

# Two Very Different Destinations

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want to thank you for praying for me.

You might be wanting to hear a report, but it was just one of those long, long days this last week. And some of you may have been through such a thing, or at least have some family members who have had these kind of treatments. And, man, by the time the day was over, I felt like I had the flu. Now, I didn't have it, so I'm not contagious, but sick. But that said, God was so gracious to really guard me and protect me from some of the most more worse kind of reactions.

And I just give all the glory to him and also to your faithfulness in prayer. Thank you so much. Got three more to go next Wednesday, the Wednesday after, and another Wednesday out from there.

[ 1 : 10 ] So four weeks in a row, three more to go, and just keep on praying. Thank you. Thank you so much. Now take your Bibles, then. Enough about me.

Let's look to the Word of God. And if you would, turn to chapter 16 of the Gospel of Luke. Luke 16, and go ahead and find verse 19.

I'm going to read it here in just a moment. As soon as I begin reading, you're going to recognize this particular passage. It's one of those famous passages, stories that Jesus told.

And we'll talk a little bit more about whether or not this was a true story or a parable. We'll talk about that here in just a minute. But as soon as I start reading it, you're going to recognize it.

So I want to read then starting with verse 19, and we'll read all the way to the end of chapter 16.

And so next Sunday, we'll be ready to start chapter 17.

[ 2 : 10 ] All right, so follow along in your Bibles as I read. There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, that is, at the rich man's gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom.

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

Then 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.

[ 3 : 20 ] But Abraham said, Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf affixed, or fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.

Then he said, I beg you therefore, Father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.

Abraham said to him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, No, Father Abraham, but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.

But he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rise from the dead. All right, so you would agree with me, it's a very familiar passage of scripture, one of those famous stories that Jesus told.

[ 4 : 35 ] And, you know, I don't know about you, but I have over the years of my ministry heard a number of sermons from this particular passage of scripture. I've even read a number of sermons. And sadly, many of those sermons or those preachers over the years have attempted to kind of force the details of this parable in order to kind of substantiate or establish their own social agendas.

For example, you know, the evils of the filthy rich. I've actually heard sermons that have taken this parable and have used it in order to preach about the evils of wealth or the evils of the super wealthy.

And then on the other end of the spectrum, I've also heard sermons, perhaps you have too, directed toward the tragedy of poverty or the tragedy of homelessness and so forth.

Now, these are interesting subjects, but the parable really has nothing to do with these things.

There's no social agenda in Jesus' mind when he told these parables.

And then there are others who have attempted to take this story and construct a theology about the afterlife or some aspect of it.

[ 5 : 55 ] And what I'm talking about is a kind of a certain theology about the existence of an intermediate state after one dies and before ultimately going on to the eternal state, heaven or hell.

I don't know if you have heard anything about this, but I want to spend a little bit of time talking about it because it may be a question in your mind. And it's basically, the view is basically this, that Jesus reveals in this story that he told the existence of an in-between place, a kind of holding place between this life and the ultimate life or heaven or hell.

And it's a place that he called, in this view, Abraham's bosom. Have some of you heard this before?

It's a place called Abraham's bosom. Those are the words that Jesus used in the parable.

And according to this view, Abraham's bosom consists of two places. One side of it is Hades and the other side is paradise.

All right? So it's a kind of a two-compartment place. And as a matter of fact, some theologians refer to it by that name, the two-compartment theory. Others would just call it Abraham's bosom because they say that's what Jesus called this particular place.

[ 7 : 25 ] And so paradise, on the one side, is for those who were saved or saved, and they go there to this in-between place or holding place until all things are accomplished.

And then the other side is Hades or the place of torment. And all those who are unsaved when they die go there. And then these two places are separated by this great gulf fixed, as Jesus referred to it in the story, or a chasm as it's translated in some versions of the Bible.

And so in this view, Abraham's bosom is an intermediate place, an in-between place that all the dead go before eventually entering into the eternal state, which would be heaven or hell, depending on whether or not you are a believer or an unbeliever.

Now, you may have heard of this, and there are various versions of the theology, but the standard view is that when Jesus died on the cross, and he died and was placed in the tomb, that he actually went to Hades.

First of all, this one side of the two-compartment place, or Abraham's bosom, went to Hades to preach the gospel, and to preach it to the condemned, as a sort of kind of seal to their judgment, I guess, or there are other views about that.

[ 8 : 54 ] And then he went to paradise, the paradise side, and he led all of those in paradise on to heaven. And thus, in some view, ends this kind of Abraham's bosom kind of place.

All right? So this is the view. Now, I must tell you, and I have no idea as I stand here how many of you believe this, and I assure you that there are a number of very conservative scholars who believe in this, but I have to be honest with you and tell you that I do not believe this.

I do not believe in this intermediate place. In the first place, I guess, to me, it kind of smacks of the Catholic purgatory, and may even be kind of a retooled, refitted kind of purgatory theology that has crossed over into Protestantism and Evangelicalism.

I don't believe in this, and there are a number of reasons for this. There are a number of problems with this theology, and chief among them is that except for some obscure biblical passages that you might find other places, the entire theology is built upon this one story that Jesus told.

It's all found right here in this story. And listen, no theology must depend solely upon the details of a parable, a fictitious story.

[ 10 : 24 ] Jesus never ever introduced and taught a theology from a parable.

Never did he do that. So we should never look at parables to base an entire theology upon. All right, now I know what some of you are thinking. You're thinking, but pastor, this is not a parable.

Right? Some of you are thinking that? You ever heard this? This is not a parable, you say, because this is a true story. And the reason we know that is because Jesus never used proper names in his parables.

And so since he used a proper name here in reference to Lazarus, he gave him a name, Lazarus, then this is not a parable. Right? Right? This is a, or this is a, or this is a, not a parable, this is a true story.

Well, that is the usual reason given for this view. And matter of fact, it is the only reason ever given for why this is not a parable.

[ 11 : 28 ] That is a true story. But, you know, I ask myself, where do we get this rule? Those who hold this view of this particular story Jesus told, where did they get this kind of rule?

Because it's not in the Bible anywhere. And Jesus, in the telling of this story, didn't introduce it or even explain it in terms that, listen guys, this is not a parable, fictitious story.

This is a true story. So, so you ought to pay attention to every element of this, this story, because every element is a, is true to theology. It's part of theology.

You ought to build your theology based upon this. But Jesus didn't say anything like that. It really is just simply a rule that someone has devised because of the uniqueness of this particular parable.

It is unique, by the way. Jesus never uses a proper name in any of his parables except this one.

And so then we have kind of assumed then that that means that this is not a parable.

[ 12 : 36 ] It is a true story. But is that true? See, I think it's important for us to make a decision about this because if this is a true story, then we must take every element of it, every part of the story, as theology, as a doctrine.

And I'll explain a little bit more about that here in just a minute. But I don't think this is a parable, and I don't think it is, first of all, because of the way it starts. The way it starts, it starts out just like all other parables.

Jesus said, There was a certain rich man. Now, I admit to you, and if you have other versions of the English versions, you don't find that word certain there, but it is in the original text.

Tis is the Greek word, and it means certain. So there is a certain rich man. And this, by the way, is the standard introduction to nearly every parable that Jesus told.

You'll find that the same thing, by the way, and we looked at this a number of months ago, in Luke chapter 10 and verse 30, the parable of the Good Samaritan. How does it start? Jesus starts by saying, A certain man was going down to Jerusalem, to Jericho.

[ 13 : 54 ] And then a little bit later in Luke, Luke 14, 16, Jesus says, A certain, he introduces a parable this way, A certain man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many.

And then you can skip on over to Luke chapter 15 and verse 11. Jesus says, A certain man had two sons. That's the parable of the prodigal son, remember. It starts exactly the same way.

And a little bit later in Luke, in Luke 19, verse 12, Jesus is going to tell a parable, and he says, A certain noble man went to the distant country to receive a kingdom for himself.

And you're going to find the same thing in many other parables recorded in Matthew and Mark and also in John. So it starts out just like all other parables that Jesus told.

The only difference is, he names one of the characters with a proper name. The second reason would be this. Jesus only names the poor man in the story and not the rich man.

[ 14 : 55 ] Did you notice that? He gives no name for the rich man. And neither does he give any names to other places, or there are no historical details where he attaches names to them, place names and so forth.

Only the poor man is named. But we need to understand that Jesus gave the poor man a name for a reason. See, it's part of the parable.

His name is actually part of the parable. The name Lazarus means the one whom the Lord saves. That's what the name Lazarus means. So his name is part of the parable.

And so Jesus did not give the rich man a name. Because why? He did not save him. He did not save him.

And also we need to understand that Jesus is making here, between these two main characters of the story, he's making a bold contrast here between the rich man and the poor man.

[ 15 : 58 ] And we're going to discover more about this as we go along. That is, discover more about Jesus' purpose in telling the parable. And the idea is, in this life, everyone knows the rich man's name.

I mean, people know rich men's names in this life. But no one knows the name of a poor man. Because he's so insignificant. And so not a part of society.

And not important to anybody. And so that's true to life, isn't it? But after death, no one knows the rich man's name. Because why? He's in hell.

And who cares about his name there? But the poor man, everyone knows his name. Because he's in heaven. And this is the part of the contrast that Jesus has made.

So the name is a part of the parable. Jesus gave him a name. Because he is the one the Lord helped. The one the Lord saved. And by the way, it is interesting. And you may know this.

[16:56] But according to church tradition, the rich man also had a name. And it's not in the Bible. Jesus didn't give us his name. You don't find it anywhere else in the Bible.

But church tradition named him Dives. You ever heard this? Rich man is named Dives. Why? Because the word Dives is Latin for rich.

And so I guess, you know, they just thought maybe the rich man ought to have a name too. You know, so. All right, so I'm just trying to explain why this is not a true story.

This is a parable. And the third reason is really the most important reason. That is that there are a number of elements in the story that have no support anywhere else in Scripture.

A number of very key elements to the story. For example, there is nothing in the Bible to support the idea that people are able, from hell, able to look into heaven. You won't find that anywhere else in Scripture.

[17:55] Not only that, but not only can they not look into hell, but also cannot speak to people in hell and have some kind of a back and forth dialogue with anybody in hell.

Or in heaven. Or in heaven. And you just won't find that anywhere else in Scripture. It's only here in this parable that Jesus told.

And not only that, but there's nothing in the Bible to support the idea that when people die, the angels come and gather up their bodies. They don't even have to be buried.

They just gather up their bodies and take them on directly to heaven. Like happened here in the parable. And that is exactly what Jesus says in the story. That the angels came and took Lazarus after he died.

Took him. Gathered him up is the idea. And took him on to heaven. You won't find that anywhere else in Scripture. In fact, in Scripture, it's very clear that when a person dies, their spirit goes to heaven.

[18:52] But the body is still here. Until the resurrection. And we know this is true life. I mean, we've been to funerals of dead believers. And no one ever witnessed the angels coming and gathering up the body of the deceased.

And carrying that body on to heaven. It just doesn't happen that way. And so, this is the only place you'll find it in the parable. But Jesus is not intending to teach a truth here or a theology about what happens to the dead after they die.

That angels come and gather them up. He's not trying to teach us that there is actually a way for people in hell to look up into heaven. And have conversations with people in heaven.

He's not trying to teach that. It's all part of the parable. And part of his purpose. This is a fictitious story. It's a parable. Jesus made it all up.

Now, that's not a bad thing. He's using this made-up story in order to convey a point to the Pharisees. Because the Pharisees were, of course, his intended audience here.

[20:00] Now, to be sure, let me say this. That there are elements of the story that are consistent with biblical theology. All right? There are some. There are some elements concerning heaven and hell and salvation and damnation.

And so you say, well, can you just pick and choose which things are part of theology and which parts are not? Well, yeah, we can not just pick and choose. But we can look at certain elements in the story.

And if they're supported by other scriptures in the Bible, then we know that those parts of the story are part of theology. And we can make some judgments about that and some conclusions about all of those particular elements.

And I'm going to do that as we go along here. Here's what we need to understand. That Jesus had one group of people in mind when he told this parable.

The Pharisees. The Pharisees. And they were represented by the rich man in the parable. Clearly. They're represented by this rich man.

[ 21 : 04 ] Because like him, like the rich man, these Pharisees will soon find themselves in a place that they would have never expected to find themselves in. Hell.

And those whom the Pharisees despised in life. The poor. The sick. The lame. The blind. To them, sinners.

They were all sinners. They kind of categorized them all as sinners and under the judgment of God. Those people. Like Lazarus. Lazarus represented those kind of people that the Pharisees despised.

And had already labeled as sinners. Lazarus. Like him, they will one day be in a place the Pharisees would have never expected to find them in.

Heaven. That is the point. And so you see the whole parable is directed toward Pharisaical people. Those living in Jesus' day as well as those who are still living today.

[ 22 : 07 ] Pharisaical people who reject the gospel of grace. Trust in their own self-righteousness. That is the point of this parable. Now that's a long introduction.

And we need to move along. But I just needed to explain some of these things. Because the conclusions that we come to about the parable and the point of the parable depend upon how we understand this parable.

That it is a parable. So that we don't make any mistakes. Not only making mistakes in theology. But we also don't make a mistake of missing Jesus' primary point here.

The parable basically has three movements to it. Three movements. And first of all we have a brief description of the two main characters in the parable.

We have the rich man and the poor man. And though they're very brief descriptions. They do pretty well give us something about their individual.

[ 23 : 13 ] Their respective life situations. And they're really stark aren't they? I mean their life situations could not be more different. So that's the first part of the story.

And then the second movement in the story is a shocker. And it's meant to be shocking. We have a shocking turn of events for the two characters in the story.

Some have called it the grand reversal. And we'll talk about that. And then third and finally we have this dialogue between the rich man who is now in hell. And with Abraham.

Father Abraham who of course is in heaven. And this is a fictitious dialogue. It's hypothetical communique between hell and heaven.

And Jesus' whole point in telling this parable is revealed in this third part of the story. Alright so let's get to it. And I've named it this way. Name these three parts this way.

[ 24 : 11 ] First of all you have the here and now of the parable. Secondly you have then and there. And then third you have the what and why of the parable.

So that's how I want to divide the parable. Those are my three main points. First of all the here and now of it. And we're talking here about how the parable describes the lives of the two main characters in the story.

And they are of course as I've already said very different. As a matter of fact the difference is profoundly extreme.

And Jesus intended for it to be that way. To be such extreme in life situations. And so Jesus begins first of all with a rich man.

And he says there was a certain rich man. And right off the question is how rich was he? How rich was he? And Jesus gives us really I think basically two descriptions.

[ 25 : 13 ] That tell us that this man was the richest of the rich. Extremely rich. Over the top rich. He says first of all he says he was clothed in purple and fine linen.

That's the first kind of description that he gives about the man. He's describing how he dressed. Clothed in purple and fine linen. Now the word purple by the way really tells us something more than just the color of the clothing.

This man was rich. It refers first of all to the type of clothing. And it was an outer garment that he's describing here. His outer garment. And it was made of wool.

Because that's what rich people wore in that day. But not just your everyday run of the mill wool. It was very refined and special wool. In fact this wool had gone through a particular kind of process.

A very tedious and expensive process. And all of it would be done by hand. And so it was extremely expensive. Only the wealthiest of the wealthy could afford this kind of outer garment.

[ 26 : 21 ] And this process that it went through would have made the wool luxuriously soft. And only the very wealthy would wear it.

And so that's what he's referring to when he says a purple. A purple and fine linen. Purple first of all refers to the outer garment. But it also refers not only to the type of the garment.

But also its color. Because this process that they would take the wool through. Would ultimately produce a wool that was pure white.

Whiter than white. But then the rich people would dye it usually. Or maybe even use several different dyes. But this man dyed his wool.

Or had his wool outer garment dyed in purple. And this says something about his wealth. Because this would be Tyrean purple. It would be a dye that came from Tyre.

[ 27 : 16 ] Which was a coastal city in that day. And it was very expensive. Because the dye was extracted from shellfish. And it took a whole lot of them. And so it was a very expensive process.

To produce the dye. And then not only an expensive process. To process and produce this wool garment. But then the dye that was used was extremely expensive.

The most expensive of dyes that could be bought in that day. So he's just kind of giving testimony to the wealth of this man. And then you have the term fine linen. And this would be a reference to the inner garments.

Underneath this outer garment. And it was a fine linen. Not just linen or a type of cotton. But a fine linen. And it was most likely would be. And everybody there listening to the parable would have thought about this.

Egyptian cotton. The most expensive. And the most refined. The finest of all cottons. And this would be his inner garment. Now that's interesting enough.

[ 28 : 17 ] But really there's one obscure word in the phrase. That tells us really more about his wealth. Than anything else that Jesus says here. And it is that word clothed.

That's how it's translated in the New King James. And the word clothed. The verb tense of that verb. Or that word clothed. Conveys the idea that this was the rich man's everyday clothing.

He wore this every day of his life. That's why some translation. I think the New American Standard uses the word habitually. So it's bringing out the idea. Habitually dressed.

In purple and fine linen. And so this guy didn't observe. You know casual Fridays. You know he didn't. He didn't wear a casual dress. Throughout the week.

He didn't have any kind of grubby Saturday. Kind of clothing. He wore this every single day. He dressed like a king. Every single day.

[ 29 : 19 ] Even we're to suppose on those days. He never even left the house. You know. So what is Jesus doing? Remember this is a fictitious story. And so Jesus is giving these details for a purpose.

Jesus means to be extreme in his description of this man's wealth. He was a rich man. And then he says something else about him.

He says he fared sumptuously every day. That's an interesting phrase. The New American Standard has it joyously. He was joyously living in splendor every day.

Now get that. Can you imagine this? What this is saying is. He was happy all the time. I mean he was doing exactly what he wanted to do all the time. It was fun all the time.

Luxury every single day of his life. He never ever had a down time. Never had to go without. Never had to scrimp on anything.

[ 30 : 18 ] He not only had every single thing he needed and more. But he also had everything he wanted. And whatever his heart desired.

That's what he could have. He didn't have to say no to his desires at any time. See Jesus could not be describing a wealthier person.

And that is exactly his point. This man is over the top wealthy. This man is the wealthiest of the wealthy. The richest of the rich.

Rich. And this is Jesus' intent. And at this point Jesus has these Pharisees salivating all over themselves. As he describes this guy.

Because this is who they wanted to be. And this is who they thought would be right to be. Because this to them this rich man.

[ 31 : 14 ] In their eyes this rich man was the most blessed of God. That's what they thought. That was their mentality. They could not conceive of a more righteous Jew.

Than this rich man. As evidenced by his opulent life. And this is how they thought. And Jesus knew that. And so that's why he described this man.

In such extreme terms. And then Jesus introduces the other character of the story. Verse 20. A certain beggar. Named Lazarus.

And Jesus uses some pretty extreme language. In describing this poor man. In fact really. He gives us more details about this poor man.

Than he does about the rich man. And the language that he uses. The description that he gives us. Of this poor man. Is extreme. First of all.

[ 32 : 16 ] He's a beggar. All right. Well. So. There are a lot of beggars in that day. A lot of beggars in our day. If you've been to other countries. You'll see a lot of beggars. Even in our own country. We have beggars.

All right. So what? Beggars. Well. The word is tokos. If you want to spell it. It's P-T-O-K-O-S. Tokos. And it is usually translated poor.

There are other words in the Greek language for poor. And this is a very specialized word for poor. And it means literally that he was beggarly. Beggarly poor. That is so poor.

The poorest of the poor. So poor that his life was utterly reduced to begging. Just to survive. All right. So that's the word that Jesus uses to describe.

This poor man named Lazarus. So you see the extreme. Describing the rich man to now describing the poor man. As poor as you could possibly get and still be alive.

[ 33 : 20 ] And that's this man named Lazarus. Then he also gives us some other information. He says that he was covered or full of sores.

All right. So his whole body was covered with sores. He doesn't tell us why or what happened to him. What kind of disease he may have had. He just says he's covered with sores. And we're talking here about open lesions all over his body.

Oozing skin. Ulcers possibly. All over his body. That's terrible. And then third he says he was laid at his gate.

Laid at the rich man's gate. And the translation laid is really very lame. Very tame. It's the word ballo in the Greek.

And it literally means to throw. To throw. Ballo. That's how I learned it when I was learning Greek.

You know ballo sounds like ball. And you throw a ball.

[ 34 : 22 ] And that's how I remember ballo is the word for throw. All right. So some of you learning Greek. Maybe you've already used that kind of word association. But it means to throw. In fact the expanded definition would be to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls or how it falls.

That's the idea behind this word ballo. So here's the idea. This poor man was thrown down at the gate of this rich man's house. And I can just kind of visualize this.

You know nobody wanted to mess with this guy. I mean he's always in the way. Nobody knew what to do with him. So they loaded him up on a cart and hauled him over to the rich man's house. The richest man in the community. Said well we'll just let him deal with him.

And then they just grab him off the cart and just throw him down there on the pavement in front of the rich man's gate. All right. So he's just there. He's oozing and bleeding.

Oozing, bleeding possibly from some kind of disease he has. But now also because he's just been thrown down on the steps of the rich man's house. And so he's just bleeding all over the place there.

[ 35 : 31 ] What a description. I mean this is over the top language to describe how poor and how miserable and how desperate was this man's condition.

But he's not through yet. Fourth he says that he is desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. And the word that stands out to me is this word desiring.

And in the original language it is a strong word and it describes the man's desperation. He's in the throes of starvation. This man is.

And he's desperate. So desperate that he would even take the dirty crumbs, dirty bread that has fallen on the floor that usually the dogs get to eat.

He would even take that. And gladly take it. You're getting the description here. You've got to picture how desperate this man is. And then there's one more thing.

[ 36 : 30 ] But he says that the dogs came and licked his sword. Now don't get the idea that this is some form of mercy. These dogs were not pet dogs, lap dogs, anything like that.

These were scavengers. Mongrels. They just kind of ran wild and loose. And it's difficult for us to see this in our culture. But they were even allowed to come into the house and kind of clean up the floor.

You know, the food that fell from the table. And so these mongrels, these dogs, wild dogs are licking the, imagine, the inflamed and oozing ulcers.

They're all over this poor man's body. What a description. I mean, it's incredible. So extreme is the description here.

And the Pharisees at this point are just, I imagine, are shaking their heads in disgust. And they're thinking, what a sinner. What a sinner. A filthy, rotten, condemned sinner this man is.

[ 37 : 39 ] You see, that's the kind of mentality they had. For those who were in the kind of condition that this poor man was in. They had kind of the same kind of mentality that Job's friends had.

Remember what Job's friends said? They said that Job was just paying the price for his sins. And that's what they thought would think about anybody like the one described in this parable.

This poor man. And that was the prevailing theology of their... Remember what they said back in John chapter 19 when there was this blind man. And the question was asked, who sinned?

That was the first question that came to their minds. Even Jesus' own disciples were kind of caught up in that kind of philosophy. Now, they knew better later when they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit and understood.

But this was the mentality of the day. Who sinned? I mean, the guy's blind. Somebody must have sinned. Was it this man or was it his parents? And that's what they thought. So, Jesus is setting this all up by giving this extreme contrast in his description of these two principal characters of the parable.

[ 38 : 52 ] And so, the first thing is the here and now of the parable. And what a contrast. Wouldn't you agree? The rich man has it all. And the poor man has nothing.

He's poorer than the poorest. If that's possible. And the rich man has the best of life. And the poor man has the worst of life.

And that's clear from Jesus' description. For the rich man, life is as good as it could possibly get.

And for the poor man, life is as bad as it could possibly get.

And the Pharisees, again, are thinking this is as it should be. I mean, the rich man is holy and righteous and just. He must be. Look at how blessed he is.

And they're thinking the poor man is a terrible sinner. Horrible sinner. He must be. Just look at how cursed he is. All right, so you're getting the idea here of the parable as Jesus introduces it.

[ 40 : 00 ] That's the here and now of it. The Pharisees weren't ready for the second part of it. And so here comes the grand reversal. And so notice second, the then and there.

Then, something happened. And suddenly these two guys are in two very different places. The then and there. Look at verse 22 again.

So it was that the beggar died. Well, you'd expect that to happen. And he was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. So he wasn't even buried, was he?

They carried him on to heaven. The rich man also died. That was not expected. But he did. And the idea is they died at the same time. So here's this guy who's so sick.

I mean, he can't move. And he's just lying in his own, you know, juices, pretty much, and blood. He dies. Well, okay, yeah. We would expect that. Rich man has everything he wants.

[ 41 : 02 ] He's got the best of everything, and he dies too. So that's the first kind of shocker. But really, they were not ready for the big shocker. The big shocker. Because the rich man also died and was buried and being in torments in Hades.

He went to hell. But the first shocker is this. The shocker is that the poor, wretched beggar, he's in heaven.

Now, that doesn't sound shocking to us. But believe me, it was to these Pharisees. He's in heaven. Huh? How could this be?

But not only that, but he is taken to heaven by special delivery. Special transport. The angels gather up his body.

His pitiful body and just gathers him up and takes him to heaven. This is a shocker.

[ 42 : 09 ] First that he went to heaven. But then that he was taken there by the angels. Because according to the Pharisees, the religious hypocrites of the day, it really should have been the garbage collectors who gathered up his body.

And the usual thing, the expected thing, would be for the garbage collectors to gather up his body, throw it on the cart, take it out to the city dump, and just throw it out there.

It's just like any other refuse. So this is a shocker. The angels gathered up his body. But then, not only that, it just keeps getting better.

Lazarus is placed by the side of Abraham. What? I mean, he's in heaven.

Lazarus is there in heaven, but he's not at the back of the crowd. He's not out there in some periphery of the host of those who have gone to heaven.

[ 43 : 12 ] He is sitting right beside Abraham. Now this is, again, this is just part of the story. It's fictitious. And it's meant for effect.

Because Abraham was the most revered man in all of Jewish history. Even before Moses. Abraham was the father of the Jews.

And there's Lazarus. This disease of a man. This worthless piece of humanity.

And he is literally cuddled in the very bosom of Abraham. The most revered of all Jews who ever lived. I mean, this is just too much for these Pharisees to bear.

And this is what Jesus is intending to do. It's all for shock value. Because he's going to get to something very, very important.

[ 44 : 16 ] But then what about the rich man? Where is he? He is in hell. How can this be? He's in hell and he's in torment.

What a reversal. Do you see? Here and now, the rich man is rich. Richer than the richest. And the poor man is poorer than the poorest.

But then and there, the rich man is poor. If possible, even poorer than Lazarus ever was on this earth. It is possible.

And yet, the poor man is rich beyond anything we could ever, anyone could ever have in this life. Here and now, the rich man is satisfied beyond all wants and needs. He's satisfied. And the poor man, he is suffering.

[ 45 : 20 ] And he has nothing. Then and there, the rich man is suffering. And the poor man is satisfied. See the reversal here in the parable?

From one extreme to the other extreme. Here and now, the rich man is filled and full. And the poor man is hungry and empty.

But then and there, the rich man hasn't even a drop of water to put on his tongue. I don't know what is going on with this earpiece. Must be my ear. Now think about it.

Rich man, he has everything here. But there, in hell, not even a drop of water. Just the smallest of drops that might fall from the tip of a finger.

He doesn't even have that. But the poor man is sitting down right beside the most revered of all Jews, Abraham.

[ 46 : 28 ] And he's sitting down at the great heavenly banquet. I can't imagine what it would be like. When in this life, he would have been satisfied with just bread crumbs.

Dirty bread crumbs at that. The grand reversal. Here and now of the parable. The then and there of the parable.

And now the Pharisees are right where Jesus wants them. Because now we want to get quickly to the final movement of the parable.

And that is the what and why of it. The what of the parable is this. Really, Jesus gives us a testimony of a man who went to hell.

And it is a testimony of a man who never expected to end up there. Never in his wildest imagination did he ever think he would be going to hell.

[ 47 : 33 ] Or end up in hell. And yet, interestingly, it is a testimony of a man who knew that he deserved to be there. But then the why of the parable is really this.

Why was this rich man in hell? Why was he there? So let's look at it. Verse 23. Just kind of read along here and comment a little bit as we come to the close of this sermon.

And being in torments in Hades. Don't get hung up on that word Hades. It's just hell. It's just another word for hell. In Hades, he lifted up his eyes.

Because he knew where he was. And what did he see? He saw Abraham afar off. So he's looking up and he looks up into heaven and he sees Abraham.

And why Abraham? Because the Jews would have, they would have been very impressed. Just to mention the name Abraham. So again, it's just a story.

[ 48 : 45 ] But it's all for effect. He saw Abraham far off. And who else did he see? He saw Lazarus in his bosom. Of all the countless numbers of people in heaven.

He sees Abraham and he sees Lazarus. That, you know, piece of flesh that used to lie out there bleeding all over his front steps.

He sees Lazarus. He sees Lazarus. And perhaps he saw him, again, just in the story. Saw him because of where he was.

In Abraham's bosom. Right by his side. And then he cried. And said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me.

Now, notice he didn't make excuse for himself. He didn't say, I don't deserve to be here. I think there will be many, countless.

[ 49 : 53 ] Maybe all those who go to hell are going to be saying, I don't deserve this. He made no excuse for himself. And he did not even ask to be taken out of hell. Notice.

And he 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's a key word here.

Remember that in your lifetime you received your good things. And likewise, Lazarus, evil things.

But now he is comforted and you are tormented. The grand reversal.

This, you see, is the what of hell. The what of hell. This is the experience of hell for those who end up there. We can go other places in scripture and have supporting passages that deal with many of the issues that Jesus just kind of in a cursory way includes in his parable.

[ 51 : 07 ] This is the experience. A place of unabated torment. Agony. A place of eternal separation.

Separated from God. Separated from the saved. Separated from all that is good. That great golf fix. Hell is a place of memory.

There are other places in scripture that support this. A consciousness in hell. And I think the idea is a consciousness of sin. Of sin committed.

And sinfulness. A place of constant guilt. In hell. With no end to it. And so it's a place of no escape. Ever. And therefore a place of no hope. Verse 26. And besides all this. Abraham goes on saying.

[ 52 : 11 ] Besides all this. Between us and you. There is a great golf fix. So that those who want to pass from here to you cannot. And nor can those from there pass to us.

But now we need to get to the why of hell. We could speak a long time about the what of it. The Bible says quite a lot about the what of hell.

In fact the Bible tells us more about hell than it does heaven. And there's a reason for that. But what about the why? That is why was this rich man in hell?

And it's easy for some to make a mistake about this. And so I would say first of all. It's not because he was rich. Okay. You say well of course I know that.

But there are a lot of people who think that. Not because he is rich. You know the parable mentions Abraham. And Abraham in this life was extremely wealthy man.

[ 53 : 17 ] And he's in heaven. It's not because he was rich. And I would also add it's not because he was some horrible sinner.

That is in a sense of you know just a life that was you know full of heinous sin. Kind of the extreme of sinfulness.

Not there because of that. I mean you notice in the parable that Jesus makes no mention. Doesn't add to his story anything about the morality of this rich man. Doesn't say a thing about it.

Except that he was apparently selfish. I mean that's certainly mentioned here. Now he was a sinner. Alright. Don't misunderstand me. He was a sinner. And he was in hell because of sin. Alright. I'm not discounting the importance and the seriousness of sin.

[ 54 : 14 ] And the condemnation of sin. Not at all. But that's only part of it here. Sinners go to heaven too. Right. Are people in hell because they are worse sinners?

Sinners than the sinners who go to heaven? Absolutely not. So he was a sinner. But that's just part of the story. And again there is the implication here.

Clear implication. That he was guilty of the sin of selfishness. I mean he loved his money. And he didn't share his money with the poor or needy. He had someone right there on his doorstep.

And he didn't help that man. Alright. That's clear. But let me ask you this. Would he have been in heaven if he had shared his wealth with the poor man?

No. No. Everyone who goes to hell is a selfish sinner. Right? Huh?

[ 55 : 18 ] Everyone who goes to hell is a selfish sinner. That's where you say, yes that's right. Thank you. Guess what? Everyone who goes to heaven is also a selfish sinner.

So what is the difference? What makes the difference? Well, why did this rich man go to hell? Let's look at the rest of the parable and find out. Verse 27. Then he said, I beg you therefore, Father, that you would send him, that is Lazarus, to my father's house.

For I have five brothers that he may testify to them. Testify of what? Well, actually, testify of a miracle.

He's alive from the dead. That piece of quivering, bleeding flesh that his brother, rich man's brother, saw every day and passed by every day and knew died because suddenly he's gone, he's dead, and suddenly now he's knocking at my door.

He's alive. Here he is, alive from the dead. That's what he would testify of. A miracle. He's come back from heaven.

[ 56 : 46 ] It would be a sign from God and then they would see that sign and they would repent. That's the idea. That the rich man had.

He says that he may testify of them lest they also come to the place of torment. And verse 29, Abraham said to him, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

This is the crux to the matter. What does he mean by Moses and the prophets anyway? He means the Bible. Well, in his day, just the Old Testament.

He's talking about the word of God. He's referring, this is how they would, how they would, the term they would use for the scriptures.

The revelation of God. It would be the Moses and the prophets. And so what is he saying? He's saying they have God's revelation. They have God's word. Let them hear it.

[ 57 : 52 ] And be saved. That's what Abraham is saying. And listen close to the rich man's response. I didn't notice this until this last week.

He said no. You see that? He said no. Father Abraham.

That is no, Moses and the prophets won't be enough for my brothers. That won't do it. It's inadequate. That is, no, the word of God isn't what they need in order to come to repentance and salvation and avoid this horrible place.

So what do they need? they need a visible sign. They need a miracle. That's what they need.

And by the way, that is what the Pharisees have been asking of Jesus. Repeatedly. Give us a sign and we will believe you. That's what they wanted.

[ 59 : 05 ] Rich man is just simply a representation of the Pharisees and their way of thinking. Give us a sign. We just need a sign and we'll believe. Implication meaning we'll repent and believe if you just give us a sign.

And that's what the rich man in the parable is saying. No. The word of God won't do it. The word of God is not enough. That won't do it. But if one goes to them from the dead, then they will believe. They will repent. That's what he said. That's what he believed. And so here's the answer to the question as to why the rich man was in hell.

He did not believe the word of God. He did not believe the word of God. Verse 31, But Abraham said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, and the idea behind here is not just simply give a hearing of it, but to receive it.

Believe it. If they do not believe Moses and the prophets, that is, if they do not believe the word of God, then neither will they be persuaded, though one rise from the dead.

[ 60 : 20 ] So true. It is so true. Yet there are many today would have us believe that just get people healed, then people will be saved.

If we could just parade a bunch of people up here, and better yet, if we could just have a funeral service and then raise that person from the dead, then man, we would have a great harvest of souls for the kingdom.

Oh yes, that's what some people believe today and what they teach. Beware of that. It's exactly what this rich man believed, and he was in hell.

It's exactly what the Pharisees believed, and they were headed for hell. So true.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12, verse 39? The Pharisees wanted a sign from Jesus, and Jesus said, an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

[ 61 : 41 ] For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

What's he saying? The Son of Man, that's me. I'm going to die. And three days later, I'm going to rise from the dead.

And so then all these Pharisees will believe, right? Well, let me read on. Jesus predicts what will happen to them. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

The people of Nineveh repented at what? The preaching. The word proclaimed by Jonah. A man back from the dead, figuratively with Jonah.

And then he said, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. And that's Jesus. The rich man is in hell because he did not believe God's word.

[ 62 : 54 ] The Pharisees were destined for hell because they did not believe God's word and you will go to hell. you will go to hell if you do not believe the scriptures, the word of God concerning the one true God who he is, the word of God concerning sin and the seriousness of sin and the condemnation of sin and repentance and grace and faith and forgiveness and salvation in Christ.

If you do not believe the word of God on all those matters then you will not be saved. Do you see how important this is?

And why Paul said in Romans 10, 17, faith comes by hearing. Literally, by the thing heard.

And that thing heard the word of God. for you. Life is short.

Death is short. Sin is the curse. Christ is the cure.

[ 64 : 20 ]