

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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Hell is Truth Known Too Late

[Part 1]

August 14, 2022

Sermon Text: Luke 16:19-31

Scripture Reading: Heb 3:7-19

Listen now as I read from the 16th chapter of Luke's Gospel and listen while receiving the Scripture for what it is – the Word of God:

Luk 16:19-31 “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. (20) And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, (21) who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

(22) The poor man died and was

carried by the angels to Abraham's side.

The rich man also died and was buried, (23) and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

(24) And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’

(25) But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. (26) And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’

(27) And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— (28) for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’

(29) But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’

(30) And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

(31) He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

The words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself which He commands us to receive as such, believe, and obey.

These past few months, and I hope, these many past years, but in particular I sense – more recently – we have been hearing particularly powerful messages each Lord’s

Day, especially I believe in the first hour sessions.

The time is short. We are all growing older and will soon pass out of this temporal life into eternity. And it seems to me that the Lord is being very kind to us to give us a “home stretch” boost by His Word and Spirit to focus our minds on eternity. On heaven and hell. On the condition of our own hearts. We just heard such a message last hour this morning from R.C. Sproul. And I hope that as we consider this remarkable passage in Luke’s Gospel now, we will all once again be struck powerfully by the Lord’s Spirit to examine ourselves and see if we are in the faith or not. *Sin is incredibly deceptive.* Our enemy strives with all his might to keep us from knowing Christ and ending in His kingdom.

So, listen and heed these words of Christ to YOU, very, very soberly, and if anyone here or listening elsewhere is deceived about the state of their soul, we pray that the Lord might show mercy and open your eyes and ears.

Let's begin then, and proceed carefully and deliberately:

Luk 16:19-21 "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. (20) And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, (21) who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

A rich man, and a poor man. The rich man's name is not given while the poor man's is – Lazarus. The condition of the two is given to emphasize the contrast:

- Rich
- Clothed in purple/fine linen
- Feasted sumptuously daily

- Outside at the gate
- Poor
- Covered with sores
- Desired crumbs
- Dogs licked his sores

John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, wrote a sermon which is a detailed examination of this very Scripture, the title of which he gave it was *A Few Sighs from Hell*." Listen to him on this matter of rich vs. poor:

"That those who judge according to outward appearance, do for the most part judge amiss (John 7:24). That they who look upon their outward enjoyments to be token of God's special grace unto them, are also deceived (Rev 3:17). For as it is here in the parable, a man of wealth and a child of the devil may make but one person; or a man may have abundance of outward enjoyments, and yet be carried by the devils into eternal burnings (Luke 12:20). But this is the trap in which the devil hath caught many thousands of poor souls, namely, by getting them to judge according to outward appearance, or according to God's outward blessings.

The Works of John Bunyan, complete, including 58 books (Kindle Locations 107219-

107223). B&R Samizdat Express.
Kindle Edition.

No doubt the rich man enjoyed more than what is listed, one advantage he would have prided himself on is *the praise of man*. He was popular. Wealth. Status. Feasts and parties and society. All that comes as a package. These were his loves, his idols.

NOTE: Craving the praise of man rather than the praise of God is one of the most common roads to hell. Lusting to be popular. Liked by all. To have a reputation in this world.

Sometimes this lust for the praise of man even follows such a person to the grave in regard to the gala events planned for their funeral. Recently I was reading about James Brown, the famous “godfather of soul.” At his funeral (he died on Christmas Day, 2006 of pneumonia)...at his funeral they actually *changed the wardrobe on his body several times*. Listen to this Wikipedia account:

Brown's memorial ceremonies were all elaborate, complete with costume changes for the deceased and videos featuring him in concert. His body, placed in a Promethean [daringly original or creative] casket—bronze polished to a golden shine—was driven through the streets of New York to the Apollo Theater in a white, glass-encased horse-drawn carriage. In Augusta, Georgia, his memorial procession stopped to pay respects at his statue, en route to the James Brown Arena. During the public memorial there, a video showed Brown's last performance in Augusta, Georgia, with the Ray Charles version of "Georgia on My Mind" playing soulfully in the background. His last backup band, The Soul Generals, also played some of his hits during that tribute at the arena. The group was joined by Bootsy Collins on bass, with MC Hammer performing a dance in James Brown style.^[159] Former Temptations lead singer Ali-Ollie Woodson performed "Walk Around Heaven All Day" at the memorial services.^[160] Brown was buried in a crypt at his daughters home in Beech Island, South Carolina.

All of this, and yet James Brown was a very wicked man and

certainly ended in hell. He was arrested many times for beating his 4 wives. He was accused of rape. He was arrested for drug and weapons crimes. And to add to his evils, he started out as a “gospel” singer, once even promising the judge that if he were granted parole he would give his life to singing to the glory of God!

Well the point is this: People like the Rich Man, people like James Brown, crave and lust for the praise and worship and approval of man. And there are masses of humanity who are always looking for just such a person to worship.

I want to challenge everyone in this regard: *If anyone is living their life to earn the praise of man, to be popular, to be well-liked and approved of by this world, be warned – you are on Broadway, not the Narrow Way.*

Luk 6:26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Are you hated by the world? Jesus said that His people would be, just as the world hated Him. I have known many people who claim to be Christians and yet you can tell that they energetically pursue and crave the praise of man. It is what makes them tick in ALL they do. Are you such a person? If so, you are on Broadway and it ends in hell.

Such was the Rich Man in his palatial home. And then there was Lazarus:

- Outside at the gate
- Poor
- Covered with sores
- Desired crumbs
- Dogs licked his sores

Lazarus did not enjoy anything the Rich Man did. Denied entry into the mansion. Poor and sick from malnutrition and exposure. A diet of crumbs if he was lucky enough to get some out of the rich man’s garbage. The dogs, who were regarded as unclean, *showed him more kindness than the Rich Man.*

Now, once again think carefully on this. The outward condition and state of these two men *did not portray what the Lord thought of them*. The one who the world considered blessed, was cursed by God. And the one who was last in this life – who everyone considered cursed by God – was in fact blessed by the Lord.

1Co 1:26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

Jas 1:9-10 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, (10) and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

Bunyan again:

Alas! poor men, they are so ignorant as to think that because a man is increased in outward things, and that by a small stock, therefore God doth love that man with a special love, or else he would never

do so much for him, never bless him so, and prosper the work of his hands. Ah! poor soul, it is the rich man that goes to hell. And 'the rich man died,' and in hell, mark, 'in hell he lift up his eyes,'

Bunyan, Bunyan. *The Works of John Bunyan, complete, including 58 books* (Kindle Locations 107226-107229). B&R Samizdat Express. Kindle Edition.

As we know, because we have read this entire Scripture, *the rich man, though I conclude was a real, historical man, is meant to represent to us the UN-godly in this world AND the next. Lazarus, on the other hand, is a picture of the godly person*. And what then to we understand?

That in this present world Christ's true people will experience many trials and afflictions, while the ungodly will typically enjoy a life of pleasure and ease.

And does not the history of the people of God in this world affirm this? We have, for example, been

hearing this morning from John Bunyan. If you know anything of his life and that of his wife and children, you know that he certainly is an example of Lazarus. Worldlings know nothing of this kind of suffering for Christ.

I want us to take the time right now and listen as I read Psalm 73. I have to believe that Christ had this very Psalm in mind when He told us about the Rich Man and Lazarus –

Psa 73:1-28 A Psalm of Asaph. Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. (2) But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. (3) For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

(4) For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. (5) They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.

(6) Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment. (7) Their eyes swell out

through fatness; their hearts overflow with follies. (8) They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression. (9) They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue struts through the earth.

(10) Therefore his people turn back to them, and find no fault in them. (11) And they say, “How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?”

(12) Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches.

(13) All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. (14) For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning.

(15) If I had said, “I will speak thus,” I would have betrayed the generation of your children. (16) But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, (17) until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.

tell of all your works.

John Bunyan once more:

This verse doth chiefly hold forth these things; 1. That the saints of God are a poor contemptible people; 'There was a certain beggar.' If you understand the word beggar to hold forth outward poverty, or scarcity in outward things, such are saints of the Lord, for they are for the most part a poor, despised, contemptible people.

Bunyan, Bunyan. The Works of John Bunyan, complete, including 58 books (Kindle Locations 107276-107278). B&R Samizdat Express. Kindle Edition.

NOTE: Once more, challenge yourself. Examine yourself. Which of these two are you? Are you despised and contemptible to the world? Are you regarded as a fool, for the sake of Christ? Or do you enjoy and seek the approval of men? The answers to these questions will tell you if you belong to Christ or not.

(18) Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin.

(19) How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors! (20) Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms.

(21) When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, (22) I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you.

(23) Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. (24) You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. (25) Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. (26) My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

(27) For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. (28) But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may

Luk 16:22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried,

once put it: *Hell is truth known too late.*

Well, the day came when that great leveler of the mighty and the lowly came for them. And yet as we shall see, there is the difference now between heaven and hell. And in fact, the “leveling” of death was only in respect to this present life – all of us must die. But what comes next is anything but a leveling – Lazarus is exalted and the Rich Man is rich no longer. Even in the moment of dying, we see that Lazarus was met by the angels to welcome him and escort him into heaven. The Rich man? He dies and his remains were buried in a hole in the ground.

But then there is more. Much, much more. In the rest of this extraordinary Scripture, the Lord Jesus actually allows us to see into heaven and hell – with emphasis upon hell. It is to that account we will plan to turn next time, when we will see as an old Puritan pastor