

Luke 16:19

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in the Lord Jesus and the consequences of unrepentant sin, highlighting the contrast between the rich man's wealth and the beggar's poverty, and the great gulf fixed between heaven and hell.

Duration: 34:40

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 16:19-31, John 3:16, John 5:39, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:17

Topics: "Lazarus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a mission trip where they were able to send \$200 to a country with dedicated young people fighting against the enemy. They had leftover materials and needed a car to transport them to a resale store. During the car ride, the speaker discusses the story of the rich man in hell from Luke 16, emphasizing the importance of trusting in Jesus as the Savior. The speaker also highlights the contrast between nearness and distance, comparing it to families who may be physically close but spiritually distant. The sermon emphasizes the need to trust in Jesus and surrender one's will to Him.

Transcript

May we turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 16, please. The 16th chapter of the gospel of Luke, beginning with verse 19. Luke 16, 19.

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, 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. But the rich man also died and was buried. And in hell, or Hades, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

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. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good thing, and likewise Lazarus' evil thing. But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

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 sense. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophet.

Let them hear them. And he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophet, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Shall we look to the Lord again in a word of prayer? Our Father, we pray thee that thy Holy Spirit will brood in this meeting tonight. We pray thee that he will speak to hearts still outside of Christ. We pray thee for a true Holy Ghost conviction of sin.

We pray thee that for that desperation which only thou canst produce, O God, we pray thee that some might bow at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ and own him to be Lord and Savior. We think tonight of unsaved loved ones. Lord, what a burden.

What a burden on thy heart, but what a burden on our heart as well. We think of those near and dear to us, those with whom we live every day, and yet if Christ should come tonight, it would be the eternal separation of which we have read in this portion of Scripture. O Lord, we pray thee that souls might do business with thee in great waters tonight.

We pray thee that thy great name will be magnified in the sounds of the Savior's worthy name. Earlier this year, some of our students were praying and talking over eternal things in the dormitory of our school, and God met with them in a very special way. It wasn't a great crowd of them, just a few as a matter of fact, a few fellows.

And they were pondering Scriptures like the Scripture that we have before us tonight. The fact of hell. And they said to one another, you know, if we really believed that, our lives wouldn't be the way they are.

They said, if we really believed that, that a soul that dies without the Lord Jesus Christ is doomed and damned forever and ever, we wouldn't hold on to material things when those material things could be used in the salvation of souls. And they went and they opened the door to their closets and they looked in the closets and they saw a lot of things they didn't need, these fanatics. And they said, God forbid that there should ever be anything hanging in our closets that would stand between a soul and eternal life.

And you know what those dear fellows did? Well, they had a rummage sale. The ones that I know about, I heard that they got down to two suits and two pairs of shoes and just the bare minimum essentials really. And they sold the rest.

And you know, some of the dear students started coming in and picking up some first class bargains. And they went back to their rooms with their newly acquired loot. And then it began to prey on their minds.

And they said, well, look, what are we doing accumulating things if it's true that souls are dying without Christ? Jesus said, forsake, not accumulate. And you know, before those students got through, there was a spare room in the dormitory that was filled. At the end of one or two weeks, I know that they were able to send \$200 across the ocean to a certain country where there are some young people who are really engaged in carrying the battle to the front lines of the enemy.

But that isn't what I started off to tell you. After they got all through, they still had about a roomful of materials left. And so they were going to take some down in Oak Park.

And they didn't have a car, shoes, and suits. And so we were going down. And one of these young fellows was in the car with me.

And he said to me, Mr. McDonald, he said, the story of the rich man in hell in Luke 16. And I said to him, yes, Larry. He said, Jesus told that story 1900 years ago.

He said, would it be correct to say? He said, but some people just say it was apparent. What he was doing was just leaving the back door open in case I wanted. And what that young fellow was saying to me was this, Mr. McDonald, if this is true, if the story of the rich man in hell is true, if it's true that he's still there, and if it's true that he hasn't served a second of his sentence, it's about time we started getting desperate.

I believe there are two subjects in connection with the gospel that Satan hates with all his heart. One of them is the fact of hell. The other is the fact of Christ.

And mind you, in evangelical circles today, I find that these two subjects are being soft-pedaled. Sophisticated society doesn't talk so much about hell today. You want to preach the love of God, you know, and woo people by love.

But you don't want to offend them and preach about a never-burning hell. And then as far as the subject of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is concerned, it's absolutely appalling how this subject has been downgraded in recent years. But I'm impressed as I turn to the sacred word of God that it's the Lord Jesus himself who tells us more about hell than we would otherwise know.

It's the lovely Lord Jesus, the one full of grace and truth, who gave us this true account of the rich man in hell. Just think of that. Told by the Son of God.

And mind you, I think that adds significance to it when we think that he came into the world to save men and women and boys and girls from ever going to that place. You know, people don't think it's very important today. People can take a very light attitude toward it today.

But I want to tell you, the Savior of the Bible didn't take a light attitude toward it. It cost him all he had. It cost him his life, his very blood to save men from the pit.

I'd like to look at it with you tonight just briefly. I think first of all it's of tremendous interest to us because of the contrast that we have here. You have a tremendous contrast here between riches and poverty.

Just think of this rich man who said he fared sumptuously every day. Anything that heart could desire, he had it. If he had just gone over to the window of his front room one day and pulled back the drapes, if he had just looked down to the gate, down to the front gate where he was living, he could have seen Lazarus there.

Lazarus, a beggar, a little known as far as this world is concerned, a man whose body was covered with sores, and apparently he was in quite a helpless condition, and the compassionate God came and licked his sore. That was his day. What a picture.

Riches and poverty. You'd never guess from the outward appearance who was going to end up in Abraham's bosom and who was going to end up in hell, would you? It isn't exactly the way men would

paint the picture. But I see something else behind those riches and that poverty, and that is this.

And incidentally that man never went to hell because he was rich. And Lazarus never went to heaven because he was poor. There was something else that lay behind that, and that's this.

That rich man, when you say it, doesn't say that in the passage. No, it doesn't have to say it in the passage. It's all there behind the black and white.

Because this is the crucial issue. This is the issue, and this is why souls are doomed for all eternity, because they fail to put their trust. And this rich man, like many other rich men down through the history of the ages, his trust was in his riches.

Pray? Why should he pray? He didn't need anything. At least he thought he did. He had everything he wanted.

All he wanted to happen to him was to be left alone, that's all. And I suppose if you had tried to witness to him and tell him about the Savior, who would save him from sin, he wouldn't be interested. Probably slam the door in your face if you ever got that.

His trust was in material things. And of course the tragic part of this was that there came a time in his life when he needed something or someone. The tragedy was that the very thing he trusted.

This is true no matter what men and women are trusting in tonight. If it isn't the Savior, if it isn't the Lord Jesus, the moment you need it most, that moment is the moment when you go to meet God. Then I see something else here.

I see the contrast between nearness and distance. It says the beggar lay at his gate. Boy, that's pretty near, isn't it? Here are two people so close together, and one who found faith.

That's what makes me think of a lot of families. Families represent... You can be awfully close in a saved wife, sharing the things of life, a Christian mother and father, an unsaved boy or an unsaved girl. So close.

So close in life. Mind you, many home ties are very, very close. And yet it says in eternity there was a great... You could hardly think of greater nearness in a sense in this life, and yet in eternity.

And notice how the scripture handles it. It says in verse 22, It came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angel into Abraham's bosom. And it says the rich man also died and was buried.

This interests me. The Spirit of God gives Lazarus... And mind you, that wasn't exactly the way it was when they died. When that poor beggar died, I hoped that maybe they did.

What kind of a casket do you think he was buried in? What kind of an embalming process do you think they go through? I have no reason to think that conditions were different in that day than they are today, and I have no doubt that they were able to... The Spirit of God knows how to describe it. He says that Lazarus died, the beggar died, and was carried by the angel into Abraham's bosom. Simple narrative.

With regard to the rich man, it said the rich man also died and was buried. You know, the restraint of scripture is wonderful. It really is.

The Bible, in an emotional way, the Spirit of God didn't do it. He lifts up his eyes. You know, in just a moment of time, the tables were reversed.

The one who was rich, the one that was poor, and that Lazarus was rich for all eternity. You know, I'm impressed as I read this narrative of this man in hell, seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom, and of the conversation that went on between them. I'm impressed by this fact that there was no change in that man.

You know, I've heard people say, and I think I've said it myself. If I did, I was wrong. I think I've heard people say that this man became an evangelist in hell.

He wanted somebody to go and tell his five brethren so that they wouldn't come into this place of torment. But dear friends, he didn't become an evangelist. You say, why didn't he? Well, there was no essential change in his character.

All that man in hell was a saint. Not a single mention of faith in the Lord, or of redemption on the ground of sin. This man's character was untamed.

As the tree falls, there are those today who speak of the purifying, to be that same person, unpurged from sin. That will be one of the torments. Mind you, he did acknowledge Abraham.

He called Abraham Father. And you know, a lot of people in the world today are willing to do that. They're willing to do that.

They're willing to call somebody else Father. Anybody but God. Anybody but God.

But there he was. There he was, and his doom was fixed. And he's crying out for somebody, first of all, to go and dip his finger in water and cool his tongue, he says, because I am tormented in this place.

Now, I know that people today read this portion of Scripture, and they raise all kinds of theological arguments there. How can a disembodied soul have a tongue? Dear friends, the Lord Jesus never spoke these words to excite theological arguments. He quoted these words.

He spoke these words because of a true man, or a woman, or a boy. He really thought of the reality of hell. Of that terrible eternity of torment apart from Christ.

And of the fact that a person can be saved from that. And that it's a free gift. Not something you work for, but something that you receive as a gift.

And that you're going to have it in a moment of time, I say, if a person really thought about it, really thought about it, and used his God-given intellect, and exercised his faith in the Lord Jesus, God has blinded hearts that he doesn't want people to think about this. You say, well, a man did want somebody to go and tell his five brethren so that they wouldn't come to this. Well, that's true.

I don't see that that indicated any change in his character. He could have been like that on earth, and still be a fool. Notice verse 26.

It says, Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, which would come from sin. What does that mean? Well, it means here is Abraham's bosom, the place of blessing, heaven itself, and here is hell. And there's a great

gulf fixed between the two.

And it says that they which are up there, they can't pass there. It says that they which would pass from hence to you cannot. And those where you are, they can't pass there.

Did you ever stop to think, why would any, it says that they which would pass from hence, that is from here, to you, those believers, why should we believe that there are no more evangelistic appeals going from heaven? What I think the thought was that even if they, even if they could, they wouldn't be, even if they would. He said, they have Moses. What does that mean? Well, it means that if you've gone into the living room of their home, you'd have probably.

But anyway, it's a certainty that those five brothers had a copy. There it was, and it was in their home. And Abraham said to them, look, they have a copy of the sacred.

Those scriptures contain a way of salvation. All they have to do is open the Bible and read it. Oh, the man, he still had his arguments at his knees.

And he said, no, no, no, no. And he said, if something supernatural, something spectacular, if somebody would just rise from the dead, then they'd believe. And the answer came back, and he said, no, he said, if they hear not Moses and the prophet, neither will they be persuaded.

The one should rise. You know, that's a calm thing. What does that mean? It means that God is going to hold men and women and boys.

You know, the Bible teaches, and teaches very consistently, that the difficulty in belief does not lie in the human mind. It doesn't lie in the human intellect. People say, they don't say that twice a minute.

They say, I wish I could believe. I'd give anything if I could believe like you. They don't say it twice a minute.

Jesus told the men of his day, it is not, it is not, it's not a matter of convincing the intellect. It's completely a matter of his will. He said, ye search the scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life.

These are they that testify of me, and ye will not come unto me. You don't want to come unto me. That gives you an insight into the same thing.

I want to say that to any who are here tonight. The reason you're not, and there's absolutely no use to say, well, if I saw this, if I had that miracle presented, some supernatural, no, no, no. He said here, if one rose from the dead, then he would, they would be persuaded.

Proof of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead to die no more, does that change your mind at all? Of course it doesn't. If you won't believe the Bible, you, and I want to tell you tonight, dear friend, that that's what the Holy Spirit of God, that's what the Holy Spirit of God will do. Step over that wall.

That's what it is. It's not just believing a lot of intellectual facts about Jesus. It's surrendering your will to him.

You know, that boy I was telling you about that was speaking to me about Luke 16, when he was on the service, he was a paratrooper, and I've talked to him about that. You mean you stood at the door of a plane, and you stepped out into nothing, into air? And you know, people that can do that, he isn't one of

them. But I'd like to ask you, what, what, what is there about the Lord Jesus that makes it impossible? And if you track that down, it was a will that God had to conquer, and it's your will tonight.

And I beg you, on the basis of the death of Christ to save you, the Lord Jesus told this story 1900 years ago.

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