

## The Parables of Jesus

### The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

*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**.

**The Pharisees considered wealth to be a proof of a person's righteousness.**

- **Jesus startled them with this story, in which a diseased begger is rewarded and a rich man is punished.**

**Luke 16:19-31 - *The Rich Man and Lazarus*** - 19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid **a beggar named Lazarus**, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 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.' 25 "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. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' 27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' 30 "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' 31 "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.'"

**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***.
- The rich man ***did not go to hell because*** of his wealth ***but because he was selfish, refusing to feed Lazarus, take him in, or care for him.***
- The rich man was ***hard hearted despite his great blessings.***
- ***The amount of money is not*** as important as ***the way we use it.***
- ***What is your attitude toward your money and possessions???***
- Do you ***hoard them selfishly***, or do you ***use them to help others.***
- 2<sup>nd</sup> example:
- And ***another who is in extreme poverty*** to show us ***the difference between 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.***  
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- 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.***

\*\*\*A Warning Against a Desire for Riches - 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***, shows us there will be ***many who won't*** make it into eternal life w/Jesus ***because of their love for riches and affluent living.***

**Luke 18:18-25 - The Rich and the Kingdom of God** - 18 A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 19 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.

- ***Jesus’ response to the ruler who came and called him “Good teacher” was, in essence, “Do you know who I am?”***
- ***Undoubtedly, the man did not catch the implications of Jesus’s reply – that the man was correct in calling him good because Jesus truly is God.***

20 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’” 21 “All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said. 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” 23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.

- **This man’s wealth** made his life comfortable, gave him power, & prestige.
- By telling him to **sell everything** he owned – **Jesus was touching the very basis of his security and identity**.
- **The man did not understand** that he would be even more secure if – he followed Jesus than he was with all his wealth.
- Jesus **does not ask all believers** to sell everything they have (**He May**)
- **He does ask us to get rid of anything** that has become **more important in life than God**.
- **If your possessions take first place in your life** – it would be better for you to get rid of them.

24 Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

**Jesus teaches that riches can be a trap for believers and a danger to their hearts. He emphasizes the heart’s attachment to riches, rather than just the possession of wealth.**

**False Teachers and the Love of Money - 1 Timothy 6:9-10** - 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, most people still believe that money brings happiness.

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**\*\*\*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 - The Tragedy of the Wicked, and the Blessedness of Trust in God -**

**A Psalm of Asaph** - 1 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.

Asaph explains that until he entered God's sanctuary, he could not understand the justice in allowing the wicked to thrive while the righteous endured hardship.

But when he saw that one-day justice would be done, he acknowledged God's wisdom and timing. This is something that can reassure all of us as well.

**\*\*\*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 - 24 *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.'* 25 *"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.*

**\*Hell is spoken of as a furnace of fire – a place of intense pain**

**Jesus explains the Parable of the Weeds - Matthew 13:41-42** - 41 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.

- **At the end of the world, angels will separate the evil from the righteous.**
- **Weeping indicates sorrow or remorse, and gnashing of teeth shows extreme anxiety or pain.**
- **Those who say they don't care what happens to them after they die don't realize what they are saying.**
- **They will be punished for living in selfishness and indifference to God.**

**\*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.*

- **Jesus says remove stumbling blocks that cause us to sin.**
- **Jesus says it would be better to go to heaven w/one hand **than to hell w/both****

**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--* <sup>44</sup> *where 'Their worm does not die, **and the fire is not quenched.**'* <sup>45</sup> *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--*** <sup>46</sup> *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.

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.

**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, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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."

- **Our world values money, power, and pleasure over God's leadership.**
- **To get what the world values, many people deny God and his principles!**
- **Worship the beast, except his mark, is to operate to the world system!!!**

**It is described as a lake of fire** - At the great white throne judgment, the books will be opened and all **those who 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> **And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**

- The book of life contains **the names of those who have put their trust in Jesus to save them** and **the recorded deeds of everyone, good and evil.**
- Everyone's life will be **reviewed and evaluated.**
- Jesus will look at **how we have handled our** gifts, opportunities, and responsibilities.

**\*\*\*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 3:16** - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**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.*** <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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.

- **God may have seemed slow to these believers** as they faced persecution every day and longed to be delivered.
- **But God is not slow; he simply is not on our timetable.**
- **Jesus is waiting so that more sinners will repent and turn to him.**
- **We have important work to do, time is short, be ready and tell everyone.**

**CLOSE: The Eternal Life of the Righteous - Jesus is preparing a place for us according to our heart's desire.**

**Jesus is the Way to the Father - John 14:1-4** "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And where I go you know, and the way you know."

**The disciples were obviously worried about death and what happens afterward.**

- **Jesus' words still comfort us today.**
- **We know from what Jesus said that the way to eternal life, though unseen, is secure for us IF we trust him with the future!!!**
- **He has already prepared the way for us.**

**The only issue that may still be unsettled is our willingness to believe Him.**

- **We have a choice – whether we will have God's heavenly reward**
- **Or the fiery destruction of the wicked after death.**