

Luke 16:25-28. the Rich Man's Petition for His Brethren.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The rich man's petition for his brethren was refused, but we can pray for our unconverted relatives to be converted and trust that God hears our prayers and has mercy on others for our sake.

Scripture: Matthew 7:13, Luke 13:28, Luke 16:19, Romans 8:38, 2 Corinthians 5:10

Topics: "Eternal Judgment", "Heaven And Hell"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the rich man and Lazarus, highlighting the consequences of choices made on earth and the eternal separation between heaven and hell. The rich man's requests in hell were denied, emphasizing the finality of salvation and damnation. The sermon underscores the importance of choosing heaven over passing earthly pleasures and the inability for any comfort to cross the impassable gulf between heaven and hell. It also encourages prayers for the conversion of loved ones while reflecting on the sorrow of potential separation in the afterlife.

Transcript

If prayers were heard in hell, how many would be offered up! But the abode of despair is not the place for prayer. All the rich man's requests were refused. The first was a very small petition. It was not a petition for release. Lost spirits know that release is impossible. The gates have closed upon them forever. The Redeemer's blood cannot be sprinkled upon their conscience, the Holy Spirit cannot be shed abroad in their hearts; therefore salvation cannot be obtained.

But the rich man hoped that the slightest possible relief might be granted. He did not ask that Lazarus might bring him a large glass, nor even a drop of water--he did not ask that he might dip his hand or his finger in water--but he asked that he might dip the tip of his finger in water, and apply it to his burning tongue. Yet the request was refused.

Abraham reminded the tormented spirit that on earth he had received good things, and Lazarus evil things. By the manner in which Abraham reasoned, it is evident that the rich man had desired, when on earth, no better portion than he now received--and that Lazarus had been content with the bitter portion allotted to him. It was, therefore, just that each should now abide by his own choice. Lazarus must not feel even for a moment the scorching flames of hell, nor must the rich man taste one drop of the cooling streams of heaven.

God now gives us our choice. Do we prefer heaven, with any amount of grievous sufferings, to earth, with any amount of passing delights? Which would we rather encounter--the trials of the saints, or the temptations of the world?

We perceive that if there had been no impassable gulf between heaven and hell, yet that Lazarus would not have been permitted to soothe the sufferings of the lost. But there is such a gulf. It fills heaven with delight, and hell with despair. The inhabitants of each world know that there can be no change of state. Hell knows that no celestial comforter will ever enter her gates, and Heaven that no malicious enemy will ever break through hers.

But though the rich man found there was no path from heaven to hell, he knew there was a path from heaven to earth. He requested that Lazarus might be sent to warn his five brethren of the danger of their condition. It seems that he had left no children upon earth. Perhaps he had died in his youth. We cannot tell what his motives were for desiring that his brethren should not partake his misery. Can natural affection exist in hell? or was the rich man afraid lest the reproaches of brothers, whom he had corrupted by his example, should add to his own torment? Let us be reminded by his prayer of the privileges we now enjoy. Have we any unconverted relatives? We may pray for them, not to Abraham, but--to God. We will not pray that a departed spirit may be sent to warn them, but we will entreat that God's Holy Spirit may convince and convert them.

The saints can witness that God does hear their prayers, and has mercy on others for their sake. It makes a Christian's heart sad to think of those who have shared with him a mother's care, not sharing with him a Savior's glory. It would add to the joy of a believer, even in heaven, to see every one of his kindred sitting around their heavenly Father's table.

If pious brothers feel solicitude for their brothers' salvation, what must parents feel for the souls of their beloved children? They bear them incessantly on their hearts before God, and with tears implore the Lord to preserve them from sinking into the place of torment. They can hardly imagine that it would be possible that they themselves should be happy in heaven, if any one of their dear children were missing. Yet some who have brought down their parents' gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, have repented afterwards. Then they have lamented (O how bitterly!) that they did not gladden their parents while they were yet alive. It is their comfort to think that their parents will see them enter into glory. One of these penitents was heard to say, "How much surprised my father will be to see me enter heaven!"

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