in the end would you rather be the rich man or would you rather be the beggar? I know from a standpoint physically and materially, anyone of us sitting here has far more than what we deserve. I've never been physically in this particular state to where I have the dogs come and lick my sores. That is something I've never experienced. I've met people where that's the case, shaken their hands, seen their poverty, but it's just been a visit and then I'm away. But do you know what? When the Lord teaches you who you are, you realize of a certainty that that describes me spiritually. I'm nothing but a beggar before God. I have nothing.

And you remember that the lady from Canaan that the Lord drew to himself when he said, "It's not good to take the children's bread and to give it unto dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, but even the little dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table. But some crumbs that would fall from the master's table, therein I may be satisfied." You see, we get far too heady, cocky, about our state thinking somehow we deserve more when we don't. So I trust, I pray that in this narrative here that we can identify, be identified by God's grace with Lazarus and not so much with the rich man.

Now, in answer to the critics that say, "What kind of God would torture creatures this way?" You stop and think about what our sin deserves. People takes this lightly but when

the Scriptures say that, "He spared not his Son, but delivered him up for us all," that is, those for whom he paid the debt, stop and think what must have then been my sin that caused the death of the Son of God? Where are those today that even have a beginning, an inkling of understanding that because if by God's grace we do, our mouth will be stopped. Even in our thought and mind and thinking that God owes me at least salvation, on what ground? On what basis? And to think that if Christ has not paid our debt, the only alternative – you see, when I talk about a great gulf fixed, there's a division here. The only alternative to Christ not paying the sinner's debt is eternal condemnation. That's just how holy God is.

I know there are people that look at this and they think, "Wow, God must really be holy then if that means that this is forever?" Again, this is not a story. This is our Lord declaring a reality and a truth and some might say, "Well, how does he know where the rich man is? How does he know where Lazarus is?" Well, he thanked the Father that the Father had delivered into his hand all flesh to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. He knows because he's the Judge, whether these men saw it or not.

This is a judgment that God renders through his Son. In fact, our Lord said that and for that they would have killed him had they been given that opportunity at that time when he said, "The Father judges no man." So if people are looking for a nice soft grandfather father in this matter of judgment, sitting in a rocking chair like a grandfather with children messing up around him and a grandfather just kind of, "Okay, children." That's not the God that will be met. The Father judges no man but what did Christ say? "He has given all judgment into the hand of his Son. You will not get to the Father except through the Son. And to whom the Son," Christ said there in Matthew 11, "is pleased to reveal it." That's it.

So any thought of man's choice, man's doing, man's works, man's will, you'll find none of that here and that can only bring condemnation. What kind of God would so condemn creatures? God. That's it. God. The Chief Magistrate. Either our sin has been put away in the Lord Jesus Christ or we will suffer eternally the separation from God and any blessing of mercy and grace. That's it. That's it.

Now, there are people, again, they don't like that. They try to work around it and that's why some say, "Oh, this is just a parable. You can't...." No, this is our Lord declaring these words. Who is speaking here when he says, "There was a certain rich man"? That's our Lord. He is declaring what is and he knows those that are his and he knows those that are not. This is not just a scare tactic. This is the word so may God grant us ears to hear.

Now, I've noted here and there is far more than this that I could ever cover in the time allotted, but there are four ways in which this great gulf is fixed. The first is a great gulf that is fixed in God's sovereign will, that is, rich and poor and life and death because we have both of those elements here. We've got a rich man and we've got a poor man and we've got these declared in life and we have them declared in death. But who determines these things? Well, you wouldn't have to read far in Scripture to understand that it's God that determines these things and I know some people, they like the soft touch.

I can't think of anybody that was the Lord's that was perhaps more humble and by God's grace than Hannah in the Old Testament, by her just bowing before the Lord and crying unto him in her state of not being able to bear a child, the Lord giving her a child but look at 1 Samuel 2. I could read you Romans 9 and some people say, "Well, that was Paul." It's all God's word but if it helps to hear it from a gentle soul, 1 Samuel 2, and I would say let this be a comfort to any of us that are parents with regard to our own children and their state before the Lord. He doesn't have to save them. The same thing applies. We show them kindness, we love them and care for them, but there is a great gulf fixed if you're in a family where the Lord has taught you but your children are yet in darkness. There is a great gulf fixed and I'm telling you, you're not going to change them. If the Lord is pleased, he'll do it in his time but all your reasoning and debating and nudging and suggesting and moving is not going to change them, and the sooner we bow, the more we enjoy the comfort and peace that comes from knowing that.

Here's one who bows, Hannah. Look in 1 Samuel 2. There is a great gulf fixed in God's sovereign will, whether it's rich or poor, whether it's life or death. "Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in," whose salvation? "Thy salvation. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee." This is where it all begins, it's understanding God as holy. It makes no sense on the outside of the ark like one person said that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. That's what's being preached. Can you imagine the mockery? That's not the God of Scripture.

"Neither is there any rock like our God." Now, when you see the word "rock," you're talking about something immovable. We're talking about a great gulf fixed in God's sovereign will, immovable.

"Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth." That's when men begin to try to change what is. That's arrogancy. That's speaking foolishly.

"For the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." And I would say when it says he is a God of knowledge, he knows all things because he has determined all things. That's why he knows all things and by him actions are weighed. Men's ways are not for them to determine, they're of the Lord.

"The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble." There again, prosperity, fertility, advancement, promotion comes from the Lord.

I don't know, this is not a misprint, verse 6, "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up."

So we're looking at this passage here concerning a certain rich man, he lived exactly as God purposed that he should live, faring sumptuously, and he can't complain because he kind of liked that stuff. You see, people today think, "Well, in the end and I know I would have wanted a different, I would have wanted to be the beggar." Don't believe them. You got exactly what you wanted. You lived and you died as you lived. No man can blame God and say, "Why did you make me thus?" You don't hear the clay saying to the potter. He was happy to have everything while he was alive. Happy, but in the end the condemnation.

But that's the Lord. Notice verse 7, "The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich." So when it says, "a certain rich man and a certain poor man," who made them that way? God did.

"He bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill." That's the end of the story for Lazarus. This great gulf fixed was fixed according to God's sovereign will and in the end he was lifted up as a beggar from the dunghill, "and set them among princes, and to make them inherit," what? "The throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints." That's what the Lord was doing even when Lazarus as a beggar, "keepeth him." Even though he was cast off in society as far as men are concerned and considered to be condemned, yet it was the Lord keeping him all along. "And the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail."

So that's one lesson that we learn here from this portion of Scripture, this great gulf fixed is fixed in God's sovereign will. But secondly, I understand from this that there is a great gulf fixed in God's sovereign election. We talk about salvation, it is from eternity, and this matter has been settled already in God's electing grace, who it is that he has purposed to save and who it is he will condemn. This wasn't by the rich man's determining and this is not by Lazarus' determining. In fact, Lazarus may well have died with great questions. I think there are a lot of times people think, "Well, if you're God's and his child, no more questions," but I will tell you that any that are the Lord's weigh this matter prayerfully, "Am I the Lord's or am I not?"

You stop and think about when the Lord brings trial your way or my way, let's be honest in our heart we begin to wonder, "Is this a judgment or this is a correction?" I do know this, that for any for whom Christ has paid the debt and God embraces as chosen unto himself, any trial that he brings our way is not a punishment, it's a correction. It's to keep us from getting our roots too deep in this world like we otherwise would did he not uproot us. Thank God for uprooting. Thank God he doesn't leave us to ourselves. Thank God for the sores. Thank God for the dogs. And I would dare say if you don't have sores and you don't have dogs and if you don't have these afflictions that God brings upon his children, I would be worried because the Scriptures say, "Whom the Lord," what? "Loves he chastens." We don't willingly take our place as beggars. I'm the chief of sinners there. But do you know what? God is going to show me I'm a beggar and he's going to bring us to meet us at our very point of rebellion whatever it is and everyone of us has one. It may not be the same but I will tell you, thank God he doesn't leave you alone.

Lazarus would have been a man in the flesh just like anyone of us probably thinking sitting at that gate, "Man, if I could just for a day be the rich man. For a week not have to beg. Find somebody to heal these sores other than dogs coming and licking." But do you know what? Even without medicine, a dog's lick is a mercy. Do you realize there's something in dog's saliva that the Lord was using? He wasn't going to take care of Lazarus with the rich doctors but the dogs licking his sores were his healing. It was a mercy God sent but most people didn't see it that way.

Those are the little crumbs everyday that we snide at because it's not what we want. You see, our covetousness tells us, "Oh, I want something better," when the Lord all the while is being merciful and the greatest mercy of all is that we're on this side of eternity and he has not cast us into hell nor will he. It would be better to die this way in poverty than have any other false reliance, false assurance like this rich man who is described here. He was one of those that the Lord said, "Have we not, Lord, have we not done many mighty works in your name?" He would consider his giving of alms to Lazarus as having been his gateway to heaven. "At least I shared some of my riches." Only to hear the Lord say, "I never knew you. Depart from me you worker of iniquity."

So sovereign election. What made the difference between Lazarus and the rich man? It was not in them. If you look over in Romans 9, you knew I couldn't stay away from Romans 9. What made the difference between Jacob and Esau? Here's the great gulf fixed. That word "fixed" meaning "to turn resolutely in a certain direction." That means those that God has chosen and this is the comfort to those he's chosen, he never goes back on it. Well, what sin will God ever cast away one of his own? Not one. That's why Christ came and paid the debt. I can't tell you how often that's a comfort because I'm no better than the worst one out there, but God, but God.

Verse 13, "As it is written." You don't undo what is written. Not in God's word. Here it is fixed. It is fixed by God's election. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." In the story of the rich man, God hated him. You say, "Well, if he hated him, he certainly endured this man and caused that he fared sumptuously." Well, in that is where you see God's kindness because even though hated he still lived a sumptuous life. He provided everything he wanted and desired. That's why I say that those that are hated, they can't complain against God, he's doing exactly what they want.

But it also says there in verse 22, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath." Sometimes we think that enduring means ?? No, it's God directing and giving this man what he desired, what he wanted and yet in the end to "make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy," that would be Lazarus, "which he had afore prepared unto glory."

Jacob have I loved. Did Jacob deserve it? No, but God determined it. Esau have I hated. Did Esau deserve it? Yup and God determined it. A great gulf fixed. That's what we see here.

Well, thirdly, we see a great gulf fixed in God's redeeming grace because it's not just a matter of God determining and choosing but there's a payment to be made and this is why our Lord is giving this example here in Luke 16. If any wonder what his purpose and will was in coming into this world, we see it here, it was to save the Lazaruses and not the rich men. Christ himself said that, he did not come for the righteous because that's what this rich man thought of himself as, a righteous man. He did not come to call the righteous but what? Sinners to repentance. That's the Lazaruses.

So why do we see here in this but the Lord is revealing one, it doesn't mention heaven, you notice, it says "Abraham's bosom." So here, again, is where people kind of take this like dogs and chew on it a little bit and keep whatever they like and get rid of the rest. But the reason our Lord is describing this the way he is in verse 22, "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried," is because up until our Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross and paid the debt, you go back and look at the Old Testament, the word translated "hell" many times or "grave" was "Sheol," and it was simply the place where all the dead went. When you get into the New Testament, specifically after the cross is where you begin to see this distinction between heaven and hell. In fact, when Christ began his ministry, he said, "Now is the kingdom of heaven at hand." You can go back and look in the Old Testament as far as the word "heaven" is concerned, it's not used in the way it is in the New Testament. The word that's used is "Sheol." It was a place of the dead and as our Lord was describing it here before the cross, this is the part that I want you to see very simply: before the cross, this would have been the way that those that had died would have existed in this place of the dead. In fact, many times in the Old Testament, you'll read when it describes death, that they were gathered unto their people.

So you say, "Why Abraham's bosom?" Because at this point Abraham, remember Paul described him as the father of all them that believe, he was a type, he was a picture of those that the Lord had chosen, called out and for whom Christ would come and pay the debt. But I'll tell you at this point, even Abraham was awaiting just like on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Eli and Moses appeared on the mount with our Lord, it says they were discussing what? The death that Christ should accomplish. I believe this is where many miss the point here. It's not Christ conniving some story, he's telling it the way it is at this particular time, that there is Abraham, his bosom and those like Abraham that awaited. Just like Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth and shall stand." He looked for this day as in any of the Old Testament.

So our Lord is describing these are represented in Abraham and all the rest, the great gulf fixed, would be those for whom Christ would not pay the debt and are still in this state of suffering. As soon as they die, there is nothing but suffering awaiting them and even when there is a resurrection at the last and Scriptures say that they will be raised to be judged and cast again forever into hell.

So that's why we see this gulf fixed. There were those that like Abraham, just like when I said Jacob have I loved, like Jacob, these are all Old Testament examples, but they awaited. Scripture says, our Lord said that, "Abraham saw my day and rejoiced." They

were not saved in any other way. They awaited the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ to carry them then into glory.

If you look with me over here in 2 Peter, a couple of these Scriptures just popping in my mind. I trust the Lord has put them there. Let me just find this real quickly here. Actually, 1 Peter 1. As I was preparing this message, the Lord brought this verse to mind and I looked at it and this is why I love to go back to Scripture because there is never ever a time you can say, "Well, I got it!"

But look at this in verse 11. These, it describes the prophets of the Old Testament, verse 10, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." In other words, it's not that they didn't enjoy that grace but the fulfilling of the grace, the grace of God that bringeth salvation is described. That's Christ.

It says, "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ," that's the part I've always seen. I thought, "Okay, yup, it's about Christ and him crucified," but look what's written after it, "and the glory that should follow." What glory followed the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? It was not only that he was raised from the dead and ascended on high, but all those that the Father gave him in him were also at that time glorified. But the glory came after the suffering.

So even in what we're reading here in Luke 16, this is not just some fantastical story, this is Abraham whose hope was in this one who was yet to die and awaiting as a soul. Souls don't die, but awaiting as a soul when that would be fulfilled and he, when Christ raised, he and all those that the Father had given Christ should be raised with him and ascend on high.

You say, "How do you know that's so?" I know time is getting away but look in Ephesians 2. How many people read this in terms, the quickening in terms of regeneration? Look in verse 5, Ephesians 2:5, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us," do you see that word, "together with Christ"? If that's regeneration, we aren't all quickened together but if it has to do with the resurrection of Christ and those in him being quickened with him, then it makes sense, and that's exactly what verse 6 says, it says, "by grace are you saved." By grace manifested in the flesh in the person of Christ, you are saved. You see, even there I'm not saved when I believe, I was saved when he rose from the grave, when this work was accomplished.

And it says, "hath raised us up," you can't separate this word, "together," and it says, "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Abraham when this was written, he wasn't sitting in heavenly places. That's why he could see the rich man and the rich man could see him but there was a great gulf fixed. Nothing was going to change it. Maybe in the rich man's mind he was thinking, "Okay, it's still not final. Judgment is still not... Maybe there is something that can be done. I can go from here." No. A great gulf fixed.

In fact, over in Ephesians 4 when it says there in verse 7, "unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ," that doesn't mean it's separate from Christ, the gift of Christ is that grace.

"Wherefore he saith," notice, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive." The sense there is of one entering in and taking out that which was captive and taking them captive with him and where are we going? On high. It fits exactly what Paul says there in Ephesians 2. So at what point were those of the Old Testament brought into glory? When Christ himself was brought into glory. And do you know what? At what point are any of us brought into glory, even me on this side of the cross? Exactly when he entered glory because it says there we are seated with him. You say, "Well, I'm not there yet." I am. I'd better be. It's just biding time, marking time until I am ushered into his presence.

That's the benefit, that's the grace in which this great gulf is fixed, it's in redeeming grace. Those in hell are in hell because God has purposed it. For those who now are in glory have been taken with Abraham and all these and brought into glory. It's because of this redeeming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews 9, notice what it says here in verse 15, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament." There was something new that was accomplished in that New Testament but it was also for those under the old covenant because it says, "that by means of death," notice, "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament." Where were Abraham's sins put away? Where were Jacob's? Where were Isaac's? Where was Ruth's? In the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Boaz was just but a type. And it says, "they which are called," the called, "might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." When could they receive the promise? When Christ rose from the grave.

Well, one other thing and I've got to wrap it up here. Coming back to Luke 16 but there is a great gulf fixed finally in how God saves and condemns. You know, verse 27 to 31, the rich man is attempting to do like so many do, negotiate. Men, a result they don't like, they start trying to negotiate. You don't negotiate with God. God will not bend his will and his way and what's interesting when he says, "I have five brothers. Send back someone to my father's house for I have five brothers that he may testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment." Abraham said unto him, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them." If you want any other proof other than what I've just declared to you, there is none. And notice: they have Moses and the prophets. That's the Old Testament. They were not saying anything different than what we're reading here in the New Testament. It was and has always only been one way with God and that is through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood and his righteousness.

And you can see the negotiating. "Nay, father," do you see there? Even in hell there's no repentance. There is always going to be an argumentative spirit. Always a reason to find fault with the way it is. That's why the Scriptures say there is going to be weeping and

wailing and gnashing of teeth. Gnashing of teeth doesn't mean remorse, it's anger. You gnash your teeth when you're angry. Forever they'll be angry with this, that great gulf is fixed.

"And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Guess what? One did rise from the dead, it was Christ, and yet when he did, what did they do? They tried to come up with a story and said, "Well, the disciples..." They will not have God to be God. They will not have his Son to be his Son. But I'll tell you who will, I'll tell you one that wasn't complaining, it was Abraham. We know that he wasn't rejoicing for anything in himself. He wasn't justified for any works of his own but for this one who came and paid his debt and that's where we rejoice, in him.

We're going to have to leave it there for now but may the Lord be pleased to continue to teach our souls in his word.