

The Parables of Jesus

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

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1. Introductory Remarks.

This parable is about the choice we all have that affects our eternal destiny. We have a choice – whether we will have God’s heavenly reward or the fiery destruction of the wicked after death. This parable paints us a graphic picture of what Hell is going to be like.

Luke 16:19-31 *"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² 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. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ 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.' ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' ²⁷ Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ 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.' "*

Jesus uses two extremes here to make His point. He uses the illustration of a person who is totally caught up in wealth and prosperity and another who is in extreme poverty to show us the difference of two individual’s eternal destinies. Most of us are not in either one of these categories, but nevertheless, the point Jesus is making applies to all of us.

The purpose of this message is to make those who do not know Christ aware of your choices in your eternal destiny and for those of us who know Christ to fully

understand the consequences of what falling away or disowning Christ could lead to.

It is also important to be properly motivated to win others to Christ and to press in with a great degree of fervency to your eternal destiny. Knowing the eternal outcome of the wicked helps us as Christians to maintain a right spiritual perspective.

2. A Warning Against a Desire for Riches.

It is my conviction that Jesus uses the illustration of the rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, who fared sumptuously every day as a warning to us as to how dangerous the pursuance of riches and prosperous living can be.

- **The Story of the Rich Young Ruler,**

The story of this rich young ruler illustrates to us that there will be many who will not make it into eternal life with Jesus because of their love for riches and affluent living.

Luke 18:18-25 Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁹ So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. ²⁰ You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " ²¹ And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." ²² So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²³ But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. ²⁴ And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵

1 Timothy 6:9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

3. The Example of Asaph.

In the Psalm of Asaph we see where he came to his senses and gained his spiritual perspective back when he began to see what the outcome or the eternal destiny of the wicked would be.

Asaph shares how he almost stumbled when he became envious of the prosperity of the wicked.

Psalms 73:1-3 Truly God is good to Israel, to such as 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 boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Psalms 73:16-19 When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me-- ¹⁷ until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. ¹⁸ Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. ¹⁹ Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.

III. A Graphic Illustration of Hell.

The parable of the Rich man and Lazarus gives us a graphic illustration of the torment that is awaiting all of those who are going to be spending eternity in hell.

The Rich man speaks of being tormented in flames and does not wish this place of torment on anyone, especially his family members.

Luke 16:24-25 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.'²⁵ 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.'

1. Hell is spoken of as a furnace of fire – a place of intense pain.

Matthew 13:41-42 *The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,⁴² and will cast them into the **furnace of fire**. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

2. Hell is spoken of as a place of everlasting fire.

Matthew 18:8 *If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the **everlasting fire**.*

Mark 9:43-46 *If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched--⁴⁴ where 'Their worm does not die, **and the fire is not quenched.**'⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, **into the fire that shall never be quenched--**⁴⁶ where 'their worm does not die, **and the fire is not quenched.**'*

The kind of worm that is spoken of here is the kind that preys upon dead bodies – this speaks of their punishment after death will never cease. It also symbolizes the loathsomeness of the penalty.ⁱ

There are many people today who are under a lot of emotional strain and torment and who often try and succeed at taking their lives by suicide. The problem is that death shall be a much worse torment and pain than anything they could ever imagine going through here on earth.

3. Hell is a place of fire and brimstone.

It is a place of fire and brimstone where there shall be torment forever and ever with no rest day or night. This is not going to be a pleasant place.

Revelation 14:9-11 *Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. **He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke of their **torment ascends forever***

and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

4. It is described as a lake of fire.

At the great white throne judgment the books will be opened and all those whose names are not written in the Book of Life shall be cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:12-15 *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

IV. Jesus Does Not Desire Anyone to End Up In Hell.

The important thing to keep in mind is that Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it. The world was already condemned. Jesus came so that the world would be saved from this awful place of torment.

John 3:17-19 *God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

V. The Eternal Life of the Righteous.

- **Jesus is preparing a place for us according to our heart's desire.**

John 14:1-4 *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."*

- **New Jerusalem awaits those of us who have decided to follow Jesus and receive His eternal life.**

Revelation 21:1-7 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." ⁶ And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."*

Pray that you will be among the righteous and be a part of New Jerusalem and not a part of the lake of fire and its torment. As long as you continue to follow Jesus your place in New Jerusalem is assured.

¹ Thayers Greek Lexicon of the New Testament - #4663