

WHAT THE RICH MAN DISCOVERED IN HELL

Luke 16:22-23 • TV143A

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Luke 16:22-23

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

I want you to open your Bible with me today to the book of **Luke**. I will be reading a passage of Scripture found in the **16th** chapter of the book of **Luke, verses 22 and 23**.

My message today is on this subject: **“WHAT THE RICH MAN DISCOVERED IN HELL.”**

Our Master said: *“And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried and in hell he lifted up his eyes.”*

Now, if I understand anything about today’s religion, I would say that it is characterized by four things. There are four things that characterize today’s modern religion:

First of all: The church has left its first love!

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Our Master said: *“My house shall be called a house of prayer but you have made it a den of thieves.”* You and I know that the church today is anything but a house of prayer. It is anything but a house of praise and a house of worship.

The church today is a social club. The church today is a gymnasium or has been converted into a school or a cafeteria or an entertainment center. It is anything but a house of prayer.

It is not a house of worship or praise; the church has left her first love and therefore, she has left her reason to exist.

Secondly: I would say that today’s religion is characterized by this: the average pulpit is for promotion today and not preaching!

The prophet Amos wrote: *“Behold; the days come saith the Lord God when I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but of hearing of the Word of the Lord. Men shall wonder from place to place from north to east, from sea to sea, to seek to hear the Word of God and shall not find it.”*

I ask you today: where is the preaching of the Word of God? We have the finest buildings that money can buy. We have the finest buildings and architects can design. We have the most educated personnel in the world.

We have the best in music but where does a man go to hear the preaching of the Word of God? The preaching of the Gospel has been relegated to the scrap heap. Everything else in the world today is done from the pulpit except the one thing that Christ called us to do.

He said: *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”* Paul wrote to young Timothy and exhorted him to *“preach the Word.”*

Thirdly: The thing that characterizes today’s modern religion is this: the people are spectators, not participators in worship, prayer, and praise!

The Scripture says: *“O come let us bow down; let us worship before the Lord our God; let us bow down, (not let the preacher bow down, not let the song leader bow down); let us worship the Lord our God.”* Then the Apostle says: *“Every knee shall bow. Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”*

Most church attenders today are spectators; they are watching from the pews while professional religionists enquire in special music and the preachers in the pulpit entertain them.

Most religionist’s today pay someone to study for them, to pray for them, and to somehow, believe for them. We are in the day of spectator religion.

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Fourthly: I would say and this leads me to the heart of my message; what characterizes today's religion is this: today's religionists believe a part of the Bible (the part he likes, the part that appeals to him) and he puts a question mark on the rest of the Scripture!

Now God said in his Word: *"all scripture is given by inspiration of God; (that is all scripture is God breathed). "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."* Isaiah said: *"If they speak not according to the word of God, it is because there is no light in them."*

Men today say they believe the Bible, but what they mean is that they believe that part of the Bible which they like and they reject the part they do not like.

Men today believe in grace but they certainly don't believe in sovereign grace. Yet, our Lord said: *"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy."*

Jonah said: *"Salvation is of the Lord."* David said: *"The salvation of the righteous is of God and of him only."*

Men today believe in a fall but not a total fall. They believe in sin but not original sin. Men today believe in a Saviour, not an effectual Saviour. They say:

**"Jesus did a part and I a part you know:
Sin left a crimson stain
But we washed it white as snow."**

They do not believe in the operation of grace nor regeneration by grace but they believe in cooperation with grace.

Men today believe in God but not the living God, not the almighty God, not the God of creation, nor the God of Scriptures.

Men today believe in heaven but not in hell, yet the Scripture says: *"no scripture is of any private interpretation."* What does that mean preacher? Well, it means this: that no verse of Scripture can stand alone or be separated from the rest of the Word of God; it must all stand together.

You mean to tell me that I have to take all the Word or none of it? That's exactly what I am telling you: *"no scripture is of any private interpretation."*

No man can have one verse of Scripture in Matthew and reject another verse in Mark. No man can have one part of Hebrews and turn down one part of Romans. No Scripture can be interpreted in the light of itself; it must be interpreted in the light of all of God's Word.

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Then, I will say this also is meant by that text: that no Scripture is interpreted by what we think, what we think it should say or what we think it does say but the Scripture is interpreted in the light of what God almighty has revealed.

Now, this Scripture that I read to you a moment ago: *“it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom, the rich man also died and was buried and in hell he lifted up his eyes.”*

This portion of God’s Word has been ridiculed, it has been debated, it has been argued, and it has been denied. Somebody said: “This Scripture has been ridiculed by some, doubted by many, and avoided by most” but it is the Word of God.

It’s not only the Word of God it is the warning of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Listen to it again: *“The rich man died and was buried and in hell he lifted up his eyes.”*

Now, here we see an ordinary death; we understand that and we are used to that. This is something that we are all acquainted with because all men die. Our friends have died, members of our families have died and we know that we too shall die, for the Scripture has said, *“It’s appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment.”* So, this is an ordinary death. It says: *“The rich man died.”*

There is no problem there at all. There’s no discussion, no debate, and no argument; this is just another man, another son of Adam, another child of the flesh who has died. We are acquainted with it, we understand it, and we agree with it.

But listen; we go on: Here is a burial. Well, we have been there many times. We dig graves and we fill them with the dead bodies of men that we have known.

We have journeyed many times out to the cemetery and stood by the open grave and watched them lower a casket and then come back later and find that the grave has been covered with dust, even planted with grass and also flowers.

So, we know that men die and we know that men are buried. They are buried in the ground and *“they go back to the dust from which they came.”*

But, it says: *“And in hell he lifted up his eyes,”* now here’s our problem. The Lord takes us beyond death, beyond the grave; he takes us into hell. Our Lord opens up to us the revelations of hell. He lets us see what the rich man discovered in hell.

Now, I know this: the rich man was certainly not a believer here on this earth. He hadn’t been in hell very long until he became a believer. There are no unbelievers in hell.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: *“he died”* (and he was buried by his friends and family). They mourned over and grieved over him, I’m sure, but then he takes us who believe the Scripture a step further and gives us a revelation of what this man discovered in hell:

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First of all: The rich man discovered in hell that death does not end all!

And it says: *“And in hell he lifted up his eyes; (he died; he was buried and...)”* It doesn’t say that he died and he was buried and that’s all; it says: *“he died, he was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes.”*

You know, I hear people speaking at funerals and at the bedside of folks who have just died and I hear comments like this; I hear people say: “Here is a man who has been sick a long time; he’s very old and very feeble and He died.” And someone looks up and they will say: “well; his troubles are over.” Perhaps his troubles aren’t over, perhaps his troubles have just begun, but that’s what they say: “well, when he died, his troubles are over.”

The rich man found out that his troubles weren’t over; he discovered that death is not the end. Death is not the end at all. I hear people say this when someone has just died and they come and they say: “well, he’s better off now isn’t he?”

Well, that depends, not necessarily; he may not be better off. This man certainly was not better off. This man faired sumptuously. This man had all that his body or his heart could desire, but in hell, he had nothing but suffering. So, he wasn’t better off. That wouldn’t have been true in his case would it?

Then I hear people say, well, after someone has died: “he’s gone to his reward.” You may be really speaking the truth there. He’s gone to his reward, the reward for evil, the reward for unbelief, a reward for rejecting God’s truth, the reward for disbelieving the Gospel. Yes, he’s gone all right, to his reward but what a solemn, serious, time it is.

Someone else says: “Well; he is at peace” and they put on the tombstone, “Rest in Peace.” My friend, there is no peace in hell. There is no rest in hell. Men do not rest in peace that go to hell.

I ask this question that Job asked: *“If a man die, shall he live again?”* The Word of God says so; in **Daniel chapter 12:2** it says: *“those that sleep in the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and contempt but they that sleep in the earth shall awake.”*

Isaiah said in chapter 26:19: *“the dead shall live; the dead shall live again, together with my dead body shall they arise.”*

John wrote this in chapter 5:28: *“the hour cometh in which all, (in which all, saved and lost, believers and unbelievers, all, old and young), all shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth: It shall come to pass when all shall hear the voice of the Son of God, all that are in the graves and they shall come forth.”*

Now this man like some of you may not have believed in life beyond the grave. Perhaps there are those listening to me that say: “Well, I just don’t believe in life beyond the grave.”

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This fellow didn't either but when he awoke in hell he believed, but too late to redeem the hour, too late to redeem the time, too late to do anything about it.

First of all: The rich man discovered when he awoke in hell was that there is life after death!

Secondly: He discovered that when he awoke in hell, he discovered that almighty God will punish sin!

Now, the world says: "there is no hell." The Universalist says: "there's nobody going to hell." Some people say: "Well, God's too good to send a man to hell." The Bible simply says: "*the rich man died and was buried and in hell he lifted up his eyes.*"

There's no argument, no explanation, no logic, no picture, no debate; he's in hell. That is what God says. The Bible very plainly states what it says; it says: "*in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" There is no argument, no debate, no proof, just stating facts.

Here it does not argue with you about hell. You say, "There is no hell and God is too good to send a man to hell, nobody goes to hell;" the Bible says: "*the rich man died; he was buried and in hell.*"

He found out in hell that God punishes sin. The holy God of heaven will deal with sin, either on Calvary, in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, or in hell. God will punish sin.

He says: "*He will in no wise clear the guilty.*" He says: "*The soul that sinneth; it shall die.*" He says: "*The wages of sin is death.*" The holy God of heaven will deal with sin either on Calvary or in the person of His Son or in hell, body and soul, in the person of everyone who has despised His grace.

Adam discovered that God will punish sin; he discovered it in Eden's Garden. Pharaoh discovered that God will punish sin; he discovered it in the Red Sea. The world discovered that God will punish sin; they discovered it in the flood.

Sodom discovered that God will punish sin; they found it out in the flames. Israel discovered that God will punish sin; they learned it in the wilderness. The rich man discovered that God will punish sin; he learned it in hell.

Now, we can learn these truths either from the Word of God or from experience. I would much rather learn them from the Word of God.

We can learn these truths from the Gospel that is given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord or we can learn them under the lash of God's angry whip throughout all eternity. This man discovered there is life after death. He discovered that almighty God will punish sin.

Thirdly: He also discovered that hell is a place; it is a place; it is not the figment of some preacher's imagination; it is a place. It is not some strange person's fictitious writings; it is a place. It is a place of eternal suffering!

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I know that preachers throughout the years have made much of what they call “literal fire in hell;” it may be, I do not know; that is not my subject today. I don’t know whether there is literal fire in hell or not. This man discovered something about hell that I say is worse than fire:

First of all: He discovered that hell is a place of suffering!

He cried out: “*Father Abraham; send Lazarus that he may dip his finger in water and touch my tongue; I am tormented in this flame.*” Whatever the flame is, it was a flame of torment, if it was from within or from without, it was a time and a place of suffering, great suffering.

Secondly: He found out that hell was not only a place of suffering but a place of memory which added to his grief!

You know, a memory can be pleasant but memory can be most unpleasant. When this rich man cried: “*Father Abraham; send Lazarus to minister to my needs.*” He said: “*Son remember that on the earth you had your good things; now you are tormented; son remember.*”

I believe that a man is going to remember every ray of sunshine he ever saw. I believe that he is going to remember every drink of water he ever took. I believe he will remember every bite of precious food he ever ate.

I believe he will remember every song, every pleasant, beautiful song he ever heard. I believe he will remember every verse of Scripture ever read and every prayer that was offered in his behalf, every Gospel sermon he ever heard.

He will remember everything about this earth and that memory will be tormenting to him; it will add to his grief. It will be one of the sources of his greatest suffering to remember that he despised the very things that could have delivered him from his present agony, memory.

Thirdly: Then, he discovered that hell is place where truth is realized too late!

I said earlier: there are no unbelievers in hell; I am confident of that; there are no unbelievers in hell. Everybody in hell knows there is a hell.

Everybody in hell knows that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour from sin. Everybody in hell knows that God will punish sin. Everybody in hell knows that Christ died on the cross to save sinners. Everybody in hell believes every word of God’s Word now.

This man said: “*Father Abraham; I have got five brothers on the earth*” but he wasn’t concerned about them when he was on the earth. “*Send Lazarus back to warn my brothers.*” He wasn’t concerned about the warnings of men he heard while he was here.

“*Send them back to tell them about this awful place, that they come not here.*” They told him about that awful place but he wouldn’t listen to them.

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Hell is a place where men finally learn the truth, where they learn it too late. Truth is realized; truth is received too late

Fourthly: Hell is separation from God!

Judgment; our Lord said: *“Depart from me; depart from me.”* That’s what he said. That’s the awful sound; *“depart from me.”* It’s not just the punishment of hell and the agony of hell; it’s separation from God.

“God is love;” no love in hell. *“God is light;”* no light in hell. *“God is truth;”* no truth in hell. *“God is peace;”* no peace in hell. *“God is rest;”* no rest in hell. *“God is mercy;”* no mercy in hell. *“God is fellowship;”* no fellowship in hell. All of these things that God is, hell is not; it is separation from God.

Fifthly: Then he discovered that hell is forever!

Abraham said: *“Son, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed and no one can pass from you unto us and no one can pass from us unto you.”* Let that be remembered anytime you hear a sermon on, “Second Chance after Death, Purgatory, Praying Somebody out of Hell,” or any sermon on this subject.

Our Lord said, the words of the Master Himself as He spoke through Abraham: *“between us and you a great gulf fixed, a great separation; no one can pass from you unto us and no one can pass from us unto you.”* It is fixed!

So, he discovered that death does not end all; there is life after death. He discovered that God almighty will, certainly will, and always has, punished sin.

He discovered that hell is a place, an awful place of torment, a place of agonizing memory, a place of separation from God, a place where truth is realized too late and hell is a place that a man will abide forever and forever and forever and forever.

Sixthly: He discovered this; he discovered that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation!

That message is delivered to men by the ministers of the Gospel through the Word of God. So, when Abraham told him this, *“between us and you there is a great gulf fixed and no man can come to us from you or go from to you us.”*

He said: “Father Abraham; send Lazarus back from the dead; send him back to earth; raise him from the dead and send him miraculously back to earth in a sensational way and my brothers will listen to him.”

Abraham said, *“they have Moses and the prophets,”* in other words, they have the Word of God. The Word of God is preached where your brothers live. The Word of God is preached on earth. The Word of God is proclaimed.”

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He said: “Nay; they won’t hear the Word; they won’t listen to the preacher. But if one rose from the dead they would listen, they would believe and they would be saved.” Abraham said: “If they won’t hear the word of God, if they won’t hear what God said to them through his word, they won’t believe though one rose from the dead.”

My dear friend; if Lazarus had risen from the tomb, what could he tell the people on this earth more than God has told them in his Word about death and about judgment and about sin?

If Lazarus came back to the earth from the dead do you know what he would preach? He would preach that man is a sinner. He would preach that man is not able to save himself. He would preach *“that Jesus Christ was sent in the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”*

He would preach that Christ died on that bloody cross to redeem us from our sins. He would preach that He was buried and rose again as our scapegoat and justifier. He would preach that He has ascended to the right hand of God where He is our Mediator and High Priest.”

We have the right and privilege to come to God by Christ. He would say that Christ said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.”* That’s what Lazarus would say.

He couldn’t tell you anymore about sin than God can tell you in his Word, not as much. He couldn’t tell you anymore about death and what God has told you in his Word; men will die; they will be buried and they will wake up in hell.

That’s what God says and that’s what Lazarus would say. Lazarus couldn’t tell you anymore about Christ then the Word of God tells you. He didn’t know any more about Christ than the Word of God proclaims for that’s where he got his information, from the Word of God.

Sensationalism doesn’t save. You could raise one from the dead or you could raise a dozen from the dead and men will not believe.

To prove that our Lord rose from the tomb and they didn’t believe Him. He came back from the grave and stood and preached to people and they still denied it, in fact, the Pharisees, when they found out that Christ had risen from the tomb.

They said to the soldier; “now you tell everybody that His disciples came and stole His body away, and if you give any trouble; we will lie to the governor. We will do whatever we can to cover up this resurrection; we don’t believe it and we don’t want anybody else to believe it.” He discovered that Christ is the way of life. Sensationalism won’t save; God saves men by faith in Christ as they hear the Word of God.

Let me briefly give you two or three more things this man discovered in hell:

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First of all: He discovered: *“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?”*

I’ve preached that to you and other men have preached that to you. He found it out and it’s true: *“what shall it profit a man if he gain the world and lose his soul?”*

Secondly: He discovered this: *“The wages of sin is death.”* He discovered it; he found it out personally.

Thirdly: He discovered this: *“It’s a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God”* without a Mediator, without a Redeemer, without a high priest, without blood atonement. *“It’s a fearful thing, a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of a living God”*

Fourthly: He discovered this: *“The fashion of this world fadeth away.”*

Now, there are so many of you who are listening to me who are giving all of your time and efforts, and everything you have to the things of this earth. This is where your affections are; this is where your concern is; this is where your time is spent, in the things of this earth.

You’ve got a family circle, you’ve got a nice home, you’ve got an automobile, you’ve got a good job, you’ve got social circles, you’ve got friends, you’ve got entertainment, and you’ve got all of these. You’ve got all of these things and this is your life.

You’ve got no time for God, no time for his Word, no time for Christ, no time to seek the Lord. Let me warn you: *“remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth while the evil days come not,”* nor the time draws near when you will say: *“I wish I had, I wish I had.”*

This is what this man is saying. He found out that *“the fashion of this world fadeth away. Naked he came into this world and naked he went out.”* He found out that *“the wages of sin is death.”* He found out it is a *“fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God!”*