

The Great Change

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon explores the stark contrasts between the lives and afterlives of the rich man and Lazarus, urging listeners to seek God and live with an eternal perspective.

Scripture: Luke 16:19

Topics: "Change"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of turning to God before it is too late. He tells the story of a rich man who ignored God while he was on earth, but in hell, he cried out for help. The preacher warns that sudden changes can occur in life, and it is crucial to be prepared spiritually. He describes the torment of hell and urges listeners to repent and seek salvation through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Before we read the Lord's Word, shall we pray? We ask you, Lord, to be with us in this service and to speak to us through your Word. May your Word be like fire and our hearts like dry wood. That your fire would burn in our hearts.

And your Word, which is sharp, which can separate between the soul and the spirit, may it also work in our hearts and lives. Amen. I would like to read a passage which is extremely well known in the world about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke chapter 16.

From verse 19. There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores.

And longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water. And cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.

Abraham replied, my son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things. While Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And you will be comforted here and you will be saved.

And besides all this, between us and you, a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us. Now I ask you, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to my father's house. For I have five brothers, let him warn them so that they will not also come to this place of torment.

Abraham replied, they have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them. Now I ask you, Father Abraham, if someone from the dead goes to them, will they repent? No, Father Abraham, he said, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent. He said to them, if they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced, even if someone rises from the dead.

We will end reading there. I would like to speak about the changing of things. A great change.

I would like to speak about the changing of things. Yes, we read about Diabetes the rich man who lived in the palace of Luxury. And Lazarus who lived in poverty and in hardship.

But we will see how they are changed. Now it speaks here about the rich man. In fact, the Bible does not mention his name.

It is just in Latin that he is called Diabetes. And so this rich man arrived in hell and lifted up his eyes in torment. Now he never read or heard at all that in his lifetime he ever raised his eyes and looked up.

In Psalm 121 it says that I lift up my eyes to the hills from whence my help comes. We do not receive help because we do not look up. We constantly look down to this earth and the things of this world.

Just like chickens who always look down and that when they scratch and look for things they are only going backwards. It was the rich man's mistake that he never looked up. The day he looked up it dawned on him.

He saw a man who was just busy with the things of this world. He looks at other people, at his parents, the money that he earns and things like that. Just busy with earthly things.

But the day that he looks up it will dawn on him. Just yesterday I heard of a man overseas who cried out and said may the Lord forgive me. May he forgive me for I hardened my heart and my father hardened his heart.

But even if he goes against me I now have to turn my eyes to the Lord. He lifted up his eyes. Have we here, we who are here, ever looked up and raised our eyes while we were just looking at your wife, husband, children? In fact, Satan didn't have to deceive him because he had all that he needed.

Lacking nothing of this world. We have a low mood. During the day wearing purple or red clothes.

At night wearing linen. Just busy with clothes all the time. Just like a prostitute.

Who is just busy with clothes, wearing maybe a two piece or should we say one and a half piece. And looking at the men going by and the cars and busy with those things. He lived in luxury.

He had everything that he could wish for. Plenty of food and he enjoyed himself. He never had the need to look up.

To have a lot of money, to be wealthy is not evil, it's not sinful. To be blessed is not sinful. But the sin is when you do not look up, when you do not look to God.

Even though the Bible says that rich people will be faced with many temptations. And on the other hand as well, to be poor is not a sin. But it will be sinful to you if you do not raise your eyes up and that you are not with God.

And to experience illness doesn't mean that you are living in sin. Here was Lazarus covered with sores from the top of his head to the sores of his feet. Just like Job as well, who was also very ill and full of boils.

And even his friends said, look you must have sinned against God. That's why it's like this. And God said, unless you go to him and he prays for you, I won't forgive you.

And I don't know these dogs that came to Lazarus to look his sores, where they came from. Whether they belonged to the rich man, or whether they were just walking all over. Because sometimes you get dogs to guard your home, and in the meantime they go and visit.

Dogs after all take after young people. Young people that you think they're at home, and in the meantime the boys have gone out to look for the girls. And even the girls leave their home to go and look for the boys.

That's what mongrels do. And after some time, there was a time when the tables were turned. And it didn't take a long time, not even five minutes.

But when the bigot died, right there, the angels came and carried him to Abram's bosom. You see, a person who dies, dies immediately. Now you do get people that at the funeral, they'll speak to the deceased and they'll say, Now go well on your journey.

And they'll even have a little bit of a candle there, so that his way might be lit up. Now Joe Slovo, a communist leader here in South Africa. Now, proper communists are atheists.

But at his grave, they put a candle there, so that it might light up the way for him. And I spoke to a minister who came to visit here about this, and he said, Well, Joe Slovo is in heaven. I said, Really? How is that possible, since he was an atheist? And they even placed a little bit of a candle there to light up the way for him.

And the minister said, Oh, he must have got a wonderful surprise when he entered into heaven. After all the wonderful things he did here on earth, by building all these two-room houses. No, that won't mean your salvation.

Building two-room houses, or one room, or even twelve-room houses. You'll only enter heaven through Jesus Christ. Lazarus didn't also enter heaven because of his poverty.

He entered heaven because he served Jesus. You might say, Well, we are Lazaruses. We are so poor, so we are like him, and therefore we'll go to heaven.

Did Lazarus steal? Did he commit adultery? Did he lie? Did he slander? For the Bible says, A liar, or a thief, or a person who is defiled will not enter heaven. Now concerning the rich man, we don't read that he lived in immorality or sin in any particular way. His sin was that he pushed God to the side.

He didn't look up. Lazarus lived in need and poverty, but his eyes were upon God. We don't read that he complained against God because of his poverty and his soul.

We don't even know whether he was married, whether he had a family, children, but what we know is that he came and he was laid at the gate of the rich man. It has the meaning that he was, so to say, thrown away there, just left there, so that he would get some crumbs. Until he died.

And the rich man continued living. After some time, he too died. Let's bear this in mind, no matter whom you are and what you might be, but that day is coming when you're going to die.

Young or old, wealthy or poor, but that day is coming when you are going to die and it will be good for you that when you leave this place, that you bear that in mind. Lazarus. Last night they phoned me and they said here towards Jameson's Drift, a home was attacked and the whole family was wiped out.

Killed brutally and only one boy of 13 years survived. He was also severely beaten and wounded, but he survived and the police asked could he please come here for just two or three days because his whole family has been wiped out. I said that's fine, you can bring him and just bring him to the reception and we'll arrange for him to be looked after.

What must that child have gone through and what is he going through? Having lost his father and mother and his whole family, what trauma? And that's what death is like. It comes so suddenly. It can come like lightning in a person's life.

And then another person might think he's dying and then he recovers. And then death came and together with death, a turning of the tables, a great change. The rich man, while he was on earth, never ever thought of praying.

He lived in luxury. He had all that he needed. And in the twinkling of an eye, everything had changed.

He was in hell, in torment. And there he cried out. Just imagine the pain and the torment in hell.

All of you know what fire is like and how it burns and if you don't, just do an experiment. Use a candle and put your finger in that candle. If you want you can even come to me and I'll cool it afterwards with water.

With his whole body in the flames of hell, burning as it were like a worm in the fire. You cannot describe it. Jesus said if your right hand causes you to stumble, rather chop it off.

It would be better for you to enter heaven with one hand than to go into hell with both your hands. Likewise your foot. So it would be better for you to only have one foot and where you need.

And having a wooden peg for the other foot or leg, that's much better than going to hell with both your feet. And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out. Rather go through life with only one eye than going to hell with both.

If your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out. Rather go through life with only one eye than going to hell with both. Some are born eunuchs, the Bible says, and some made themselves to be like that.

And Jesus said it's better for you, you men, you hear that, you young men that are troubled by lust, rather that you're a eunuch and go to heaven. If your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out. Rather go through life with only one eye than going to hell with both.

When Jesus said that, He wasn't making a joke. He wasn't just trying to be funny. He meant that you've got a brain to think.

Just think about what it'll be like in hell. When you burn there and you're in torment, there's no holiday, there's no reprieve, you can't take a break from that. Until today, the rich man is burning in the flames of hell.

Whether he hears me, I don't know. Come to the Lord Jesus, come and confess that sin, get rid of it, turn away from it, that the Lord Jesus might help you and save you. The rich man had no time for prayer or for going to church while he was on earth, but the first thing he did in hell was he lifted up his eyes and he cried out, Are you only going to cry out once you get into hell or will you cry out before the time? You see what it's like when things change all of a sudden.

There's a total change. These days, a white man came and visited me and he spoke to me, he said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He came with his wife.

He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life.

He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life.

He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life.

He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life.

He said, Uncle Elo, when I came into your home, a 180 degree turn came about in my life. Tybees, the rich man, never knew how to pray on earth, but that was the first thing he learned when he got to hell. He lifted up his eyes and he cried out with a prayer that even reached heaven and the rich man now became a beggar and Lazarus became wealthy.

If you lift up your eyes and you look towards heaven, it was born in your life. You don't have a life of prayer in hell, you'll pray, but it will be in vain. Today you're not a beggar, you're living a normal life, but in hell you'll be the greatest beggar.

Right there and then he was a missionary, a flame, a real missionary. You just need to get to hell, then you'll become that what you are told today and you are not. He became a fiery and earnest missionary, crying for his five brothers.

They're not saved. Send Lazarus to them that they'll repent. You'll become, if you don't want to become a missionary here, well for all eternity you'll be missionary in hell.

But his missionary services don't avail anything. It's for nothing. Are you a missionary? Do you speak to people about their souls and their salvation? Well, if you don't want to be one here, you'll become one in hell, but it won't mean anything.

It won't avail anything. Even if you might cry out like a madman, it'll be said no. He said, please send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue.

And also asked that he should go to his brothers. And then he was told, but they've got Moses and the prophets. He said, no, they will hear if somebody is raised from the dead.

And he was told no, they weren't, because even Jesus was raised from the dead and they didn't believe. There are people that have been raised from the dead, but people don't repent. And he said, send Lazarus to my father's house that he might warn them.

But they said, he was told they won't listen. He said, besides that, there is a great gulf fixed between us and you. This gulf between those on that side and that starts right here.

Right here on earth already. It's like that. Where you, there is division, there is division between you and those who are believers, where you even slander them.

You take their names on your lips and you smear them. You see, you're not going to heaven. You're going to hell.

There's a big gulf between those that are God's children and those that are not. The gulf that is when you come to the cross and the cross is at work, it's a bridge and you cross and there are not two crows on the other side, there's only one. And there you say, our father, not our and your father.

And there you say, our father, not our and your father. And there you say, our father, not our and your father. It makes you think, doesn't it? If there's something between you and your brother, that something will be a gulf between you and heaven on the other side.

You can't stay in the same place. You can't even live here together. You can't even forgive each other.

You've got grudges and then you want to go to heaven. You living in a fool's paradise. You deceiving yourself.

We as coaches. Abraham understood that the father of believers here on earth, he dwelt in tents. He was looking forward to that heavenly city, not wanting to build an earthly city or an earthly home.

And there in heaven, Lazarus was at his bosom. You see how everything changed around completely. You see how things change.

You're on earth. You're not interested in heaven, but there you want to be in heaven. Yeah.

You're not interested in telling other people about Jesus, but they're in hell. You'll become a missionary. You're on earth.

You don't look up. You look down. I told you about a particular woman who had a son who wasn't a good son.

He was a scabengo. Every day he would come and ask his mother for 5 cents. In those days, it was still cheap to go and buy beer.

And the mother was soft hearted, feeling so sorry for her poor son. So she would go to her purse, get out a bit of money, give it to her son, and he would use it to go and buy beer. I'm not telling you a fable of somebody from overseas.

It was here. It happened yet not 20. When the boy was dying.

And then he said to his mother when he was dying, he said, please let me just whisper something in your ear. And as she brought her ear closer to his mouth, he bit her ear, almost tearing it off. She said, what are you doing? She cried out in shock and said, what are you doing? He said, well, it's because of you that I'm going to hell.

You see, you mothers and grandmothers, you've got such soft hearts. It's with your money that the boys go, your grandchildren, they go and they buy drugs and they go and spend it in a wrong way, in a sinful way. And they'll bite off your ears in hell one day.

Now, the time has run out. My watch tells me it's going towards half past one. Half past twelve.

And let's just remember the points. The rich man lifted up his eyes in hell. And then he cried, he prayed and his prayer reached heaven.

The tables were turned. The rich man became a beggar and the beggar became a wealthy person. And the rich man became a missionary in hell.

Here on earth he wasn't interested. You might not be interested here. You say, well, I haven't got a calling.

Well, just go to hell then. There you'll get a calling. He was no longer concerned with his businesses, with his fields, with the people working for him, with his financial empire.

No, he was concerned that others that didn't know God should not go to hell where he was in torment. And realize that there is a great gulf fixed in heaven between heaven and hell between God's children and those who are children of the devil. And that gulf And that gulf is there right now already where if you've got a grudge against your brother, go immediately and make that right.

Be reconciled to him now before it's too late. I hope you understand that. Blessed the one who hears and then goes and does it.

Blessed the one who hears and then goes and does it. May you live as you ought to in this new year and that you will wake up. If you don't wake up here, you'll wake up in hell, but then it'll be too late.

Shall we pray? I ask of you, Lord, that these truths which you have spoken will penetrate into each one's heart. And the one who has not yet got converted, that they will repent. The one who has not yet become a missionary, that he might become so today.

Work, Lord, in a wonderful and an amazing way in each one's life. Amen.

Audio: http://archive.org/download/SERMONINDEX_SID18694/SID18694.mp3
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/erlo-stegen/the-great-change/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net