**THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS – LUKE 16:19-31**

Over the past 16 weeks, we have been studying the “Parables of Jesus”. Today we finish this series by examining an account that many believe is a parable; I do not. I believe that this is a true account of the eternal fate of 2 men. We will not be studying it as a parable but rather as an always needed teaching on the most serious issue known to man – hell. In opening, we have to understand some basic truths about hell:

* **Hell is a real place.** Many would ask how do we know? The answer is simple – the Bible tells me so. That’s all that we need to know. Until the Bible can be proven wrong, we must accept what it teaches as truth,
* **Hell is eternal separation from God and everything good that flows from God.** Good things that will be missing because God is missing are love, joy, peace, comfort, happiness, contentment, relationships, pleasure etc.
* **Hell is eternal.** When a person arrives in Hell, he or she will never leave. There are no pardons, early release or paroles.
* **Hell is just.** People go to Hell because they reject God’s gift of salvation which would have provided complete forgiveness in His sight. The sins that Christ could have paid for must be paid for by the rejecting sinner. Rev. 22 teaches that those is Hell will remain “filthy”, in other-words, they will continue to sin. An eternal existence to sin requires an eternity of punishment for those sins. God is totally just in sending lost sinners to hell.
* **No one will “get used” to Hell.** Sinners consigned to Hell will never get to the point of ever getting used to Hell. Every moment will be just as bad as the previous moment and as every future moment. Time in Hell will not help people to get acclimated or “used” to it.
1. **Two men with two different fates – Luke 16:19-23 -.** These two men could not have been any different in life. They also couldn’t be any different in eternity. The lifestyles of both men had nothing to do with where they spend eternity. From what the whole of the Bible teaches, these men went to their respective eternal abodes based on what they did with the salvation that God offered. Lazarus went to “Abraham’s Bosom”, paradise before the cross, while the rich man went to Hell.
2. **The rich man was in torments – vs. 23 -.** It is clear that Hell is not as some have espoused, simply a place of separation from God; it is a place of torment. The Bible teaches elsewhere that this torment produces “wailing and gnashing of teeth” – **Matt. 13:42, 50.** This torment never stops nor decreases.
3. **Hell will be hot – vs. 24 -.** It’s interesting that the rich man asks Abraham for “mercy”, the same mercy God could have shown him had he accepted God’s gift of salvation in life. Sadly, the absence of God means the absence of any mercy. He states that he is “tormented in this flame”. There is no reason to interpret “flame” as anything other than heat and fire. Those who do so, do so without the aid of proper Biblical interpretation.
4. **Memories do not go away in Hell – vs. 25 -.** Abraham tells the rich man to “remember”. Those memories are earthly memories. Another horrible aspect of Hell are the memories that will be held for all eternity. The unsaved will remember all the wonderful and enjoyable things of life that they will never get to enjoy again. They will remember being told about Hell and how to stay out of it. They will remember every rejection of Christ. Those memories will haunt every lost person for all eternity.
5. **A great gulf fixed – vs. 25-26 -.** The rich man’s request for a drop of water went by the wayside because of the “great gulf fixed”. This was a great divide between Abraham’s Bosom and Hell. This divide was “fixed” or established by God. There is still a great gulf that is fixed between Heaven and Hell – salvation. One cannot cross the infernal depths into the Great Paradise without being saved. Good works, religion, good intentions or sincerity cannot cross that divide; “Ye must be born again”. This great gulf between Heaven and Hell also keeps everything enjoyable from crossing over as well.
6. **The unsaved will know why they are there – vs. 27-28 -.** The rich man wanted Lazarus to go back to life and witness to his 5 brothers to keep them from going to Hell. It appears as if he knew that they were headed there as well. He knew that they were just like him. In the verses to end the account, we will see an interesting conversation between Abraham and the rich man which shows us the way to escape Hell and what most people think about that way – vs. 27-31 -.