

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS LUKE 16:19-31

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. Today we continue our sermon series on the parables of Jesus by looking at the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.
- b. Some say that because the beggar in this parable is the only character given a personal name in the parables of Jesus that this is not a parable but an actual incident.
- c. Whether this is a parable or a real incident this is one of the most important places in the Bible that teaches the reality of hell.
- d. Today using this parable and other passages we are going to look at three things the Bible says about hell. THE REALITY OF HELL; THE REASONABLENESS OF HELL; THE RESCUE FROM HELL.

II. THE REALITY OF HELL-

- a. Many unbelievers say the doctrine of hell was invented to frighten people into conversion or that the doctrine of hell was created to frighten people into giving money to the church.
- b. But the doctrine of hell was not “invented” by anybody. It is clearly and repeatedly taught in the Bible. Above all the Lord Jesus Christ Himself frequently affirmed that hell is a real place.
- c. *Matthew 10:28 (NKJV) “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*
- d. *Matthew 25:41 (NKJV) “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”*
- e. *Matthew 13:40-42 (NKJV) “...at the end of this age. 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.”*
- f. *Mark 9:43-44 (NKJV) “...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.’”*

- g. The Lord Jesus said hell is a real place where fire constantly burns but does not consume its occupants; where an undying worm is constantly eating away at those condemned there; a place of lonely and foreboding darkness where there is continuous weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- h. Jesus said those who are condemned to hell suffer terribly, remain conscious, retain their desires and memories, long for relief, cannot find comfort, cannot leave their torment and have no hope.
- i. The Lord taught there is an impassable gulf that separates the condemned in hell from the saved in paradise.
- j. The Bible says there is no reprieve from hell, no release, no parole and no second chance. Jesus said in *Matthew 25:46 (NKJV)* “*And these (the unsaved) will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*”
- k. Revelation 14:11 and Revelation 20:10 says those in hell will be tormented “*forever and ever.*”
- l. Just as the saved will experience the joys of Heaven forever, the lost will experience the terrors of hell forever.

III. THE REASONABLENESS OF HELL-

- a. Many people, including many professing Christians, have a problem with what the Bible says about hell. Some deny its existence while others try to minimize its horrors by symbolizing what the Bible says about it.
- b. Many people struggle with the question of how a loving God could send any person to hell. Many reject hell as a divine overreaction unworthy of a loving God.
- c. But hell as described in the Bible is real and it is a place where the reasonable and righteous judgment of a holy and just God against wicked and evil sinners who have rebelled against Him and rejected His grace will be carried out.
- d. The punishment of hell is not unjust. No where does the Bible say that an innocent person will spend one single moment in hell. The truth is none of us are innocent. We are all guilty of sin and we all deserve to go to hell.
- e. We have all broken the laws and commands of our Creator and holy God many times over.
- f. There may be certain sins that we are not guilty of but we are all guilty of sinning against a holy God many times over.

- g. Hell is not evil. It is a place where sin and evil is punished. For God to be a morally just and holy God He must punish evil. Hell is God's just and holy response to sin, not His overreaction to it.
- h. The reason we reject hell and deny that we deserve to go there is because we fail to understand and appreciate just how holy God is and how sinful we really are.
- i. Hell is not unfair. No one goes to hell without having many opportunities to turn from their sin and come to God.
- j. What about those who have never heard the gospel? The Bible says that God has revealed Himself to every person through His creation and in their conscience.
- k. Every day of our life the creation around us and the conscious within us cries out "There is a God."
- l. A sovereign God will make sure that those who respond to these witnesses will receive a revelation of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ through the witness of believers, angels, miraculous intervention or however He chooses.
- m. Like Cornelius in Acts 10, God will reveal Himself to those who respond to His witness in creation and conscience and seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 says that God "*...is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*"
- n. Those who reject God's witness in creation and their conscience and turn to idolatry and sin will be judged for the witness of God they have refused.
- o. Of greater accountability are those who have heard the gospel over and over and still refuse to repent of their sin and receive the salvation Jesus Christ has provided.
- p. Hell will be Hell for all who are there but the Bible teaches Hell will have degrees of punishment depending on the amount of truth received and the nature and number of sins committed.
- q. Jesus said that hell will be more tolerable for some than for others and some will receive greater condemnation than others.

IV. THE RESCUE FROM HELL-

- a. Human beings are not basically good. We are all sinners by nature and by choice. And because we are, hell is the default destination of every one of us.
- b. Because we come into the world as sinners we are like those Olympic skiers racing down a downhill slope. Our sinful nature, like gravity, is pulling us downward away from God toward an eternity in hell. Signs posted along the way

(creation, conscious, witness of believers, God's Word, conviction of the Holy Spirit) warn us of the destruction that lies ahead. But we can't stop ourselves. The only hope we have is realize the danger we are in and call for help. The only One who can help us is Jesus. Only He can rescue us, turn us around and empower us to be able to defy our sinful nature and go upward toward God, to know Him and live for Him.

- c. What does a person have to do to go to hell? Nothing. Live your life the way you want to. Do nothing about your sin. Do nothing with Jesus. Ignore Him, ignore His death on the cross for your sins, ignore His claims on your life and you will die and go to hell.
- d. Because Hell is our default destination a person has to "do" something to go to Heaven.
- e. In Acts 16:30-31 a man asked Paul and Silas, "...*what must I do to be saved?*" *So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved..."*
- f. Hell can be refused. We can be rescued from Hell. When we call on Jesus.

V. CONCLUSION-

- a. **THE REALITY OF HELL; THE REASONABLENESS OF HELL; THE RESCUE FROM HELL.**
- b. Come to Christ