

A Sermon From Hell

by Scott Ardavanis

Scott Ardavanis' sermon explores the challenging doctrine of hell, its biblical foundations, and the urgent call for evangelism in light of eternal consequences.

Duration: 41:22

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 8:36, Luke 16:15, John 3:16, Romans 10:14

Topics: "Hell"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of the rich man and Lazarus from Luke 16:19-31. He believes that this account is not a parable but an actual description of the afterlife. The preacher emphasizes the importance of sharing the gospel and the hope found in Jesus Christ. He highlights the contrast between the rich man, who is detestable in the sight of God, and Lazarus, a poor man who finds favor with God. The sermon encourages listeners to be change agents in spreading the message of salvation.

Transcript

I want to address a very, very difficult doctrine with you this morning. It may be one of the most difficult doctrines in all of the scripture. I would like to talk to you about the doctrine of hell this morning.

I just finished my doctorate degree and I wrote on the character of God and one of the attributes in my dissertation was related to the justice of God and the wrath of God as it relates to his punishment of the lost. You know, I thought about it. You can misunderstand some of the doctrines and maybe there's not consequences to it.

You can maybe see the gift of tongues. Some brothers and sisters might in a different way. Some people might hold to a different view of the timing of the rapture and you're not going to be harmed.

But the truth that we talk about this morning obviously has eternal consequences attached to it. I mean, I would just ask you as we begin this morning, is any idea more unpopular today than the doctrine of hell? In fact, the belief in a literal hell seems to have fallen on hard times. A poll taken in the United States in 78 revealed that more than 70% of those who were interviewed believed in a literal hell.

However, just 11 years after that poll, Newsweek magazine survey revealed, produced a figure of just 58% of the people who believe in that doctrine. Then they conducted a poll in Australia in 88 and it

indicated that only 39% believed in hell and then in 89, there was a Gallup poll taken in Britain and it revealed that no more than 24% of those questioned believed in hell. I mean, it is a lost doctrine, at least in this 21st century.

I think the philosophy is expressed best by John Lennon, who wrote years back, he said, imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try, no hell below us, above us, only sky. Lyrics to one of his songs. Sadly, however, whatever one may imagine, the pervasive condition of unbelief does not discard the biblical doctrine of God's justice and judgment of the lost.

I think you would agree with me this morning that we really live in a world of trivialization despite the fact that people are perishing all around us. I mean, just consider this, that three people die every second, 180 people around the globe will die in the next minute and this next course of time while we're up here, 11,000 people every hour will perish. If you add up the figures over the course of one day, just today, 260,000 people will die and if you added that reality, at least the statistics over the course of one year, 95 million people will stand before God in this next year and what's frightening about this and maybe this has happened to you, I have had more than one person tell me that after I have shared the gospel with them and the horrible plight of eternal punishment for rejecting Christ, I've had more than one person look me in the eye and tell me that hell, quote, was not such a bad place and if their friends were there, they would like to go there and party together with them.

It's staggering, staggering what people think. I think expressed today by Homer Simpson, theologian, he wrote and said on his TV show, I'm not a bad guy, I work hard, I love my kids, so why should I spend half my Sunday hearing about how I'm going to hell, end of quotes. I mean, a culture that laughs away this vital doctrine is gonna find its worst nightmare, a living reality in the afterlife.

I mean, we have so trivialized this word that I think we've even stripped hell of its biblical meaning. In fact, I would ask you, what does the word even mean anymore today? John Blanchard states when 15 people were killed and 186 people were injured in a collision involving 75 vehicles in Tennessee, a fireman described the scene as, quote, three miles of hell. In other words, we've kind of repacked it.

In fact, during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, CNN reporter Bernard Shaw described the bombing of Baghdad saying this, quote, feels like we're in the center of hell. Not quite sure what that means anymore today. At a funeral service for multimillionaire Malcolm Forbes, his son Robert addressed his dead father with these words at the funeral, quote, it's been a hell of a party, thanks for the trip.

And what does that word mean anymore? However, I think you would agree that others, and I'm probably addressing preachers, have become so exaggerated in their efforts to describe hell's horror that they've completely gone beyond a description that we would ever find in the word of God. One preacher speaks of, quote, the wicked hanging by their tongues by hooks while the flaming fire torments them from beneath, end of quote. Another says, quote, the flames of fire gush from eyes, ears, and nostrils, and out of every pore, end of quote.

I mean, these kind of statements go beyond a sobered biblical approach, and I think it's more vivid imagination than what is revealed in the scriptures. But I don't think it's just the society that has neglected this aspect of God's justice. It is also the biblical scholars who are mixing a strange concoction contrary to the scripture itself.

In fact, when church historian Martin Marty was preparing a Harvard lecture on the subject of hell, he consulted indexes of several scholarly journals dating back a period of over 100 years all the way back to 1889, and he failed to find one single entry. And his conclusion was this, quote, hell disappeared and no one noticed. That's what a theologian said.

Then you have guys like a man by the name of Clark Pinnock who at one point was a confessing evangelical, but Pinnock said this about the doctrine of hell, and he writes on this profusely. He said, how can one imagine for a moment that the God who gave his son to die for sinners would install a torture chamber in the new creation in order to subject those who reject them to everlasting pain? He said, I consider the concept of hell as endless torment, an outrageous doctrine, a theological and moral enormity. How could Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness? Surely a God who can do such a thing, Pinnock said, is more like Satan than God.

Everlasting torment is an intolerable, from a moral point of view. It makes God, Pinnock said, into a bloodthirsty monster who maintains an everlasting ostrich for victims whom he does not even allow to die, end of quotes. And this is what some of the so-called theologians are saying about it.

John Wynnum, who's a British scholar, said this about hell. He said, I believe that endless torment is a hideous and unscriptural doctrine that has been a terrible burden on the mind of the church for many centuries and a blot on her presentation of the gospel. He said, I should indeed be happy if before I die, I could help in sweeping it away, end of quotes.

I mean, whatever you do about outreach week, I don't really care if that's true. I mean, why get in a van and drive up to Frisco if that's the case? In fact, why do anything if there's no hell? And of course, the most important issue of all is what do the scriptures say, right? You can quote these different people and look at the ramifications. In fact, I read a quote not long ago by Brian McLaren, the emergent church leader.

When they asked him what his thought on hell was, he basically said, I think if you want a description of hell, you can go to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and he said, I think that pretty much describes hell. I thought, what? I want you to open your Bibles this morning to Luke 16, and I want to examine not just a doctrine with you, that which we will do, that will we do, but I want to look at a passage with you on the account of the rich man and Lazarus. It is one of the most gripping and one of the most disturbing passages in all of the scripture.

Some call this account in Luke 16 a parable, and students, I might ask you even this morning, is it? Is it a parable? I find it interesting that Jesus did not call it a parable, nor does Luke call it a parable, and though the rich man is not named, the beggar is named, his name is Lazarus, and if it's a parable, it would be the only parable of which Jesus gave, in which a name is given. I don't think it's a parable. I think it's an account, and I think Jesus is giving us an account of what it's like in the afterlife, and maybe as I prayed this morning, let this be motivation for the outreach week as we are gripped with the reality of what Jesus Christ said on this most important doctrine.

Now, if you glance in your Bible at Luke 16, 15, here's the context set. Jesus is gonna give us this description, and all of it is an illustration of Luke 16, 15, when Jesus said to the leaders there, you are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your heart, for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. That last phrase there is key, that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

That which is highly esteemed, as we'll see, the rich man is gonna be detestable in the presence of God. You know, as we walk through this juxtaposition and contrast of this text, the passage really comes to life. Someone noted as we go through it in just a moment that you have a poor man on the outside of the house, and you have a rich man on the inside, and then comes death, and you have a poor man on the inside, and a rich man on the outside.

You have a poor man at least at the beginning with no food, and a rich man with all the food that he can possibly need, then you have a poor man at the great heavenly banquet, and you have a rich man with absolutely nothing. You have in this account a poor man at the beginning who desires everything, and you have a rich man who desires nothing, then you have a rich man who will never have his desires fulfilled, and a poor man who has all of his desires fulfilled. You have a poor man at the beginning who suffers, then you have a rich man who is satisfied, then you have a rich man who suffers, and a poor man who is satisfied.

You have a poor man who's tormented, and a rich man who's happy, then you have a poor man who's happy, and a rich man who's tormented. It's incredible the contrast. You have a poor man who's humiliated, and a rich man who's honored, then you have a rich man who's humiliated, and a poor man who's honored.

You have at the beginning a poor man who wants a crumb, and a rich man who feasts, then you have a poor man who's at a feast, and a rich man who wants a drop of water. You have a poor man who is a nobody, and a rich man who is well-known, and then you have a poor man who has a name, and a rich man who has none. I mean, the contrast we're going to see is incredible.

This account is described in very graphic and vivid terms. Now, if you're taking notes this morning, I just want to arrange our teaching around two points. I want to look first, pretty simple, the rich man and Lazarus in this life, and then the second point would be the rich man and Lazarus in the afterlife.

We'll examine them here, then we'll examine them in the life to come. But let's begin and walk through this exposition, the rich man and Lazarus in this life. The rich man and Lazarus in this life.

Pick up the text with me in Luke 16, 19. Jesus says there, there was a rich man, and he was habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. Now, you'll catch here as the text opens for us that he was rich, but we would say together, so was Abraham, and so was Job, and so was Joseph of Arimathea.

Certainly, the Bible doesn't condemn this rich man or any rich man for being simply rich, but as we'll see, here is the extravagance of a lifestyle apart from a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Now, the text is very clear in verse 19 that this rich man, it says, was habitually dressed in purple and fine linen. I think we all understand that purple was a fabric reserved for royalty.

It was worn by the wealthy. If you could just picture this rich man just for a moment, here he is, he is in designer clothes. He is dressed, maybe in the modern vernacular, in Armani suits, okay? He's not dressed in clothes from Kohl's, we might say.

I mean, this guy's just walking around, he's dressed in purple, he's dressed in fine linen. I think, and you'll note that he lived just as he dressed. It says, look again at verse 19, he was joyously living in splendor every day.

The word for splendor there means to radiate. And so as he walked around in his designer clothes, he was radiating, if you will. He's living in luxury and he liked to show it off.

He's in the party life every day. I think if this man were alive today, he would have been on the MTV show Cribs on the lifestyle of the rich and famous. But so blind was this rich man that he suffered from myopia and to the needs of others.

Look at verse 20 in the text. There's the rich man in 19, enter the poor man in verse 20. There was a poor man named Lazarus.

And he was laid at his gate and he was covered with sores. Students, the picture of Lazarus here is pitiful. He does have a name though.

I think that's significant. His name is Lazarus and what's fascinating about his name is his name means this, the one who God helps. Interesting, isn't it? So here was Lazarus.

Look at the text again in verse 20. The NASB said that he was laid at his gate. Interesting choice of words.

Literally in the language, he was literally thrown down at this rich man's gate is the thought. In other words, he's crippled. And I think it's fascinating when it says in verse 20 that he was laid at his gate.

There's different words in the Greek language for gates. This is not just your little garden gate that you open. This is the word for gate in the original language that speaks of a high ornamented gates.

It indicates the luxury of this rich man's mansion. The picture in my mind is here's an estate. Here's an entry, if you will, into a palace.

So here's this rich man decked out in his great looking clothes, party life every single day and thrown down at his gate, presumably as the rich man would leave every day is this poor man named Lazarus. Now you'll note what the text says in verse 20. It says that he's covered with sores.

And I can only tell you that these are painful sores. When you put that in your mind, it would be like saying he is racked with Job-like afflictions. He is covered with these sores.

Literally, he is covered with ulcers is the thought. In other words, you picture this poor man. He has oozing open lesions.

It's pathetic really. And as Lazarus lays at his gate, look what it says in 21. He's longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table.

Interesting phrase, longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table. I think many of you know that in biblical times, most people and even most people in the world today still eat with their hands. They wouldn't eat with utensils as we would, fork and spoon.

They just would eat their food with their hands. And it was very common for them to not only eat their food with their hands, but while they were eating their meal, they would take bread and they would use bread, if you will, to wipe up the stuff on the plate. They would use bread almost at every particular meal, but they had two types of bread.

They had bread that they would eat with their meal and then they had older bread which they would have on the table. And the purpose of the older bread was after you would eat your meal, your hands would be dirty. And just as the good bread would kind of absorb what was on the plate, they would take their older stale bread and use that to wipe their what? Hands.

And here's the picture. Here is this poor man, verse 20, where it says that he was 21, longing to be fed with the crumbs. He doesn't just want the scraps, if you will, of the leftover of the rich man's table.

He's hoping that he might just get the bread that they wipe their hands with and then they would wipe their hands and throw that bread underneath the table. That's the picture here. He would like just what falls underneath the table.

And if you look at the end of 21, look what else was happening here. It says, besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. It's hard to quite understand exactly what that might mean.

Either this poor man was just laid at the gate. He could not defend himself. He's got these open lesions and he's in such a pitiful condition.

He can't beat the dogs away. But there's another group of scholars that say what the picture is here is he's got these open, oozing lesions, if you will, and they're burning on his skin. And these dogs are coming up, licking his skin, and so he's not beating them away because they bring cooling relief to the sores and the condition in which he's in.

Listen, student, what a contrast. You have a child of wrath and an heir of hell living luxuriously. And you've got a child of God and an heir of heaven perishing for want of bread.

Look what happened, though, in verse 22. It says that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom. His misery was over.

It is not mentioned that he was buried. In fact, in Jerusalem, unknown beggars who died were carried away to a place called Gehenna, and they were flung where the fires were burning to destroy the rubbish. But you'll notice that when he dies, he's carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom.

That phrase literally means that when he died, he was carried away and placed, if you will, by Abraham's side. And that phrase there is it's the only place in all of the New Testament, Abraham's bosom, where it's used. In fact, in the Talmud, a Jewish writing, it was a figure for heaven.

So if you can just imagine the scene that he who longed to be fed with the scraps from the rich man's table is now in heaven along Abraham's side. But look at the text in verse 22. It just simply says, and the rich man also died and was buried.

The man with all the money could not rid himself of the grim reaper on the pale death horse. I mean, death is a great leveler, is it not? I mean, the hearse carries all classes of people. I'm sure this rich man had a splendid funeral.

You say, is that all that happened? Oh, no. His personal stock market crashed big time. Let me take you to the second principle this morning, the rich man and Lazarus in the afterlife.

We go to the second scene here. And it says that in verse 22, verse 23, that in Hades, look at it, he lifted up his eyes being in torment and he saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. Hades, we know, is

a place of torment.

It's a place where the unrepentant wait for final judgment. Hades, students, is just another term for hell. Can you imagine the scene in hell or in Hades? It says that he sees Abraham far away.

He sees Lazarus in his bosom. I mean, if you just stopped right there, it is a horrifying picture of the conscience reality of hell. It reminds me of the words of Jesus in Luke chapter six, when he said, woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.

Woe to you, Jesus said in Luke six, who are well fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Hell is described as a place of unspeakable torment.

Hell is a place from which God's mercy and his goodness have been withdrawn. Hell is a place where God's wrath is revealed as a consuming fire, and men live with their unfulfilled lust and desires in torment forever and ever. I mean, this is the state of things.

Imagine this, man, students. One day, he is living in splendor, and the next day, he is languishing in torment. One day, this guy is decked out and dressed in the finest apparel, and the next day, he finds himself in a place of unquenchable fire.

Now, seeing this, Lazarus in his bosom, the rich man cries out. Look what he says in verse 24. He cries out and he said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus.

I think it's interesting, if we just stop there for a moment. As a Jewish man, this rich man hopes to claim a relationship to Abraham. I think he probably should have listened to the preaching of John the Baptist.

John the Baptist said this in Luke 3a. He said, bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance. Do not say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father.

That's what this rich man was claiming, claiming some kind of relationship. I'm Jewish. Listen, Father Abraham, have mercy on me.

I mean, the tables have been reversed big time. The rich man becomes the beggar who longs for relief from this horrifying torture of agony in the flames of hell. And so while he's there, what he does is he picks up in my mind his cell phone and he calls 911 because he's got a great need for thirst.

He's in the burning heat of the flame. He says, send Lazarus. And look at the text, what it says in verse 24.

Send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue for I am in agony in this flame. Wow. I mean, you just think about that.

Here the poor man's taken up into heaven. This rich man is lost in the conscious reality of everlasting torment. And the Bible says that he says, I'm in agony in this flame.

I mean, whatever you conceive of hell to be, the Bible's clear that it describes it as a place of fire. Jesus said in Matthew 5.22 that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the courts. And whoever shall say to his brother, Rokka shall be guilty before the Supreme Court.

And whoever shall say you fool shall be guilty enough to go into fiery hell. Jesus described hell as a place of fire. In another passage, our Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 18.8, he said, if your hand or your foot

causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you.

It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. I mean, what a picture here. And from other biblical accounts, you well know that hell is not only described as a place of fire, but it's also described as a place of weeping and gnashing of what? Teeth.

This is a reality here, students. I mean, this is a horrific place. It is a place that the Bible talks about of utter darkness.

It is a place that the Bible describes as a tormenting fire. It is a place that is described in the word of God as everlasting torment. Just as the believer goes into everlasting life, the one who rejects Christ in this life goes into a place of everlasting torments.

In fact, the Bible describes hell as a place where the worm never dies and the fire is never what? Quenched. So what does that mean? I think we well know that when you go to heaven, you receive an eternal body. But even those who will perish forever have to go stand before the judgment seat of God and at the judgment seat of God, he will fit them with an eternal body.

Obviously, if you go out to the grave over here off of Sierra Highway, you'd open a grave if you pulled out one of the graves. Don't do that though. And if you opened that grave inside, you would see what? Bones.

Person's gone immediately standing before the Lord but all you would see in that grave is bones but not in the life to come. Not only does the believer get fit for an eternal body but the unbeliever gets fit for an eternal body. And so Jesus describes hell as a place where the worm never dies.

The worm keeps consuming but the body's never consumed. The fire keeps burning but the fire's never consumed. The fire's never quenched.

Maybe Jonathan Edwards can help us just for a moment here. Jonathan Edwards described the eternity of hell in these words. Listen to what Edwards said and maybe this will be a little motivation for Outreach Week.

While we live in a world of people dying every day, 95 million people will perish this year alone and the Lord can use you as a change agent in that place. There was a couple that got seated next to me just a few weeks ago at Placerita which is not weird but I'm sitting in the front row and sometimes when it gets packed in there, it's full in the back so they bring the visitors up front. I met this couple afterward.

They had a big smile on their face. They looked so happy and I think they were so happy because just that week, somebody in our church had led that couple to Jesus Christ and I thought, man, what a neat reality. They just went from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of his dear son.

They just went from being a child of wrath to a child of God and there was joy on their face but you think of those who reject this message. Edwards described it in this way. He said, imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven or a great furnace where your pain would be as much greater than that occasion by accidentally touching a coal of fire as the heat is greater.

Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour full of fire. What horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace and how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you and after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be for you to think that you had to endure it for

another 14 but what would be the effect on your soul if you knew that you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for 24 hours, for a whole year, for a thousand years. Oh, then would not your heart sink if you knew that you must bear it forever and ever, that there would be no end, that after millions and millions of ages, your torment would be no nearer to an end and that you never, never should be delivered.

Wow. In fact, Edwards went on to say if some had thought that he overstated the case, here's what he said and I believe him. He said, we have reason to suppose that after we have said our utmost, that all we have said or thought is but a faint shadow of the reality.

So true. You know, I might just have a direct word for some of you. Do you know the Savior? We sung this morning about salvation.

Some of you who are maybe trying to run from the gospel, some of you who are trying to move away from the intention and the implications and the imperatives of the gospel. Listen, you're playing fast and loose with your life. Listen, you have one life to live for Christ and you never know when that day's up.

You never know when you're gonna be carried away and here evidently it was not at the time the rich man wanted and he's carried away and he's put into a place of torment and he asked Jesus if they would send Abraham and send Lazarus, excuse me, to dip the tip of his finger to cool off his tongue. He's in agony and so he wanted to send him but you'll note that what Abraham said, look at verse 25, it's fascinating in the text. But Abraham said, child, you remember that during your life you received your good things and likewise Lazarus bad things but now he is being comforted here and you are in agony.

Basically Abraham gives him two reasons for the denial. He says number one, it's unreasonable. He said in this life you received your good things.

In other words, you're dressed in purple, you're dressed in fine linen, you're daily partying in splendor every single day. Abraham basically says to this rich man, God was not your aim, the kingdom was not your goal, you live for self, you live for money, you live for notoriety, it's unreasonable. He says it won't work and likewise Lazarus received the bad things.

He was poor, he was sick, he was a beggar. I mean what a grand contrast to the now and the here in the text. He says not only is it unreasonable but he said secondly, it's impossible to send him.

You say why? Look at verse 26. It says and besides all this between us and you, there is a great chasm fixed so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able and that none may cross over from there to us. What a picture.

He says there's a great chasm. He says not only is it unreasonable but it's impossible. In other words, once your life is up, there's a chasm that comes into picture here.

There's a gigantic gorge separating the lost from the redeemed. It is an unforgettable symbol of the absolute impossibility of change of status after death. I mean maybe some of you have been to the Grand Canyon.

It is an awesome sight standing on the edge of that canyon and looking over from one canyon to the next and the miles that just separate that canyon. It is a picture that you're just left with and here in terms of heaven and hell, there's a gigantic chasm that separates the lost from the redeemed. Certainly you know

that the Bible does not speak of a place called purgatory.

Listen, the day is coming when that chasm will be so wide that it will be impossible for your loved ones, impossible for your neighbors, impossible for your friends to cross over. Listen, when those gates are shut to heaven, they will never be opened again. But obviously that's not the case now.

Obviously as Jesse said this morning, what a great opportunity to go share Christ with someone who maybe has been called out from the foundation of the world. While people have life, while people have breath, there's hope in the hearing of the gospel. But there is coming a day, student, when that gate will be shut, when that chasm will be so wide, when that gulf will be such an extreme that nobody can cross from one side to the next and vice versa.

Spurgeon put it this way when he thought of this chasm. Spurgeon said, I see the angel standing at the iron door. I hear the awful key as it grates among the tremendous wards.

And when the gate is closed, he hurls the key into the abyss of oblivion and the captives are fast amured, bound in fetters, which will never break the chains that never rust. Students, we know that there's no second chances. There is no future hope once your life is done.

It says in Hebrews that it's appointed for man to die once, then comes judgment. In fact, once someone dies, there's no use of even praying for them. Once their life is over, their life is over.

There are no second chances with God. Your status toward God and his word in this life cannot ever be altered in the next one. That fire, if someone is to go to hell, is never quenched.

That eating worm never dies. There comes a time when it's too late. And so here is Lazarus is taken away into that place called heaven.

Here is the rich man taken to that place of agony and he wants Lazarus to come so that he may dip the tip of his finger to cool off his water, cool off his tongue because he's in this agony. But what's amazing is the text. It says you can't cross over from one side to the other.

So look what he says in verse 27 and 28. Then he said, I beg you, Father. He said that you send him to my father's house.

Why? I have five brothers in order that he may warn them so that they may not also come to this place of torment. The rich man's cry is that his family's not been warned sufficiently. He basically says, would you go if I can't cross that chasm? Send someone to my brothers.

But look at Abraham's response, stunning. He said they have Moses and they have the prophets. Let them hear them.

God, in effect, says I've already spoken and Moses and the prophets, they have all the revelation they need. But you know what? The rich man knows that his Bible doesn't take, the rich man knows that his family doesn't take the Bible very seriously. So look what he says in verse 30.

But he said, no, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent. In other words, he says we need something more than the scripture. What the rich man says is they need a miracle.

But would you notice Abraham's incredible response in 31? He said to them, if they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if even someone rises from the dead. Listen, if one's heart is so dull as to not hear the word of God, then no miracle, how miraculous will ever be persuasive enough to convince them of Christ? And besides, someone already had risen from the dead in John chapter 11, who was it? Lazarus, right? Another Lazarus. He had already risen from the dead.

And you would think if he had already risen from the dead, did everyone believe? The answer is no. In John 11, they tried to kill Christ after that fact. And they tried to even kill and put to death the risen Lazarus.

And they were more focused than ever to do away with the Messiah. So he says here, if you don't listen and obey the scripture, you will be judged by God. You know, when I think of this passage, I think of that statement by our Lord in Mark 8, 36.

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his one soul? Listen, students, you have an incredible opportunity to stand in the gap at a time when there is hope in the hearing of the gospel. And I pray that you would take every advantage to share Christ with others before it's too late and before they render themselves in one place or the other, because once that time comes, there remains nothing else to ever be said. And so we are in a place where we can tell people and sinners about their gracious need of the Savior.

Tell them about the glories of the cross of Jesus Christ. Tell them about the hope that's bound up in the gospel. And could I not just say to you this morning, aren't you glad that God Almighty through his son saved you from that? Aren't you glad that out of all that you do here, that your eternal destiny, if you've placed your faith in Christ, has been rendered and you go not into a place of eternal torment, you go into the place that John 3, 16 says, where God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have what? Everlasting life.

Listen, cherish the gospel, love the gospel, share that gospel, because you know what? The people at Outreach Week are actually in the story. You say they are? Yeah, they're in the story in verse 28 when he says that he has five brothers. You know, there's people out there who still have the opportunity before it's too late, and I pray that with all your heart you could be a change agent in that great plan of salvation.

Amen, amen. Would you bow your head with me and pray? Father, thank you. The time is quick.

Lord, we just love you. Thank you for redeeming us. Thank you for saving us.

I'm thankful for Romans 5.9, oh Lord, where it says you demonstrate your own love toward us, and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him. Father, thank you for redeeming us.

Father, would you use us, would you use these students as change agents? Would you send them out to these opportunities that they may stand in the gap and proclaim the only hope left in the world, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Lord, we pray, move in these students, move in this student body, Father, that there might be a harvest reaped for you and those who are in heaven and those who will give you eternal praise because you used us as the instrument to declare the word that you would open blind eyes to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We ask this now in Christ's name and all God's people said, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21365.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/scott-ardavanis/a-sermon-from-hell/>

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