

This is something that all who are unsaved will experience. Here on earth they despise salvation and despise those who are saved and seek to live a godly life. Here on earth they pursue money and the things of the world with all their hearts. But when they are in hell in eternity, everything will be different. They will no longer value money and the things of this world. They will see the value of salvation, but it will be too late.

6. In the sixth place, we learn that if a person refuses to believe the word of God, then he will continue to refuse to believe it, even if he sees a great miracle.

The rich man thought that if someone from the dead went to his brothers then they would repent. He knew that they had heard the word of God and had rejected it, and he thought that the sight of a man who came back from the dead would move them get saved. However, Abraham answers him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

The teaching that is found in these words is deeply important. The Bible contains everything that we need to know in order to be saved, and a messenger from the world beyond the grave can add nothing to what we find in the Bible. The people who refuse to get saved are not refusing because they do not have enough revelation from God, they are refusing because they love their sins and want to pursue their sins. Even if a person were to come back from the dead, they would still not believe and be saved. If you are not saved today it is because you love your sins and do not want to give them up. It is not because you have no revelation from God. All the revelation you need is in the Bible; you do not need any more. One day, when you stand before God in judgement, He will ask you why you did not receive His word and obey it. On that day, you will have no excuses. All that you need to know in order to get saved He has given you. What you need to do is to receive it and believe it and live by it.

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near the Lutheran church.***

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Lazarus and the Rich Man

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" (Luke 16:19-31)

This parable is the only passage in the Bible which describes the feelings of the unsaved after they die and are sent into hell. For this reason, as well as for many others, it is an important parable deserves special attention from us.

1. We learn in the first place, that a person's status here on earth does not tell us his true spiritual standing before God.

The Lord Jesus describes to us two men, of whom one was very rich, and the other very poor. The rich man "lived in luxury every day," while the beggar had nothing at all. And yet of these two the poor man had received grace, mercy and blessing from God, and the rich had received nothing that was of eternal value. The poor man lived by faith, and walked in the steps of Abraham; he was a saved man. The rich man lived a worldly life, he loved his wealth and was dead in trespasses and sins.

Let us learn from this that a person may have great wealth and great power, but that does not mean that he is great in the sight of God. This rich man was unsaved and on his way to hell. Let us also learn that a person who may be poor and humble may have received great blessings from God and may be saved from his sins and on his way to heaven. Very often God chooses to save not the rich and the powerful, but the poor and the humble. The Bible says to those who are saved, "Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential, not many were of noble birth" (1 Cor. 1:26). God says to the rich, "Let not the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this: that he understands and knows me" (Jer. 9:24).

Let us make sure we understand this lesson very clearly from this passage: just because a person is wealthy does not mean that the favour of God is upon him. Similarly, just because a person is poor, does not mean that God is angry with him or displeased with him. The status of a person here on earth tells us nothing about their standing before God: many rich people sin openly against God and are under His anger, and many poor people are saved and live their lives to the glory of God.

2. We learn in the second place that no matter who we are, we will all one day die.

The Bible tells us, "The time came when the beggar died," and it tells us, "The rich man also died and was buried." Those who are rich and those who are poor will all one day die. This is a truth that few people seem to realise. Most people live and eat and drink and talk and plan as if they were going to live upon this earth forever. The true Christian must be on his guard against this sort of thinking. The person who is saved needs to think often about death. When remember that we are here on earth for only a few years, then we are less likely to complain and be discontent with our condition. We are also less likely to be proud and arrogant and to think that our wealth will protect us from all problems. Wealth cannot protect us against death. In this story, the beggar died," and his sufferings were at an end; and the rich man died and his feasting came to an end.

3. We learn, thirdly, that the Lord takes special care of His saved people when they die.

The Lord Jesus tells us, "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side." There is something very comforting in these words. We know very little about the feelings of a person at the point of death. When our own last hour comes, and we lie down to die, we shall be like those who journey into an unknown country. But in this passage we have the comfort that those who die as saved people are in God's care. They are not homeless wanderers between the hour of death and the day of resurrection. They are at rest in the midst of friends, they are with all those who have been saved and have died. They do not lack anything, they are "with Christ" (Phil. 1:23.)

4. We learn in the fourth place, that those who die unsaved go into hell for eternity.

The Lord Jesus tells us plainly, that after death the rich man was "in hell, where he was in torment." The Lord Jesus gives us an indication of the torment this man faced: he longed for a drop of water to cool his tongue. And the Lord Jesus tells us clearly that between heaven and hell there is a deep valley so that those in hell cannot enter heaven once they have been cast into hell. This is one of the most frightening passages in the whole Bible because it is a description of hell from the Lord Jesus Himself.

The Bible tells us repeatedly that those who refuse to repent and be saved and remain in their sins and die in their sins will face eternal punishment in hell. This is a truth that the devil tries to hide from people, the devil never wants people to believe that they will face the judgement of God when they sin. This is why he said to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "You shall not surely die." He wants people to believe that sin is a small matter to God and that God will over-look all sin. These are the lies of the devil. The truth of the matter is that God hates all sin and will punish all sin for eternity in hell. The Bible makes it very clear that all who do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus will be punished (2 Thess. 1:8).

Let us not believe the devil's lies and treat sin as a light thing and an unimportant thing. Let us make sure we understand how serious sin is in the sight of God and how much He hates it.

5. We learn in the fifth place, that those who are saved only find out the value of salvation when they are in hell and it is too late.

We read in this parable that when the rich man died, he went into hell. This is when he realised the importance of salvation. This is why he wanted Abraham to send Lazarus to his home to warn his five brothers. He pleaded with Abraham, "I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

When he was alive, he never did anything for their spiritual profit. They had probably been his companions in worldliness and sin, and, like him, they had neglected the message of salvation. But when he is dead he finds out how foolish they have all been. He realises that the most important thing in life is not the things of this world but salvation.

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