

***What Your Lost Friend Has To Look Forward To  
Luke 16:19-31***

**Intro:** In about 27 days the NASCAR season begins with the running of the Daytona 500. I am looking forward to that day. I am sure all of us have, at one time or another been looking forward to something with great anticipation. I know many of you look forward each year to Christmas; the kids because they know they are going to get something new and for adults it might be you look forward to spending time with family members who you don't get to see but once a year. Sally and I were looking forward to this past Christmas because it was our year to have the kids with us.

By the same token most of us have had something looming out in front of us that we weren't looking forward to. Last December I had to have surgery and I can tell you that I wasn't looking forward to that

Today we are going to take a look at ***What Our Lost Friends Have To Look Forward To*** if they enter eternity without Christ.

Our text today is a very familiar passage of scripture but often it is looked at as a parable but it isn't a parable; it is an actual account of the death of two men.

**[Stand/read Luke 16:19-31/pray/dismiss Jr Church]**

The subject of today's sermon is one of those things that we all believe but none of us likes to talk about. In fact many modern day TV preachers who have appeared on TV shows like Larry King live have refused to even talk about hell when he pressed them. They prefer to speak about their view on self-esteem, better attitudes doing good and especially working yourself to heaven rather than even consider the possibility of someone actually going to hell.

In a recent survey, it was determined that 35% of Baptists; 54% of Presbyterians, 58% of Methodists, and 60% of Episcopalians don't even in a literal place called hell! 71% of the 8 leading seminaries in the United States do not believe and therefore teach about either a literal Heaven or Hell.

Frankly folks, if Hell is not real, and everyone is going to get to Heaven eventually, we might as well close the doors to this church and go home.

Today's sermon may be a little hard for some people to listen to but that's ok because it is on a topic that Jesus found extremely important so it must be one we need to hear more about.

I like "the story that is told of a chaplain who reported to a new duty station. Upon arrival some of the men came to see him and asked him this question; Do you believe in a literal hell? When he replied that he did not. The men asked him to resign and he asked them why. Their response to him was; ' If there is no Hell then we don't need you and if there is a Hell we don't want you to lead us astray.'" I think the point is well made. [Paul Lee Tan. Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations. "Time to Resign the Chaplain." (Rockville, Maryland: Assurance Pub., 1979). p. 554 # 2221]

Another poll conducted by US News and World Report (2000) reveals that more Americans today believe in Hell than they did in the 1950's. But most now think of hell as "an anguished state of existence" rather than a real place. [ US News and World Report. "Hell Hath No Fury." January 31,2000. p. 46]

We don't like think about the reality of Hell that is why we often hear the statement, "*I don't believe that a good god will send anyone to Hell.*" The statement, however, makes about as much sense as saying, "*How could a good judge sentence a mass murderer to death for his crimes?*" That statement doesn't make any sense because we know that the judge is not responsible for

the man being sentenced to death, his actions are.

The bottom line; ***Hell is what our lost friends have to look forward to*** do you know what that means? Do you understand just what hell is?

Lazarus, a poor man covered with open sores, who it says, the dogs would come and lick his sores, laid outside the gate of the rich man. Lazarus had nothing but he rich man, it says lived each day in luxury.

Finally, one day both died and went into eternity. It says that Lazarus was carried by angels to be with Abraham and the rich man, it says, was buried and his soul went into hell. In this account of these two men we see three truths about hell; the hell to which ***Our lost friends have to look forward to.***

Let’s look at just what God’s word says are the **three truths about hell...**

### ***Truth #1 – Hell Is A Place Of Endless Misery***

Vv. 23-24

- A. There is misery
- B. The word *torment* is used four times in this account, and it speaks of definite pain.
- C. It is the same word that is used for the doom feared by the evil spirits (Mark 5:7) and the judgments God will send on an unrepentant world
- D. Will the misery be really realized by man? Listen to these deathbed quotes from some who died lost:
  1. rAuthor, Voltaire, atheist who fought Christianity:  
*“I am abandoned by God and man, I shall go to hell!”*  
He died lost! [note: His condition had become so frightful at the time of his death that his infidel associates left his bedside. His nurse said repeatedly,

"For all the wealth of Europe I would never see another infidel die!"]

2. Sir Thomas Scott, Chancellor of England:  
“Until this moment I thought there was neither God nor hell, now I know that there are both and I am doomed to perdition by the just judgment of the Almighty!”
  3. "Stay with me! Stay with me, for God’s sake! I cannot bear to be left alone!" - Thomas Paine
  4. This is why God says, ***“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”*** because only a fool would chose to face hell
- E. This torment or misery comes in many forms:
1. ***Unsatisfied Cravings*** V.24-26
    - a) He begged for even the smallest amount of water to relieve his suffering (v. 24-26)
    - b) Can you even imagine a place where even the slightest drop of water – a simple touch of a wet finger to the tongue would seem satisfying?
  2. ***Unquenchable Flames*** V. 24
    - a) The rich man says that he needs the touch of water to cool his tongue
    - b) The flames are burning hot around him and the text says that he was ***“tormented in this flame”***
    - c) He adds that, ***“beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence”***
  3. ***Un-crossable Separation From Loved ones*** Vv. 25-28
    - a) The rich man then asks Abraham to send Lazarus to his 5 brothers to warn them
    - b) But there is no friendship or “company” in hell!  
Hell is a place of torment and separation
      - (1) From family/loved ones

- (2) Saved friends
- F. If we look beyond the text today we find that there will be even more misery that indicated in our text:
1. According to Matt 8:12 it will be a place of **Unbearable Darkness**
    - a) **“But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”**
    - b) 2 Pet 2:4 says that God cast fallen angels and sinners, **“... down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness”**
    - c) Jude 13 tells us that God, **“reserved the blackness of darkness for ever”** for sinners
      - (1) Can you even imagine what **“blackness of darkness”** even is?
      - (2) In Egypt, according to Ex 10:21-23, the Bible says that the darkness was felt by people during the plagues upon the land
      - (3) According to Barnes notes on the NT, **‘thick gloom, darkness, intense’ darkness, or the thickest darkness’**
      - (4) They will be tossed **‘into the utmost degrees of misery and despair**
      - (5) The term actually refers to **‘an eternal separation from the presence of God, and the glory of his power’**
    - d) Without a doubt, Hell is a place of **Unbearable Darkness** because it is a place completely absent the Glory of God
  2. According to Matt 25:41, 46 it is a place of **Unbelievable Despair and Hopelessness**
    - a) Matt 25:41 says, **“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”**

- b) V. 46 says, **“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”**
- c) One thing is clearly taught in Scriptures, hell is a place of **Unbelievable Despair & Hopelessness**
3. According to Matthew 13:42 it will be a place of **Unbearable Sounds**
  - a) Image what is meant when Jesus says of hell that it will be a place where, **“there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”**
  - b) Mark tells us, in 9:46&47 that this is a place where, **“worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched”**
  - c) I am told that there is nothing more painful than a burn
  - d) Hell is a place where the fire is never quenched but the body is not consumed
  - e) It also says that the **“worm dieth not”**
- G. So, **Our Lost Friends Can Look Forward to Endless Misery**

**Truth #2 - Hell is a Place of Inescapable Memory v.25**

  - A. Beyond the fact that Hell is a place of conscious misery we also see that it is a place of memory and profound regret
  - B. Listen to verse 25 again, **“Son, remember...”**
    1. those two words convey one of the most horrifying aspects of Hell, that of memory
    2. Erwin Lutzer, pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago in his book **“One Minute After You Die”** says that Hell is, **“... a region of deprivation, and unending regret. There, with all their memories and feeling fully intact, images of their life on earth will return to haunt them. They will think back to their friends, family and relatives; they will brood over opportunities they**

*squandered and intuitively know that their future is both hopeless and unending. For them death will be far worse than they imagined.*" [ Lutzer. p. 10]

- C. In our text we can image the mind of the Rich man as it fills with images of poor Lazarus lying by his door with stray dogs licking his wounds
1. He remembers those who tried to tell him about God.
  2. Perhaps He recalls sermons he heard
  3. He remembers those who warned him about the coming judgment
  4. Memories come swimming out of the unconscious mind
  5. There is no torment greater than an accusing memory
  6. It is impossible to forget when you're in Hell
  7. The rich man could not take his money, but he did take his memory
- D. He will remember the opportunities he had to repent and escape Hell but then come to the realization that there is no way out for him
1. You cannot get out of hell!
  2. When you're there, you're there forever
  3. Some teach that you can work your way out of hell. That would certainly be a wonderful thing but IT ISN'T TRUE
  4. You can't get a transfer!
  5. You can't work your way out of it
  6. There is no crossing over.
  7. Abraham explains to the rich man that there is of "**great gulf**" between heaven and hell
  8. In other words, there is no hope of crossing over from one place to another
  9. His destiny is eternally set
  10. There is no hope of escape or relief
  11. Hell isn't like a prison where you might be paroled, pardoned, or simply "do your time" and be released.

12. Hell is forever and inescapable
  13. There are no second chances!
  14. God will not change his mind
  15. This great chasm is "fixed", i.e. it is unalterable
  16. The story makes clear that those who go to Hell are without hope as their fate is forever sealed
  17. In Hell it is too late to pray, it is too late to change your life, and it is too late to repent.
- E. In the classic book "Dante's Inferno" Hell is described in graphic detail and with great imagination. Much of the book is based on conjecture not Scripture as to what Hell might be like. But there is one thing in the book that is in full agreement with the Scriptures. Near the beginning of the book the main character in the story sees a sign at the entrance to Hell with says: "Abandoned hope all you who enter here." This much is certainly true. There is no hope after this life is over. Your destiny is eternally set. A tragedy greater than the one being described is hard to imagine. To miss the opportunity for something good is bad. To miss the greatest opportunity of all – the chance to go to heaven is terrible. But to miss it forever, and know that you have missed it forever, seems almost unbearable. Surely one of the most fearful horrors of Hell is the undying memory of what could have been!
- F. **Hell is not only a place of Endless Misery, Inescapable Memory...**
- Truth #3 – Hell Is A Place of Unrealized Mercy vv. 27-31**
- A. Hell will not be at all like it is often characterized, as a giant lounge where between drinks people can recount their escapades on Earth.
  - B. Ted Turner, founder of Turner Broadcasting, seems to be speaking for this attitude in a speech to the National Press Club, in it Turner said, "*Heaven is going to be a mighty slender place. And most of the people I know in life aren't*

*going to be there. There are a few notable exceptions and I'll miss them. [Laughter] Remember, heaven is going to be perfect. And I don't really want to be there...Those of us that go to hell, which will be most of us in this room; most journalists are certainly going there. [Laughter] But, when we get to hell we'll have a chance to make things better because hell is supposed to be a mess. And heaven is perfect. Who wants to go to a place that's perfect? Boring. Boring." [Laughter]* [Quote Taken from David Dykes. "What In Hell Do We Need." www.sermoncentral.com (Luke 16:19-31)]

- C. C.S. Lewis was told about a gravestone inscription that read: *"Here lies an atheist—all dressed up and no place to go."* Lewis quietly replied, *"I bet he wishes that were so!"*
1. The interesting thing is that, once in hell, the rich man became very religious and began to pray!
    - a) First, he prayed for himself, that Abraham would have mercy on him and allow Lazarus to bring him some comfort (Luke 16:23-26)
      - (1) Even a drop of cool water would be welcomed
      - (2) What a change from his sumptuous feasts when slaves ran to do his bidding!
    - b) Then the rich man prayed for his brothers (Vv. 27-31)
      - (1) Notice he didn't say, *"I'm glad my brothers will also come here. We'll have a wonderful time together!"*
      - (2) I have heard many times someone say, *"I don't mind if I go to hell. I'll have a lot of company! All my friends will be there so we can party into eternity"*
      - (3) Hell, contrary to what Mr. Turner might think, isn't an eternal New Year's Eve party at which sinners have a good time doing what they used to do on earth

2. All this rich man wanted was a little taste of cooling water and when that mercy wasn't granted all he wanted was to see his brothers escape his reality
- D. There was no mercy for this man and Abraham made the reason clear – **you had your chance**
1. In the rich man's lifetime, God had spoken to him in many ways
  2. God had permitted him to have riches, yet he did not repent (Rom. 2:4-5)
  3. Likely Lazarus had witnessed to the rich man, and so had the Old Testament Scriptures that were familiar to the Jews, but his heart remained unbelieving
  4. The fact that Lazarus died first was a strong witness to the rich man, a reminder that one day he would also die, but even a death at his very doorstep did not melt the man's heart.
  5. In spite of the fact that he was in torment in hell, the rich man did not change; he was still self-centered
    - a) He prayed, but it was for *his* comfort and the safety of *his* family
    - b) He was not concerned about other lost sinners; his only concern was his five brothers
    - c) He argued with God instead of submitting to His will
    - d) This indicates that the punishment of lost sinners is not corrective; it does not improve them
    - e) Hell is not a hospital for the sick; it is a prisons for the condemned where there is no mercy or pardon
  6. One thing we must remember here the rich man was not condemned because he was rich, nor was Lazarus saved because he was poor
    - a) Abraham was a very wealthy man, yet he was not in torment in hell

- b) The rich man trusted in his riches and did not trust in the Lord

**Conclusion: [play clip]** *"The safest road to hell,"* wrote C.S. Lewis, *"is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts"*

Jesus said, ***"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"*** (Mark 8:36)

Jesus asked that question. What is your answer?

More importantly, you now know what your lost friends have to look forward to; are you going to commit to do something about it?

Ladies, you can sign up today to be part of the Phosters club and men we will be having a Phisers club coming in the very near future, these are going to be clubs