



A Testimony from Hell – The Rich Man and Lazarus Part 2

May 10, 2026

Luke 16:19-31

You want to turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 16. The Gospel of Luke, chapter 16. You'll know we were in a study in the book of Romans. We departed for a few weeks to explore the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, kicking off, of course, appropriately so, on Easter Sunday to do that. In the course of doing that, we looked at some passages where we discussed the two holding tanks, the two areas, the two departments, if you will, the two sections, if you will, of the place of the dead in the Old Testament, allegedly, called the good and bad sides of Sheol, and made the case, at least from my perspective, that there's no such thing, and what those passages of Scripture really mean. That led us into looking at this one passage of Scripture here in Luke 16, where there seems to be two sections of Sheol, if you will, and one side talking to the other, and what's that all about? And we explained that that does not support a two portions of Sheol, a good side and a bad side, and what all that meant. We won't go through that again, and if you have never heard that before, you didn't get it, you can get it online at the website. You can see it in print, where the sermons are transcribed. You can listen to it all again. You can even watch it on video if you need to watch it again.

But in continuing in that, the richness of the parable, the richness of the teaching of this passage, and its relevance for today, just stood out, like in neon lights, and I couldn't let it go. And so I felt it was important for us as a congregation to explore this parable and this teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ in much more detail. And so we started doing that last week. Anybody who's hung around Christianity, or people who talk about the Bible at least, any time at all, have heard about the story and know something about the story of the rich man and Lazarus. I prefer to refer to it as a 'testimony from Hell', because as I said last week, it literally is the only place on the pages of an entire Bible where you have an eyewitness testimony from someone experiencing the torment of Hell.

In our modern religious environment of love and tolerance and pseudo-Christianity, I'm not foolish enough to not know, and understand that this is a very difficult subject to talk about. As a matter of fact, there are many portions of the Word of God that Christians just simply choose in our day to ignore and avoid, and in some cases even reject. And the reality of Hell is certainly one of them. It is a difficult message to preach. It is a very difficult message to listen to. It is a very difficult topic to process. It's a very difficult subject to apply when you think about it. And yet, it is true because it's biblical. And people think the idea of Hell is cruel, but it's true. Some people think it's unfair, but it's true. Some people wonder why in the world would God ever send anybody to Hell. But wonder away, as one commentator said, because it is true. And it's important. One commentator said this: *God never is in the position of defending Himself. He defines what is right. Get this, God defines what is right by His nature. He defines what is right by His work. He defines what is true by simply saying it. And He defines what is just by doing it.* Therefore, it is critical for us to understand,



appreciate, and know a lot about whatever the Bible says about the subject of Hell. The reality of Hell and accepting that reality is to accept a very important warning in Scripture. Hell is denied by many today. They teach a universal salvation. Everybody's going to Heaven. And some teach a soul sleep. When you die, well, you don't get into any kind of pain. You just go out of existence. It makes people uncomfortable. One commentator expressed it this way: *Hell has been reduced to a swear word used by unbelievers, not believers. It's been reduced to a trivial verbal epithet that we sling around, he says, when we want to express our anger. Unbelievers flippantly and frequently tell people, "Go to Hell." And while unbelievers don't seem to have any hesitation to talk about Hell and to verbally threaten people with it, at the same time, the church is reluctant to warn people not to go to Hell, supposedly out of love and compassion and concern and a desire to be acceptable.* And quite frankly, let me add, that is exactly what Satan wants. Nonbelievers to throw it around as a curse word and believers to shy away from ever talking about it for fear they might offend somebody and not be acceptable.

The concept of Hell, people say, you know, you talk about this stuff. It not only makes me uncomfortable, it makes me fearful. It scares me. Friends, it's supposed to. It's supposed to. I just prayed a moment ago, oh God, use your word to what? Afflict the comfortable. Some people don't know Christ and they are comfortable in their lack of knowledge of Christ. And the concept and the doctrine and the reality of Hell will shake them hopefully out of that comfort level. For the rest of us who do know Christ, it should drive us to our knees in prayer. For those that we love. I get tears in my eyes. I don't want the people that are on my heart right now to ever go to this place. Neither should you. And yet I hear these statistics. Only 2% of the people in America who believe in Hell think they're going there. 30% of the Christians who do believe in Hell don't believe it's a real place or a place of torment. They think it's just a mental or a symbolic kind of judgment. That is dead wrong as we're going to see. C.S. Lewis had a great line that is quoted by many people sort of in different ways. You may have heard it expressed in different ways. It comes from his treatise, actually called *The Weight of Glory*. And Lewis said this about the people that you and I interact with every day of your life. That's why this is so important. Listen to this: *It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses. To remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you'd be strongly tempted to worship. Or else, that person he means, a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.* In other words, every human being you interact with one day is going to be more glorious than the glorious angel. Is going to shine with the light of Christ so magnificently. Or is going to be the most hideous, ugly, monstrous, vile, fearful, horror-filled individual you would ever want to meet. That is the future destiny of every human being on the planet today, on the planet previously, and is going to be born in the future. That is reality. And that is exactly why it is critical that we understand... this should make us powerful evangelists. This should make you get out of your comfort zone and want to talk about Christ to every person you work beside. Every person you meet. Every person that God opens a door to share this with. Jesus talked more about this subject than anybody.



And the four gospels are loaded, loaded with it. He's the chief spokesman on Hell. Peter talks about it. The writer of Hebrews talks about it. John talks about it in his epistles. Paul talks about it all through his epistles. Jude refers to it. And by the way, it's referred to as eternal punishment. The Greek word, everywhere you see it, it's eternal fire, eternal punishment, eternal damnation. The Greek word is *aiōnios* (G165), *aiōnios*. We get the word eons from it. It means eternal. And some preachers and teachers and others want to say, "Well, it doesn't mean forever." It doesn't mean. Well, guess what? You've got a real problem with that. Because that same word, *aiōnios*, is used to describe heaven. Everywhere it says everlasting heaven, eternal heaven. God in the eternalities. It's *aiōnios*. So, if Hell is not eternal, that means Heaven is not eternal. And by the way, the word is also used, I'll give you one more, to refer the eternal nature of God. The eternal [nature]. It says God is *aiōnios*. God is eternal. So, there's no getting around it.

And by the way, why go into it? Hell is what is on the heart of Christ in this parable. In this story.

Now, who is the story directed to? Let's go. Let's pick it up. Luke 16. But I wanted to back you up. Because now I can see, in the last several weeks, I've been struggling where I couldn't see very well. I want to back it up because I can actually see the text. In context, who is He talking to? Is this parable primarily directed to His disciples? Is it primarily, who's it? Take a look at Luke 16, verse 14. Now, the, by the way, look at 13. Jesus is speaking. He says, ***No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*** You cannot serve God and money. Now, look at the next verse. ***Now, the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, ...*** By the way, you know, ***the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil***, that's used in a negative context, and rightfully so. They're lovers of money. But you need to understand, in their concept, not that it was any less sinful or any less wrong, the pursuit of money was the pursuit of godliness to the Pharisees. Because if you had wealth, it was a sign you were blessed by God. And so they literally had that, I said this last time, I'm sure I did, that prosperity gospel, if you will, prosperity mindset. That's why to them, the hero of the story is the rich man. He's the one clearly blessed by God. Look at all his wealth. The sinner is Lazarus, the beggar, the poor man. Look how he's being cursed by God. And isn't that exactly what Job's two friends say to him? You know, you're obviously lost all this stuff. You're going through all this calamity and all this heartache, Job, because you're obviously in sin somewhere. You've obviously done something wrong. Again, and I said it was the blind man in John 9. I was wrong. It was another blind man. When the Pharisees asked him about a blind beggar: Who sinned, this blind man or his parents? In other words, see, they saw any natural calamity, and certainly the loss of wealth, as literally a lack of favor from God. And to show you how that mindset permeated into all society, how all the Jews of that day thought that a wealthy man was a holy man, a righteous man, a man blessed by God, it's the passage of Scripture where Jesus turns and said, you know, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And what do his disciples say immediately? Oy vey, who can be



saved? If a rich guy doesn't have the blessings of God, then we've obviously got this all wrong. Who could possibly be saved? And that's, by the way, the context in which Jesus says with men it is impossible, but with God it is possible. That's the context in which that phrase is used. Now, he obviously doesn't mean that wealthy people can never go to heaven. What he's saying is riches can be a tremendous barrier, a tremendous impediment. Why? Because you know what? When things aren't going right, when your degree and your bank account and your connections and your family life and your social life and your business life, when those things are all in chaos and disaster and uproar, you start crying out more for God. It has a tendency to drive you to your knees. It has a way of drawing you closer to the Lord because you're running out of all your earthly resources. You see that they don't work. But a lot of times when there's heartache or problems that you should address, instead of addressing them from a spiritual standpoint, people throw money at the problem. Let's take another vacation. Let's buy another house. Let's buy five more cars. Let's take another trip. Let's do that. Let's get some new clothes. Man, if you've got a lot of money, you can constantly fill yourself with stuff and things and activity and put a salve on your conscience for a while and sort of numb your senses for a while. And you can numb yourself with entertainment and with material things, and the wealth enables you to do that. To that extent, it becomes harder for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. But make no mistake about it, Abraham was fabulously wealthy. Job, at his start and at his conclusion, was extremely wealthy. God has many, many rich people enter the kingdom of heaven, but like I said, not because of their riches, and it's no sign that they're being blessed by Almighty God.

Okay, so look at verse 14. ***Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; (See, it's always been a hard attitude) for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then, the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.***

By the way, that's a passage of scripture that may bother you. What do you mean? People are forcing their way into the kingdom. Later over in Matthew (11:12), he says, men try to ***take it by force***. The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. But since John, John the Baptist, came on the scene, what did John the Baptist start doing? Repent and believe. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Since John hit, the kingdom, now being present among you, meaning Christ Himself, the kingdom is preached, and men are forcing their way into it. What he means by that is there's an excitement. The rabble, if you will, the populace are thinking about spiritual things. They're talking about the kingdom. There's an anticipation here. This Messiah, this Jesus, this proclaimed Messiah, has raised a guy named Lazarus over in Bethany from the dead. He's healed the sick. He's healed lepers. John the Baptist has gone early on in the ministry on the other side of the Jordan. And what's it say? All of Jerusalem has come out to him. Well, it wasn't all of Jerusalem, but that's a euphemism for tons of people, meaning what? There was a public excitement now. There was an urge, a



push to mentally battle with, to mentally go through, to spiritually, to explore, to examine, to talk about this kingdom of the God thing. There was a force, a push, among the people to learn about it, to know about it, to inquire about it that had not happened up to that point in time. That's what He means by people are sort of forcing themselves at it. There's this populace crush towards it because Jesus is on the scene and he's eradicating disease and all this excitement is there. That's all that's talking about. Verse 17, ***But it's easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the letter of the law to fail.*** Now look what He does. Out of nowhere. Now why does He do this? He's talking about money. He's talking about you guys. He's talking about the kingdom of heaven is among you. People are forcing their way into it and so forth. You cannot love both God and money, etc. He's talking to these Pharisees who are scoffing at Him. And what's He say in verse 18? ***Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband and commits adultery.*** Why do that? He's talking to the Pharisees. And one of the biggest highlights. I mean, why talk about adultery? Why not talk about theft or something? One of the biggest highlights in terms of showing their hypocrisy was what they did to the teaching and the law of God when it came to marriage and divorce. They had so many bases and grounds where you could divorce your wife "legally" so that they could go on to someone else. I mean, literally, as one commentator said, if you burned the muffins for breakfast, they could divorce the wife. It was that ridiculous. I mean, it was simple things like that. And so He's throwing it out there to show what hypocrites they are. And then He goes on and talks in 19 to 31 of this parable that we're studying. He's primarily directing it to the Pharisees and the religious formalists, the religionists, of His day. And by analogy, the religionists, the religious people, if you will, of our day. And then look at chapter 17, verse 1. He gets done with the parable. He says, ***And He said to his disciples, ...*** In other words, he's talking directly to the Pharisees, and then he turns and starts talking more directly to his disciples. All of that to say, this has a focus on this particular group, the Pharisees.

Okay, let's jump in. Verse 19. ***Now, there was a certain rich man, and he habitually...*** we talked about it, doesn't mean on occasion. It doesn't mean a lot. Doesn't mean on a regular basis. It means every day of his life. Habitually ***dressed in purple and fine linen...*** We explained all of that. This is like putting on a tuxedo to go to breakfast every day of your life. ***...gaily living in splendor every day.*** This is throwing a party every day. This is a let the good times roll daily, okay? ***And a certain poor man named Lazarus*** (it's still a parable even though a proper name is used, because remember we said last week, "Lazarus" has something to do with the point of the parable. Rescued, saved by God.) Lazarus ***was laid at his gate, covered with sores.*** Laid because he could not walk himself, most likely paralyzed. Covered with sores, most likely bed sores. We talked about all of that. Couldn't move for himself. Laid there, *ballō*, he's almost thrown down there. He was probably cared for by friends or family. Got to a point, we can't care for this guy anymore, and maybe the rich guy will do something. And they basically tossed him at his gate. And we said gate was not just garden gate. We're talking about a fabulous ornate entrance to a most likely a very, for that



day at least, a very large estate or home. So he's covered with these sores. He's laying there. He's helpless. We got the total contrast.

...and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table;...

We explained crumbs there; Stanley Toussaint, a scholar of a bygone era, he thinks that means "the garbage that was taken out and thrown by the gate". Most scholars I read think that, no, he's really talking about the dry crusted bread that they would take, they had some bread that they would sop in liquid stuff and use it. They didn't have utensils. And they would eat with their fingers. Their fingers would get moist. Wet, cruddy, whatever. They'd take the dryer bread, the stale bread that was always left on the table and use it to soak up the liquid, if you will, from their hands. And they would throw those crumbs under their table. Many times, by the way, for just coolness, for air and refreshment and so forth, especially in a large wealthy area. That table and that eating would take place outside the main house in a courtyard area, maybe under trees in the shade or whatever. So it would be very easily for a Lazarus, paralyzed, looking through the grate-work of a gigantic gate to literally, constantly see, this table and this party and all these people at this rich man's table that is constantly going on, as he, literally, slays the fatted calf every day and throws those crumbs underneath that table, if you will. We talked about that last time, and so he's longing to maybe just eat those, to grovel with those.

And it came about, and verse 21 also says, ***...besides even the dogs were coming and looking at his sores.*** What's that all about? Well, I'd like you, if you would, flip over to Matthew 15 real quick. Go to Matthew chapter 15. I made reference to it and I said at the end of last week that I'd show you where this was. These dogs, again, like I said last week, are not like our late Kramer used to be, all shampooed up and brushed and really good looking soft wheaton terrier dog and your little pet. These are mangy, mongrel, dirty dogs that would roam the street almost akin to a jackal or a coyote or a baby wolf even. I mean, not that vicious most likely, but in any event, who would scavenge around and eat. And what they would do is they would open up the courtyard to a rich man's palace and let the dogs come in and eat all those crumbs. It was like their own cleanup crew, if you will. And verse Matthew chapter 15, if you look at verse 21, ***And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman...,*** so we got a Gentile and not just that, a Canaanite woman ***...came out of that region and began to cry out saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."*** Verse 23, ***But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came to Him and kept asking Him saying, "Send her away, for she's shouting out after us." But he answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and began to bow down before Him saying, "Lord, help me." And He answered and said, "It's not good,*** get this, ***to take the children's bread...,*** that's the bread you would eat, the regular bread, the good bread that you'd sop and dip into something and eat. Children, he means the children of Israel. Bread, and in this case, he's making an analogy to take their spiritual food that I came to give them. ***...and throw it to the dogs.,*** you Gentile dogs. And what does she say? She said, look at this, ***"Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs***



which fall from their master's table." Tremendous humility here. Jesus is saying, look, I don't take the spiritual food that I came to give the children of Israel to the Jew first and then the Gentile and throw it to Gentile dogs, if you will. And what does she say? She takes that analogy, instead of being offended, she shows her faith in her humility. And she says, oh, but even the dogs, now she's referring to those mangy, mongrel dogs, that even the dogs eat the crumbs, eat those crumbs when they wipe their hands and throw that bread under the table. Even those dogs come in and eat those crumbs. So let me be like one of those clean-up dogs, if you will. And the only reason why I go there is that Jesus wasn't being rude to her. He was making a spiritual point. We've studied this in the past. But I wanted you to see her humility. But I wanted you to see how we're not dreaming or making it up when we say that the dogs would come and eat the crumbs, and they'd throw that bread underneath their table. She makes reference to that herself in responding to Jesus' comment. So that's why we say, most likely, Lazarus here is longing for those crumbs that they would regularly throw under the table, that they would wipe their hands with, not even the good stuff. We're talking about the stale garbage, if you will. Okay, so I just want to make that point.

Back to Luke 16. And so, verse 22, what have you got so far? You got two lives, two unbelievable lives of contrast. Now we're going to have two deaths, and then you're going to have two lives after death. And we're going to get to the point this week and next that Jesus wants to make. **Now it came about, verse 22, that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels...** Now here's another rationale why, you know, this is a parable. Now, it's got a real point, and he's going to talk about reality, and he's doing it to make a point. Why did this, how did this rich man, and why, how does anyone end up in Hell, and what is Hell like? That's the point. But you know it's a parable because why? He says he was carried away by the angels **...to Abraham's bosom;...** Now, it doesn't say he died and was buried and his spirit. It says "he", and it's referring to physically, his whole body carried away by angels into Abraham's bosom. Well, we know that doesn't happen. Everybody who dies, believer and non-believer alike, their physical body isn't carried away by angels. They go into the ground, absence from the body, presence with the Lord, spiritually speaking, okay? So, but this is a story, and he's making a point, and he's also using the Jewish tradition about Sheol or Hades to make that point, carried away by the angels.

He's doing this to shock them, to shock them, and there's at least three things about this death and about this situation that is just going to blow the minds of the Pharisees, and really all the Jews are going to blow their minds. The first one is that any angel from heaven would have anything to do with this horrible, sinful, outcast, rotten, putrid, clearly morally degenerate, to a max extent, beggar. I'm saying that from the Pharisees' mindset. So, the fact that angels would take him away is unbelievable.

But the second thing that is totally unbelievable, **to Abraham's bosom.** That's an ancient word, an archaic word. Some of your translations might say to Abraham's side, and it's just as good a translation. It's the only place in the entire Bible where that word translated bosom or side in some of your translations is used in the Greek there, and it simply means



fellowship, faith. This is another reason why you know this is a parable. First of all, nobody in Hell is able to look into Heaven, and nobody in Heaven is able to look into Hell, nowhere in the word of God, and it even says later on there's a chasm fixed, and people can't go back and forth, and because of that chasm they really can't see back and forth, but Jesus is doing this again, telling this fictional story to make the ultimate point that He's going to get to. But here's the second shocker. This dead guy is with Abraham in Heaven. Why Abraham? Why not Moses or Jacob or Joseph or somebody? Abraham, why? Abraham was the hero of heroes to the Jews. Why? He was not only physically the father of the Jewish nation ethnically, he's their father spiritually. He's the first of whom it's said in Genesis 15:16. He believed God, and it was imputed. It was reckoned to him as righteousness. He's the father of the Jewish nation spiritually. He's the father of the Jewish nation ethnically. He is the epitome. He is the max, and so not only is this beggar taken by angels, not only are they shocked that he's not in Hell, he's in Heaven, but he isn't in the back row just slipping in sort of looking over a bunch of heads to see what's going on. He is up right next at the main table. He's up next to Abraham, and Christ is doing this to totally shock them. Your view of wealth, your view of spirituality, your view of Heaven and Hell, your view of God, your view of what matters to God and what God values and so forth is totally dead wrong, and this is a warning to all of them concerning that.

So we go on, **...and the rich man also died and was buried**. See, he got a funeral, and I'm sure many people showed up, all the people who sort of siphoned wealth and riches and favors off of him, all the people that wanted to cuddle up and be beside him because it looked good to be next to somebody. This is like Bill Gates and Elon Musk rolled into one. He looked real good rubbing elbows with some of those people in society, and he clearly obviously was blessed by God, so they thought, because look at the guy's wealth, okay?

Now, by the way, how do we know the guy was Jewish? He just says a rich man. He doesn't say a rich Jew. How do we know this guy is even Jewish? Maybe he's in Hell because he's a Gentile, he's of the wrong stock? Because in verse 24 and verse 27 and in verse 30, what's he say? Father Abraham, and Abraham refers to him and says, child, and again in verse 30 he says, **'No, Father Abraham'**. He's calling Abraham his ancestral father, so he's clearly Jewish. He's thought to be a devout Jew because of all of his wealth and perceived blessing. He's sitting, and now he sees Lazarus, I should say, sitting next to Abraham.

Now, how does the Bible describe Hell? By the way, just to show you why they're shocked and why you know that he's talking about a position of great favor that Lazarus is being fit by being face to face, side by side with Abraham, is what is it that James' and John's mother does when she approaches Jesus and wants something for her two boys, and they wanted it as well? What was their request? When You come into Your kingdom, when You're in Your glorious heaven, I want my sons to sit on Your right and on Your left. I want my boys to be by Your side. Being by the side of the host of the banquet was the ultimate position of honor. We got Lazarus by Abraham's side, if you will, at the banquet in glory. It is the ultimate position of honor.



Okay, verse 23. **And in Hades,...** now in the Old Testament, the word was Sheol. The word translated Sheol in the New Testament is the Greek word, Hades. And in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, the word Sheol is translated Hades. But as the progress of revelation goes on throughout the scripture, Sheol in context can refer to just the place of the dead. The good dead or the bad dead, they just would refer to it as the place of the dead, if you will. When you get to the New Testament, the word Hades always, always, refers to not just the place of the dead, it refers to Hell. Every time it's used except one. In Acts chapter 2, verses 27 and 31, the word Hades is used, and it refers to just the grave. But it is used in quoting an Old Testament psalm, Psalm 16, where it says, you will not allow your Holy One to undergo decay. You will not allow your Holy One to remain in the grave. Sheol for grave in Psalm 16, when that psalm is quoted in the New Testament by the writers in the Greek, it says Hades to refer to the place of the dead or the grave or Sheol. That's the only exception, but only because it's quoting the Old Testament. Everywhere else in the New Testament where the word Hades is used, it means Hell.

And this is the third shocker. Not only is Lazarus the beggar, the guy who obviously, their mindset, disfavored by God, a clear sinner, he not only is in Heaven, taken there by angels, first class, sitting with Abraham, of all things, but the rich man is in Hell.

And what's it say? **And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, ...** Some of you might say, the translations might say, raised up his eyes, opened his eyes. It simply means to be conscious, to be aware, to recognize where you are. He lifted up his eyes, **...being in torment, ...** Actually, that word is in the plural, in multiple torments, in torment. **...and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.** Again, the only place this word is used, and this passage, these two verses. **And he cried out and said,** here we go, **"Father Abraham, have mercy on me..."** we're going to get into this more next time and unpack more of this the next time we're together, but I wanted you to see this thought. He doesn't go, "What am I doing here? How did I get here? This is clearly unjust. I'm a righteous guy. I'm a religious guy. I'm a Jewish formalist. I'm one of the Pharisees," perhaps. "How in the world could I possibly be here?" There has to be an appeal, something. No, because the moment a soul is sentenced to Hell, that man or woman gets a perfect, active, fully engaged, and fully alive conscience. It recognizes its sinfulness. It knows its wretchedness. We're going to get into this. It knows its wickedness. It knows it's where it deserves to be. And the only thing he cries out for is mercy. Have mercy. And by the way, what is the nature of the mercy that he cries out for? It's not, oh, forgive me of my sins. Hey, I really now am going to be a lover of God. That does not happen in Hell. We're going to talk about that more. Hell is not remediate whatsoever. Hell is total punishment. And the only mercy he's asking for is one second of relief, one drip of water to stop, rhetorically speaking, this flaming, burning, this torment I am in. And as we said last week, the classic definition of Hell is that all that torment with no hope. There will be no mercy. No mercy is coming.

As Brian comes to lead us in this final song, as I lead us in a closing word of prayer, this is sobering truth. If you're nervous about this, if this bothers you, it should drive you to a point



of making sure that you know Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you can definitely on the authority of your soul and the Word of God know for a surety that you know Christ, and it's making you uncomfortable and uneasy, it should. Because it should make us want to be stronger in our witness for Christ, in our walk with Christ, in our prayer life, for those we love who are outside of Christ. Hell is as real as the fact that I'm hitting a podium and everybody we know one day is going to be a glorious creature or a hideous, hideous creature. And Christ makes all the difference. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for this time in Your Word. Father, we thank You for those among us who had moms, as well as dads, who instructed us in the scriptures at an early age perhaps, who modeled Christ-like biblical qualities so that we were in a perfect and best position possible for You to lead us to Yourself in the person of Christ. So on this Mother's Day we thank You for those who had Christ-fearing, godly moms. Father, we thank You for Christ, more importantly above all. We thank You for dying on a cross for our sins, for saving our souls. If there is one person within the sound of my voice, O God who is not sure that he or she knows You, don't let them leave this building without making their calling and election in Christ a surety. For the rest of us, Father, do just what I mentioned a moment ago by Your grace and Your Spirit working within us enable us to be better evangelists, better prayer warriors, better holy soldiers for the cross of Christ. We ask it in His matchless name. Amen and amen.