

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

“Let’s not fall into the fallacy of thinking that unless we are big, we are going to be ineffective. One with God is a majority. So often God has done some of the most amazing things in the whole history of the church through remnants.” (Lloyd Jones)

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www.unholycharade.com (blog)

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The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment (Part 4)

The Wicked Never Repent in Hell

March 8, 2026

Sermon Text: Luke 16:19-31
(The Rich Man and Lazarus)

Scripture Reading: Revelation
14:6-20

Luk 16:19-24 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. (20) "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, (21) and longing to be fed

with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. (22) "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. (23) "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and 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.'

“Methinks the Lord Jesus Christ doth hereby signify that men are

naturally unwilling to see or take notice of their sad state, I say by nature; but though now they are willingly ignorant, yet in hell they shall lift up their eyes. That is, in hell they shall see and understand their miserable condition; and, therefore, to these words: 'In hell he lifted up his eyes,' he adds, 'being in torments.' As if he had said, though once they shut their eyes, though once they were willingly ignorant (2 Peter 3:5), yet, when they depart into hell, they shall be so miserably handled and tormented, that they shall be forced to lift up their eyes. While men live in this world, and are in a natural state, they will have a good conceit of themselves, and of their condition--they will conclude that they are Christians, that Abraham is their father, and their state to be as good as the best (Matt 3:7-9). They will conclude they have faith, the Spirit, a good hope, and an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ; but then, when they drop into hell, and lift up their eyes there, and behold first their soul to be in extreme torments; their dwelling to be the bottomless pit; their company thousands of damned

souls; also the innumerable company of devils; and the hot scalding vengeance of God, not only to drop, but to fall very violently upon them; then they will begin to be awakened, who all their lifetime where in a dead sleep. I say, when this comes to pass, lo it will; then in hell they shall lift up their eyes, in the midst of torments they shall lift up their eyes.

The Works of John Bunyan, complete 3 Volume Set, including 62 books (with Active Table of Contents) [Annotated] (Kindle Locations 123142-123150). Niche Edition. Kindle Edition.

The Wicked Never Change – Even in Hell

We continue with our sober and serious consideration of the Lord Jesus' own words in this account He gave of the Rich Man and Lazarus. We have seen how dangerous and even foolish it is to make judgments based upon outward appearance. And as Jesus pulls back the curtain for us, we

learn that the wicked are immediately in hades and torment the moment they die, escorted there (as Bunyan theorizes) by the devil's angels. While the Christian is given an angelic escort into glory and thus does not face death alone, the wicked will have torment, not comfort.

Now, we might often be tempted to think that once they enter hell, the wicked, seeing the error of their ways and the horrible torments they enter into, would cry out in repentance, with sorrow for their sins. Because, after all, the moment they enter Hades (and ultimately the Lake of Fire which burns forever) these people who lived for themselves and mocked Christ, at that very moment they will see that it was all true. The gospel. The necessity of faith and repentance. The reality of heaven which is lost to them forever. They see it all as truth. They scoffed and ridiculed whenever they were given warning about hell. But now they are in it. Surely they will repent, have sorrow for their sins, and....as it seems an increasing number of professing Christians (and Rome)

are trying to tell us – God in His mercy and kindness will hear their cries and save them.

But this is all a flight of fancy produced by the imaginations of men. And we see the falsehood of it all right here in this story. Consider again:

(23) "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and 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.'

What do we see in Dives here? The veil has been pulled back for us. We see right into the place where the unregenerate, Christ-rejecting person goes immediately upon death. And what do we see?

1. We see *conscious* torment. There is no annihilation. The Rich Man is still the Rich Man. *In Hades HE....* The same person who partied on

day after day living in splendor.

2. There is *continuity between this present life and one's destination upon death.* "Right now counts forever" as R.C. Sproul used to put it. Abraham recounts the earthly life of the Rich Man –

Luk 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, 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.

"Indulging in this present world, living for self, receiving one's 'good things' now, all the while scoffing at Christ and all who warn you of eternity, all of this carries on into the wicked man's destination in hell. As Jesus said, there is a Broadway and a narrow way. The way we choose to travel is even right now connecting us with a destination.

Joh 14:6 Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life;

no one comes to the Father but through Me.

3. That the Rich Man is unchanged, even in that torment, is evident from his own words to Abraham.

Luk 16:24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and 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.'

One of the characteristic qualities of a wicked man, of the person living for self (which unrepentant sinners all do), is what we might call a mentality of *entitlement*. The Rich man was *entitled* in his thinking. He had been entitled to his wealth, to his luxury, to his popularity. He deserved. And all other people existed for the primary purpose of providing supply to his ego.

And this mindset of entitlement was not at all changed, even in hell. If anything it was increased. He was *owed*:

- Abraham *owed* him mercy
- Lazarus was still just someone to be used. A servant.
- He was a child of Abraham, he claimed, and thus deserving of his inheritance.

There is no repentance here at all. He is absolutely unchanged, or if there is any change it is simply an increase in his wickedness.

The wicked will never repent, even in hell.

We are not told what his ultimate response was when all of his requests were denied, but we are no doubt correct in assuming that his hateful weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth broke out in renewed fury.

NOTE: This is why the righteous will never be plagued in heaven by grief over the torment of those in hell. We will understand sin with perfect clarity then. We will see the glory of the Lord in all of His brilliance and holiness, and we will realize how perfect and beautiful

the justice of God is in casting the wicked away forever.

NOTE: The Rich Man spoke of the torment he was in:

Luk 16:23-24 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, **being in torment**, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and 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.**'

Let's pause here and give some sober consideration to this matter of his *torment and agony in the flame*.

What is the torment and flame of Hades and ultimately of the Lake of Fire? We saw last time that one of the primary pictures of it used by the Lord Jesus was *fire*. At other times, the *worm* that never dies or the *outer darkness* or the place of *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth*, or the *place of eternal*

punishment How literal are we to take these descriptions?

Well, hades and hell and the Lake of Fire are REAL. There is a *place* of torment. Just as there is a place of blessing and joy, there is a place on the other side of that “great gulf fixed” which is real. It is possible that Jesus’ descriptions of hell used the best words in human vocabulary to describe it, but the actual torments may be even worse than that eternal fire.

Did you know that the book of Isaiah ends with this description of the final judgment? And that his text is where the “worm that does not die” comes from? –

Isa 66:15-24 For behold, the LORD will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. (16) For the LORD will execute judgment by fire And by His sword on all flesh, And those slain by the LORD will be many. (17) "Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the gardens, Following one

in the center, Who eat swine's flesh, detestable things and mice, Will come to an end altogether," declares the LORD. (18) "For I know their works and their thoughts; the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and see My glory. (19) "I will set a sign among them and will send survivors from them to the nations: Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Tubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have neither heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations. (20) "Then they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering to the LORD, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. (21) "I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites," says the LORD. (22) "For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure. (23) "And it shall be from

new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD. (24) "Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

Their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched. Listen to Bunyan again on this. I will quote him here at length. Do NOT dismiss what he says as some ignorant ramblings of a superstitious and uneducated tinker as so many wicked people do:

"Now that thy soul might be made to flee from those intolerable torments into which the damned do go, I shall show you briefly what are the torments of hell.

First. By the names of it.

Second. by the sad state thou wilt be in, if thou comest there.

First. The names. It is called a never-dying worm (Mark 9). It is called an oven fire, hot (Mal 4:1). It is called a furnace, a fiery-furnace (Matt 13). It is called the bottomless pit, the unquenchable fire, fire and brimstone, hell fire, the lake of fire, devouring fire, everlasting fire, eternal fire, a stream of fire (Rev 21).

Second. By the sad state thou wilt be in, if thou comest there.

1. One part of thy torments will be this, thou shalt have a full sight of all thy ill spent life, from first to last; though here in this world thou can sin today and forget it by tomorrow, yet there thou shalt be made to remember how thou didst sin against God at such a time, and in such a place, for such a thing, and with such a one, which will be a hell unto thee. God will 'set them in order before thine eyes' (Psa 51:21).

2. Thou shalt have the guilt of them all lie heavy on thy soul, not only the guilt of one or two, *but the guilt of them all together*, and there they shall lie in thy soul, as if thy belly

were full of pitch, and set on a light fire. Here (in this life) men can sometimes think on their sins with delight, but there with unspeakable torment; for that I understand to be the fire that Christ speaks of, which shall never be quenched (Mar 9:43-49).

While men live here, O how doth the guilt of *one* sin sometimes crush the soul! It makes a man in such plight that he is weary of his life, so that he can neither rest at home nor abroad, neither up nor in bed. Nay, I do know that they have been so tormented with the guilt of one sinful thought, that they have been even at their wits' end, and have hanged themselves.

But now when thou come into hell, and hast not only one or two, or an hundred sins, with the guilt of them all on thy soul and body, but all the sins that ever thou didst commit since thou came into the world, altogether clapped on thy conscience at one time, as one should clap a red hot iron to thy breasts, and there to continue to all eternity: this is miserable.

And 3rd - Again, then thou shalt have brought into thy remembrance the slighting of the gospel of Christ; here thou shalt consider how willing Christ was to come into the world to save sinners, and for what a trifle thou didst reject him. This is plainly held forth in Isaiah 28, where, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, the foundation of salvation, verse 16, he saith of them that reject the gospel, that, when the overflowing scourge doth pass through the earth, which I understand to be at the end of the world, then, saith he, it shall take you morning by morning, by day and by night shall it pass over you; that is, continually, without any intermission. 'And it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.' 'A vexation,' that is, a torment, or a great part of hell only to understand the report, to understand the good tidings that came into the world by Christ's death for poor sinners. And you will find this verily to be the mind of the Spirit, if you compare it with Isaiah 53:1, where he speaks of men's turning their backs upon the tenders of God's grace in the

gospel, he saith, 'Who hath believed our report?' or the gospel declared by us?

Now this will be a mighty torment to the ungodly, when they shall understand the goodness of God was so great that he even sent his Son out of his bosom to die for sinners, and yet that they should be so foolish as to put him off from one time to another; that they should be so foolish as to lose heaven and Christ, and eternal life in glory, for the society of a company of drunkards; that they should lose their souls for a little sport, for this world, for a strumpet, for that which is lighter than vanity and nothing; I say this will be a very great torment unto thee.

4. Another part of thy torment will be this: Thou shalt see thy friends, thy acquaintance, thy neighbours; nay, it may be thy father, thy mother, thy wife, thy husband, thy children, thy brother, thy sister, with others, in the kingdom of heaven, and thyself thrust out (Luke 13:28). 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham (your

father), and Isaac, and Jacob, (together with your brethren), and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, and you yourselves thrust out.' Nay, saith he, 'they shall come from the east, and from the west'-- that is, those that thou didst never see in all thy life before, and they shall sit down with thy friends, and thy neighbours, thy wife and thy children, in the kingdom of heaven, *and thou, for thy sins and disobedience, shall be shut, nay, thrust out. O wonderful torment!*

5. Again, thou shalt have none but a company of damned souls, with an innumerable company of devils, to keep company with thee. While thou art in this world, the very thoughts of the devils appearing to thee makes thy flesh to tremble, and thine hair ready to stand upright on thy head. But O! what wilt thou do, when not only the supposition of the devils appearing, but the real society of all the devils in hell will be with thee howling and roaring, screeching and roaring in such a hideous manner, that thou wilt be even at thy wits' end, and be ready to run stark mad again for anguish and torment?

6. Again, that thou might be tormented to purpose, the mighty God of heaven will lay as great wrath and vengeance upon thee as ever he can, by the might of his glorious power. As I said before, thou shalt have his wrath, not by drops, but by whole showers shall it come, thunder, thunder, upon thy body and soul so fast, and so thick, that thou shalt be tormented out of measure.

And so saith the Scripture (2 Thess 1:9), speaking of the wicked, 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,' when the saints shall be admiring his goodness and glory. Again, this thou shalt have, as I said before, without any intermission; thou shalt not have any ease so long as while a man may turn himself round; *thou shalt have it always every hour, day and night; for their worm never dies, but always gnaws, and their fire is never quenched;* as it is written in Mark 9.

7. Again, in this condition thou must be for ever, and that is as sad as all the rest. For if a man were to have all his sins laid to his charge, and communion with the devils, and as much wrath as the great God of heaven can inflict unto him; **I say, if it were but for a time, even ten thousand years, and so end, there would be ground of comfort, and hopes of deliverance; but here is thy misery, this is thy state for ever, here thou must be for ever:** when thou lookest about thee, and seest what an innumerable company of howling devils thou art amongst, thou shalt think this again, this is my portion for ever. When thou hast been in hell so many thousand years as there are stars in the firmament, or drops in the sea, or sands on the sea-shore, yet thou hast to lie there for ever.

O this one word EVER, how will it torment thy soul! Friends, I have only given a very short touch of the torments of hell. O! I am set, I am set, and am not able to utter what my mind conceives of the torments of hell. **Yet this let me say to thee, accept of God's mercy through**

our Lord Jesus Christ, lest thou feel THAT with thy conscience which I cannot express with my tongue, and say, I am sorely tormented in this flame.

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In all of this, even in these torments of hell, we see Dives' continuing unchanged in his entitled, self-seeking wickedness, unchanged, unrepentant:

His entitled attitude continues:

Luk 16:25-28 "But Abraham said, 'Child, 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. (26) '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.' (27) "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— (28) for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

“God didn’t do enough. It isn’t my fault. If only someone had told me. I am not to blame.”

And so it is with sinners today. God has sent His Son! He has given us His Word! If any person ends in hell, it will be his own guilt and rejection of Christ that took him there.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, will be saved. Are YOU born again? Has the Lord come to you in power and opened your eyes to His truth, shown you your sin and brought you to faith and repentance? Are you a new person? These are the questions we must put to ourselves now, today, not tomorrow.

