

After This the Judgment

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon emphasizes the certainty of judgment after death and the urgent need to accept Christ for salvation before it's too late.

Duration: 10:14

Scripture: Luke 16:19, Hebrews 9:27

Topics: "Eternal Judgment", "Gospel Warning"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes a man who neglected the message of the gospel during his life and now finds himself in torment in Hades. The man realizes the contrast between his current state and the comfort experienced by Lazarus, a faithful believer. He desperately begs for relief from his thirst and requests that Lazarus be sent as a messenger to warn his five careless brothers on earth. However, his request is denied, as those on earth have the written word of God to warn them. The sermon emphasizes the solemnity of the man's fate and serves as a warning to listeners to heed the message of the gospel before it is too late.

Transcript

In the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 9 and verse 27, I read these arresting words, and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. If you have read your Bible to any extent, you will have noticed that it speaks very frankly on subjects that we prefer to dismiss from our minds. The thought that each one of us will eventually stand before a thrice-holy God causes the natural man to express a wish that that day might never appear.

That there is something after death is a universally accepted fact. Only a very few dishonest people will question this Bible fact. The most careless and indifferent, as well as the most thoughtful, are convinced that death does not end all.

This universal impression has obviously been printed by the finger of God. Spiritism and demonology prosper today because many are curious about the future and pay large sums of money to evil agents who claim to have contact with the unseen world. Some eccentric and gullible people would rather be deceived than turn to the clear statements of God's precious word.

No one but Christ has ever returned from the invisible world to describe what lies beyond death. We have watched our loved ones as they draw near to death, but we have no word from them after they pass over

the threshold from time into eternity. A few were raised from the dead during the days of the public ministry of Christ upon the earth, but they evidently forgot to leave us any information of what lies beyond.

At least there is no record of their findings. Since Christ is the only one who returned, and since his words are absolute truth, we are wise to listen to his statements regarding what happens after death. In Luke's gospel, chapter 16, we have the inspired record of Christ saying, there was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. 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, and in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torment. Here we have an unveiling of the unseen world, a description given by Christ of something that really happened to his personal knowledge. He declares that the rich man died and was buried.

Everything is changed in a moment. For a while he is clothed in purple and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day. But suddenly death comes, and what then? He descends from wealthy robes to the depths of misery in Hades, where tons of gold could not purchase one drop of cold water.

His funeral may have been a very imposing one, just as in his life, but in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torment. Long before his funeral ceremony on earth was concluded, the poor, respectable, but Christ-neglecting sinner was facing the reality of a lost eternity. I can almost hear his preacher saying many nice things about the man, of all his good deeds, and of the rest that he is now enjoying in a far better world.

While all this is going on on earth, the poor Christ-neglector is suffering the early pangs of eternal punishment. In this place of torment, which is now his permanent home, he could see, he could feel, he could thirst, he could talk, he could remember. First of all, he sees Lazarus with his mind's eye in a place of extreme contrast, a place of comfort.

And surely he must realize that he too had the privilege of being in that better place if only he had given heed to the message of the gospel. But there's no use wishing or hoping now, for there's a great gulf fixed, and there is no passage from the prison house to the palace. That choice had to be made before death, and like many others he made light of such matters in his bygone days.

He is no longer a rich man, but a beggar in one moment of time. He begs for one drop of water to alleviate his thirst, but he soon finds that he is in a place where no petitions are granted, not even small ones. Once more he seems to look out into space.

This time he sees five careless brothers on earth, and he seems to realize that they are on their way to the same place of torment. He makes one more petition. This time it is not a selfish one, not a drop of cold water for himself, but a request to send a messenger to those five careless brothers to warn them of the danger.

They still have a chance to be saved. They can still choose to be with Lazarus in comfort. They may be as careless and foolish as I was, but if one could be sent to them from the dead, they might believe.

And his request is, send Lazarus to warn them. His request is denied, for careless sinners on earth have the written word of God to warn them, and if they will not listen to God's word, they will not listen to Lazarus. This is exceedingly solemn.

Perhaps you've never thought of it. This very moment you may have a friend in hell who is earnestly praying for you. You may have a praying mother or father on earth who are deeply interested in your salvation.

They may be praying for you daily, and this has gone on for a number of years, but I doubt seriously if any of your praying friends on earth are praying quite so earnestly as are those who are now in hell. Your friends in hell are pleading for you. They are saying, my friends and relatives on earth don't realize how dreadful is this place.

One might think that the rich man might be glad to see his five brothers in hell so that he might have a source of comfort, but it's quite evident that companionship is unwanted in God's prison house. It's most likely a place of solitary confinement. I know of no scripture that suggests that you will ever meet a loved one in hell.

Sometimes we hear a sinner say, since my wife is not saved I would rather remain unsaved, for I want to be with her in eternity, even if it is in hell. Such reasoning is prompted by Satan, for you will never meet your loved ones in hell. You need to be saved right now, regardless of whether or not your life's companion is interested in this all-important matter.

We notice too that the rich beggar in maintained a good memory. There's nothing that can make hell more unbearable than to remember that you heard the gospel and that you felt to some degree the desire to be saved and certain of heaven. But on the other hand, you loved your sins, and even though you had a slight suspicion that you would someday be lost and miss the glories of heaven, you continued on, rejecting a loving Savior who died for you and desired to save you.

Remember, every time God's Spirit calls you and you deliberately refuse Him, you will remember that when you get to a lost eternity and you will have to blame yourself. I'm bringing some very solemn facts to your attention tonight, and I ask you individually to listen to this message. What will you do with the Lord Jesus Christ who died for your sins, who stands by your side, ready to save you from this horrible lost eternity? Will you turn down such a grand opportunity? If you do even once, you deserve to be banished from God's presence, and you deserve to be branded as a Christ rejecter, as an unbeliever.

Whether you believe it or not, judgment is coming. Today we have apparently an unequal providence, and surely there must be another world where the guilty will be punished and the righteous will be rewarded. If men are not punished or rewarded in a future state, the administration of God appears to be neither equitable nor just.

So your own reasoning demands that you submit to the clear and reasonable statements of God's precious word. I ask you to turn to Christ. Tell Him that you will trust Him, thank Him for dying for your sins, and if you will close in with this offer of salvation, you have this promise that whosoever believes in Him shall never perish but have everlasting life.

I trust you will take very seriously the fact that you are facing eternity. It will either be heaven or it will be hell, and that matter is decided right here and now by your attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. If you

reject Him, if you neglect Him, God will have to punish you.

If you receive Him as your substitute, as your Lord and Savior, God will save you, and you will be in heaven, in that place of comfort and rest and peace for all eternity. God grant that you may make your decision this very hour.

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