



A Testimony from Hell – The Rich Man and Lazurus Part 4

May 24, 2026 Luke 16:19-31

Well, I have had the great privilege, as a matter of fact my last time was about three weeks ago, to conduct many, many funerals. I've had the privilege, sad at times as it can be, to stare into literally thousands of faces who were contemplating and looking in the void of going on with life after losing a loved one. However, it's very rare in my estimation, when you see tears at funerals, it's very rare that people are contemplating the state of the one who died. They're more contemplating life without the one who has passed. There are rare exceptions to that. I will never forget the true account shared by my father-in-law when he pastored Hope Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, about a woman in their congregation who was a committed, solid believer in Christ. And they prayed and they prayed, and they prayed diligently as a church family, and she with the pastor and others and her friends and her circle of friends for years that her dear husband would come to know Christ. And up to the point, he breathed his last, he shook his fist at the gospel and refused and died. And my father-in-law tells the story about when he was conducting, in the middle of conducting the funeral with the casket, literally, this lady was so distraught, so brokenhearted, she rushed up towards the casket wanting to cling to his body so bad and say, "No, no, no!" and literally tried to crawl in the casket. The elders had to lovingly pry her hands away and walk her and console her. And she was screaming, "But pastor, pastor, pastor, you know where he is. You know where he is!" I don't ever want that, if I can possibly be used by God to help it, to be your situation. Either for you personally, or for a loved one you know, or for a friend that you know. And that is why, again, the greatest, most compassionate, greatest, but the most loving, compassionate thing anybody who shares the Word of God can do is to make sure that the topic we've been talking



about in Luke 16, which is where I want you to go, about the rich man in Lazarus, is understood and explained.

Jesus came to save sinners from what? From a real place called Hell. No two lives are alike. No two lives follow the same path. No two journeys are the same. No two histories are the same. No two lives are equally played out. I've never done two eulogies that were identical. Everyone's life path, life journey through this life is separate, distinct, unique, and only yours. I was in Frost Gelato place at Kierland the other day. There were two identical twins behind the counter. And I was talking to them back and forth, just teasing about some stuff. And I said, "By the way, you guys are identical twins," I said, "do you know that you're not identical 100%?" And they sort of looked at me, but I said, "You don't have the same fingerprints. And medical doctors say your retinas are absolutely different." There may have been other differences, but for sure. So there's really no such thing as identical human beings in that regard. Everybody's path is totally different. And yet, all these divergent paths, they all converge at one point. Death. Mark Twain said it best. The statistics on death are very, very excellent. One out of one person dies. All paths converge at death. And after that, they only take two courses. There's only two courses after that point. Two eternal destinies, two eternal paths. I shared a portion of this quote with you. I want to give you the whole quote from C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory: Every human being is in the process of becoming a noble being, noble beyond imagination, or else, alas, a vile being beyond redemption. The dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, I shared this with you before, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet if at all only in a nightmare.* This is the part I thought was powerful, among others. *There are no, Lewis says, ordinary people. It is immortals that we joke*



with, immortals that we work with, immortals that we marry, that we snub and exploit, immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. We need to understand that and remember that.

The arrival at the point of death is instant. You're immediately ushered in to a condition. It's either glorious splendor or it's abject horror in a place called Hell. *And so while relatives and friends plan your funeral, says Irwin Lutzer, deciding on a casket, a burial plot, and who the pallbearers shall be, you will be more alive, he says, than you have ever been. You'll either see God on his throne, surrounded by angels and redeemed humanity, or you'll feel an indescribable weight of guilt and abandonment. There is no destination midway between these two extremes, just gladness or gloom.* He further writes, *Nor will it be possible to transfer from one region to another, no matter how endless the ages, no matter how heartfelt the cries, no matter how intense the suffering, your travel plans are limited to your present abode. Those who find themselves in the lower gloomy regions shall never enter the gates that lead to endless light and ecstasy. They'll discover that the beautiful words spoken in their eulogy bear no resemblance to the reality that now confronts them.* That's reality. And none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, crafted a parable, a story, a tale with true reality points, and to make a key point to warn sinners of the horror of going to Hell and how one avoids going there.

Let's pick it up in Luke 16:19, the rich man and Lazarus. Luke 16:19. ***Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now it came about that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom (or Abraham's side); and the rich man also died and he was buried. In Hades, or hell, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and***



said, 'Father, Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child (or son), remember that during your life you received your good things, likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he's being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' Let me stop right there.

This is our fourth look, fourth week in a row on this important parable. How in the world did we get here? Well, we were in Romans 15. Easter came along and we started talking appropriately so about the resurrection and took a couple of weeks in order to fulfill our thoughts on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the question was raised, well, wait a minute, He died, He's buried, for three days He's in the grave physically. Where does Jesus go spiritually during those three days? Well, that led to a discussion of what the Jews had, a discussion about the theory, I call it the "Two-sided Sheol Theory", that, well, He went down to this world where saints who died before the crucifixion of Christ who were believers went to the good side of a place called Sheol and those who were not believers went to the bad side and suffered torment in the bad side of Sheol. And Christ, as the theory goes, went down there and He declares victory over sin and Satan on the bad side of Sheol. And then He goes to the good side of Sheol and declares his victory and he takes those who were captive in that region and takes them captive to Christ in glory. That's the theory. And in examining that theory, we went to the two passages of Scripture, 1 Peter 3:18-22, and Ephesians 4:8-10, which are the two passages of Scripture that are most often relied upon in support of that and hopefully between other Scriptures and a proper exegesis of those two Scriptures, explain the fact that, from my personal view, that is erroneous teaching. Godly men have taught it. Many godly



people still believe it. Not going to be a breach of fellowship. You know Christ is your Lord and Savior. You're going to live with Him in eternity. We're not going to have any issues over that, but error nonetheless. Interestingly enough, my own mentor of sorts, by long distance, Dr. John MacArthur, in looking at his sermons in the past several weeks on this, I saw where, in the early 1970s, he gives allusion to his belief in the "Two sides of Sheol" theory, and then over the process of time, when he ultimately preached the passages, he jettisoned it, and did not subscribe to it before his ministry ended. But in any event, it raised something else. So what's that got to do with Luke 16? Because people will go to the concept, wait a minute, what about Luke 16? What about the rich man who's on one side, and Lazarus who's with Abraham on the good side, and doesn't that support this teaching? And we explained how no, Christianity glummed onto this concept because of an erroneous exegesis of 1 Peter 3 and Ephesians 4 and a couple other passages, and because the Jews 400 or 500 years before Christ had developed the concept of this two-sided Sheol, and so Jesus' teaching is sort of buying into that tradition, and I also pointed out that in the Apostles' Creed, the first time the phrase "Jesus descended into Hell" is mentioned in the Apostles' Creed, isn't it like 369 or something like that, and then it pops up again around 660 A.D. and is sort of stuck with us. Nowhere in the Word of God does it ever say "Jesus Christ descended to hell". Plus, coupled with the fact that this is not a real account, it's a parable told by Jesus to describe reality, and so for all those various reasons, I hope I've sort of made my case relative to the "Two-sided Sheol Theory".

However, in doing this, I realized the significance of why we, as a church family, and why I think the evangelical church, the church worldwide, needs to understand more deeply. I can't tell you the number of people, and thank you for your comments, by the way, who have said to me, we don't hear this. Nobody talks about this. Why? It's uncomfortable. It's an



uncomfortableness. I was just talking with Bob Winkler and others before the service. You know what? If you stay away from the doctrine of Hell, reality, because it's uncomfortable, people start to, if you don't talk about Hell, pretty soon people don't take sin as seriously as they should either. And that is exactly why we need to talk about it. And like I said, it'll encourage you in your walk. I believe greatly.

Okay, so there's two critical questions that Jesus has, and by the way, only place in the Word of God where you hear someone literally talking from Hell. Now, it's a made-up story, but it's Christ who's made the story up. And so He's sharing it to tell us these truths. One, what is a sinner's experience in this real place called Hell? And we talked about that. We talked about outer darkness and abandonment and a weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and torment of fire and so on and so forth. We talked about the fact that it was eternal. Now, a dear friend and a saint, a wonderful guy here in our church, raised a question last week, and a couple of others have raised it as well. Well, what about Matthew 10:28? I mean, what's it say? Don't fear him who's able to destroy the body. Ah, but fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. And the question becomes, it says destroy. It doesn't say cast him into hell. It doesn't say cast him into eternal torment. It says destroy. Well, first of all, I believe that Hell is a place of eternal existence. Not to teach that and not to believe that, I think, goes against all of the scriptures that I shared previously and many, many more that are compatible with the concept of eternal suffering. But for clarity's sake, let's answer that question.

Matthew 10:28, ***Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.*** The word for destroy there is *apollymi* (G622). And in the Greek, it has the meaning of kill, bring to nothing, render useless, lose, to perish, to be lost. But in none of those usages does it mean to go out of



existence. That's not what it means. The word destroy, as translated here, does not mean destroy the soul in the sense of going out of existence. Why not? Well, over one example, Matthew 9:7, talks about you don't put new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wineskins will be burst and be destroyed. The word is *apollymi*. They'll be rendered useless. The wineskins that were broken and burst, they didn't go out of existence, they're just rendered useless. Another one is ~~Matthew~~ 15:4. Excuse me, Luke 15:4. If a man has 100 sheep and lost one of them, doesn't he go and leave the 99 in open pasture and go after the one sheep which is *apollymi*, lost? The word that's translated destroyed in Matthew 10:28 is translated lost there, meaning rendered useless. Thayer's lexicon, Thayer was a, it's a classical lexicon of the Greek language. Thayer says this: *The word apollymi, this word destroyed, lost, rendered useless, at its heart means to be delivered up to eternal misery, to be delivered up to eternal torment.* And that's exactly what Jesus is saying in Matthew 10:28. Don't fear him who is able to just destroy the body, but fear him who is able to destroy, render up to eternal misery, both body and soul in Hell. So that's one second after a nonbeliever dies.

Second question though, so we answered all of that. We said that it's a place of eternal torment. There was more I could go into, but I won't for now. But the second critical question, Jesus gives us this parable to answer the question, what takes a person to Hell? What takes the sinner to Hell? Why does the rich man end up there? Why does the rich man go there?

Well, let's begin and take a look at verse 27 where we left off in Matthew 16:27 through 31. ***And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house - for I have five brothers - in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'*** That's a key phrase, *Let them hear them.* ***But he said, 'No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will, look at this, repent!'*** We're coming back to



that. **But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'** So what's the issue? What's the issue? What sends people to hell? What is it? Well, Jesus tells us right here, big time, absolutely big time.

First of all, he says this. It's the Scripture. It's not listening to the word of God. Say, well, how can you possibly say that? To the Jewish mindset, the Jewish mindset is shocked. They're totally shocked at the story. We've talked about that. The rich man is in Hell. The poor beggar who was obviously in their mindset cursed by God is in heaven. He's not only in heaven. He's up there face to face with the hero of the faith. They're totally shocked over this. So the first thing, well, maybe it's his race. Maybe he's not Jewish. He's a bad stock, if you will. Remember, the Jews thought basically Hell was reserved for Gentiles, and so maybe that was the case. We answered that last time. You recall, even Paul, what did Paul say in Philippians 3:4 through 7? I, if anybody, had reason to boast in the flesh, it's me. I'm a Jew of Jews, if you will. I was a Jew circumcised the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, as to the law, blameless. And so in other words, if you're going to talk about fleshly accomplishments and race and living, that's me. And he says, but I counted all those things as manure compared to knowing Christ. In John 8:39, they objected Jesus' teaching. What did the Pharisees say? We're of our father Abraham. Race was everything to them. But Romans 2:28-29 makes it clear. **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.** We talked about this, I think, last time, verse 24, 27, and 30. He says, **Father Abraham, Father Abraham.** And Abraham responds to him and says, **child** or son, he's clearly of the Jewish race. Jesus is making the first point here: It's got nothing to do with bloodline. It's got nothing to do with your heritage. And



by the way, it's incredibly, incredibly important because there are many cults and isms and schisms. We're surrounded by one in our valley. That literally up until, it wasn't until 2013 that the LDS Church came out with a pronouncement that all races have the ability to seek God's favor equally in their religion. I was shocked to see it was only 12 years ago they came out with that. In any event, it's not a result of that. Well, then the Jews say, wait a minute, he's a Jew and he's in ~~heaven~~ Hell? Well, it must be his wealth. It must be his substance. It must be his wealth that caused him to go there. And obviously that's not the case. We made the case like Abraham was incredibly wealthy, Job was incredibly wealthy, Isaac was incredibly wealthy, Solomon was the wealthiest man who ever lived. Wealth will not keep you out of heaven. Wealth will not sentence you to Hell. Well, maybe, maybe he was incredibly sinful. Maybe he was just one of those individuals. You know, one commentator said he had a conversation with a Jewish rabbi one time in a debate. And the rabbi made the comment that if there is a Hell, I don't know anyone we would go there. And one of the debaters said to him, well, what about Hitler? You think Hitler would go there? He said, well, yeah, maybe, maybe Hitler would go there. Well, what about Stalin? He killed more Jewish people. Well, maybe Stalin could go there. But the point is only somebody who committed a horrendous sin would ever go there. And I dare say that's the thought of most people, Jew and Gentile alike today; that if there is a hell, only somebody who does something horrendous would ever go there. I think it's highly significant that in this parable, Jesus never mentions one thing about this man's morals. He doesn't catalog some long list of sins. He doesn't say one thing about this guy's morality at all. Now, maybe he was extremely stingy. Maybe he was selfish. I think that's one of the reasons why, by the way, he looks up into Abraham's bosom and he doesn't say, oh, Father Abraham, send that beggar next to you to dip his hand in some water and give me some relief. No, he says, send Lazarus. He knew Lazarus' name. I think that's one of the



reasons why the name is put in the parable. The man was familiar. The guy laying by your gate, you knew the guy's name even, and you walked by him every day. And, by the way, his brother, he says, send him to my brothers. Why? Because the brothers would know, the brothers knew Lazarus and knew him by name and knew who he was. The point being, maybe this guy was, and we know that not helping the poor when it's in your ability to help them like that would be sinful. So maybe that's the reason. Maybe being stingy and selfish does it. Well, guess what? Selfishness is a sin, and sin does send you to Hell. But guess what? Everybody who goes to heaven is a sinner, too. And everybody who goes to heaven has lived for self as well. So it can't just be the sin of stinginess or being selfish or living for self. Living for self is the definition of sin in many respects. Oh, okay, well, maybe it's this, maybe he's just Jewish culturally. He goes along with the program. He floats along, but he really, really wasn't religious. Let's say he was just an irreligious Jewish person, secular, we would call him today. Well, that's not really the case as well. As a matter of fact, he was a very sophisticated theologian. His religious beliefs are pretty clear. Jesus says in verse 29, what? Abraham says, they have Moses and the prophets. That's a euphemism for the law. That's a euphemism for the Old Testament. They've got the Scriptures. By the way, Jesus comes 400 years after the canon is complete. So they've got the entire, what we would call the Old Covenant Scriptures. You've got it, and your brothers have got it. You're aware of the Word of God. You're not ignorant of spiritual things. Well, and he goes on further. And he says, well, yes, but if you send Lazarus to them and hear them, verse 30, Father Abraham, if someone goes to them from the dead, they will, look at here, repent. He uses the word repent. What's the point? For you to believe in repentance, you have to believe in sin. To believe in sin, you have to believe that there was a law given that was violated. And for you to believe there was a law given that was violated, that means you have to believe in God who gave that law, and that that law



declares His standards, His holiness, His righteousness. This guy was aware that there's a God who has a law, that the violation of the law is sin. He's even using the word "repent". This guy understands. He is not irreligious.

So as one commentator said, he's not, by the way, he's not a Sadducee. The Sadducees didn't believe in angels and didn't believe in miracles and didn't believe in life after death and to the extent that the Pharisees did and so forth. He's a typical religious Jew of his day who's got his theology down pretty well. By the way, that's what makes him the perfect model for an individual who's shocked to find themselves in hell. Like we said before, most people in the world are religious, and most of those people who are religious believe they're going to Heaven. That's the whole point of their religion, to supposedly get into a right relationship with God. And that's why we say, "The overwhelming majority of people are going to be absolutely shocked that they will wake up in this place."

No, heinous crime, not just because he's a stingy sinner, sin sends every person to hell, selfishness is at the heart of all sin, and yet everybody that goes to heaven is a selfish sinner, and the people that go to hell are as well. By the way, it can't be philanthropy. You mean to tell me if he had picked up this beggar and brought him in and sat him up at the table and swept up the crumbs and kicked the dogs away and fed him the food and clothed him and given him good things to eat and so forth, that that would have earned his way to heaven? Do we believe in philanthropy as a way to get to Almighty God? Are we saved by giving, by generosity, by compassion, by kindness, by good works? If we are, guess what? Everybody who gives to the poor, if they go to heaven, what happens to the poor? I mean, who do they give? Who do they give if you have to give away your wealth? Now, Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it very clear, and we all know the phrase, ***by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves, not of work, it is a gift of God; not of works, lest any one of us***



should boast. So sin and selfishness are only part of the answer of why individuals go to a real place called Hell.

So, what is the reason? What is the real reason? By the way, Romans 4:5 says it best, God justifies the ungodly. Everybody who goes to heaven is ungodly. So what sends people again to Hell? How, get this, if you dialed out, dial in: How they respond to the word of God. How they respond to Scripture. Heaven is for those who believe the word of God, who believe the word about Christ, who believe the truth of the Scriptures, who believe the good news. James 1:18, ***In the exercise of His will He, God, brought us forth,*** caused us to be born again ***by the word of truth,*** by the word of truth. So Scriptures is the only hope. That's why Christ makes the point. They have the law and the prophets: They have Moses and the prophets. They have the Scriptures. They need to hear them.

Well, by the way, he says no, no. If one rose from the dead, then they would believe. He's still trying to get off the Scriptures. You know what he's saying by that? But we've got insufficient data. We really don't have, I'm really in this place because I didn't know enough. And my brothers, I don't want them to come here. But you know what, if you really do something big, if you give them a huge sign, like somebody rising from the dead, then they will believe. I remember one of the saddest conversations I ever had with my father-in-law sitting in our home on East Kester Boulevard in Indianapolis shortly before we moved to Arizona, talking to him about the truth of the gospel of Christ. He was sitting there smoking an unfiltered Camel cigarette at the end of our dining room table, kitchen table, and he looked at me and he pondered after listening to the entire gospel presentation. And he said, you know, John, I guess if I saw somebody actually rise from the dead, then I would believe. My heart sank. You could have stuck a knife in my heart because immediately I thought of this passage of Scripture. They won't believe if they don't believe the Scriptures, they won't believe even if



someone rises from the dead. And here he is. Send them a big sign. Send them a knockout neon sign. Man, if Lazarus came back from the dead. They know Lazarus. They know Lazarus by name. They know he was the beggar. They know he's dead. They know he's gone. Man, if Lazarus comes back, that would be the ultimate sign. Friends, you never come to Christ based upon experiences. People never get genuinely saved because of that type of sign. It's obedience to the truth of the Word of God.

Okay, so wait a minute. I'm a Jewish man in Jesus' day. I'm one of the disciples maybe. I'm hearing him explain. It's Moses and the prophets. It's the Scriptures. It's the text of the Word of God. Wait a minute. We got 39 books. What part? I mean, is there a Cliff Notes version? I mean, is there a Reader's Digest version? Can you distill this down? What part of all of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Psalms, Proverbs, 1 and 2 Samuel, on and on and on, all of the Pentateuch, on and on? What part of that am I supposed to know and understand and follow and obey? For you and me, post-Cross, Romans 10:9-10. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, what's the saying? If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. This is pre-Cross. This is pre-Calvary. This is the old covenant, if you will, people who died. Which ones were believers and which ones were not? Which one, my view, when they died immediately went to heaven as believers, or which one when they died immediately went to Hades and were lost forever? What is the portion of the Word of God that they have to know? Here you go:

1. What did Old Testament saints have to believe in order to go to glory? First of all, they had to believe **in the nature of God**. They needed to believe that God is revealed in the Old Testament in the only scriptures that they had. That He's all holy. That He's a sovereign creator. He's the ruler. He's the lawgiver. He's the judge. That He's a God who always, always judges man's sin, and we're given great examples of that. Good



grief. Look in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve, our ancestors. One command, one violation of one command, and the entire created order crashes, all cursed. A little bit later, you're in Genesis 6 and 7, another unbelievable object lesson that God is the creator of everything. He's the ruler. He's sovereign. He's the lawgiver. He's the judge. And you, Old Testament person, you must start by believing definitely in that. How so? Noah and the flood. He destroys the entire world except for eight people. And most commentators believe millions die as a result of that sin. It doesn't stop there. Genesis 5. You go to Genesis 5, and what's it say? So-and-so begets so-and-so, and so-and-so lived so many years, and so-and-so died. This guy died. And he died. And he died. And the names, for the most part, in Genesis 5 are absolutely irrelevant. The key phrase in Genesis 5 is, **and he died**. And he died.

What's the point? Death entered the human race because of the curse, because of sin. And by the way, even in their own history, Ezekiel 18, Isaiah 6, *I saw the Lord high and lifted up, and what did I say? I said, woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips. I'm unholy. I'm this. I'm that.* Ezekiel 18:4, *the soul that sins, it shall die.* Habakkuk 1:13, God is of pure eyes than to be able to look upon sin. Habakkuk [2], the just shall live by faith.

2. Deuteronomy 17 says what? Not only is God holy and the judge of all sin, but also that man must repent. That's the second thing that a man has to understand. The only way, from the Old Testament scripture, he has to understand the nature of God. Holy, ruler, sovereign, just, lawgiver, judge, all laid out clearly on every page almost. And about **repentance**. The keynote in the book of Job. Job is considered a righteous man who escheweth, the King James says, a righteous man who escheweth evil. And what



happens ultimately in Job 42, verse 6, when it's all over, done and said with, Job says this: ***I have heard of you by the hearing of my ear;*** (that's to say I knew something about you) ***But now my eye sees You.*** In other words, now I really know after all of this. And then he says this, ***[Therefore I retract,] and I repent in dust and ashes.*** What did Job have to repent of? He repented of his inadequate view of God. For dare suggesting that God could not do whatever God chose to do. He's basically saying I had an inadequate view, an inadequate understanding of who You are. But now I know and I repent. You've got to understand the nature of a holy, righteous, law-giving, sovereign God. You need to know that repentance is all preached all through the Old Covenant. Jonah, there's an entire book that is dedicated to Jonah going to Nineveh and preaching repentance. So if you want to be saved, Old Testament individual, if you're living before the cross, you have to acknowledge God as creator, sovereign, law-giver, and judge. And you have to recognize that you're a sinner and that you come to God through repentance.

3. A third thing you need to understand, most people don't believe that this is in the Old Testament. It's everywhere, everywhere. You have to believe in **the sovereign grace of God**, the grace of God. Salvation/Old Covenant, salvation/New Covenant. Understanding of the nature of God, the need that I'm a sinner and need to repent, and the fact that God is gracious. That God is gracious. You don't earn it. You don't earn grace. Salvation has never been by merit. It's never been by works. It's never been by relative goodness. I'm better than the next guy kind of thing. It's never been by religious ceremony or ritual. It has always been by grace. What did he say in Genesis 3? In the day that you eat of it, you will surely die. They ate. Adam and Eve



live almost a thousand years after that. You know what that is? That's grace. He pronounces a blessing upon sinful humanity. What does he say in Genesis 3:15? At the point of the curse, he also is giving grace. He says the seed of the woman will one day crush Satan's head. Right there, you know he's talking about a supernatural being because a human being born of a woman would be a natural person. A natural person wouldn't be able to crush Satan, but a person who was natural and spiritual could. He says Satan's head will be crushed. I'll tell you another thing. He teaches them grace. He teaches them substitution. The fact that when for sin, I'm going to grant you grace, but their shame, if you will, is covered by what? God kills the very first animal, slays an animal, and covers their private parts with the animal skin, if you will. God is gracious. God gives life to those who don't deserve it. God covers sinners. God's provisions have blessing on sinners and curses on those who reject Him are illustrated all throughout the Old Testament. I'm not going to give you all. Let me just give you a few. Exodus 22:27. God says, **for I am gracious**. Exodus 33:19. **I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious**. 2 Chronicles 30:9. **The Lord your God is gracious**. Psalm 86:15. **Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. Turn to me, and be gracious to me;** That's the prayer of a penitent heart in the Psalms. That psalmist knew God was the lawgiver. He knew God was the judge. He knew God required repentance of the sinner for violating His holy standard.

They knew they couldn't be saved by the mosaic law. All of the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12, all of the provisions of the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7 could not come to pass until they really obeyed God or were truly saved. And the Mosaic covenant was



clear, they could not keep the law. They knew their only hope of salvation was the new covenant.

Now guess what? You mean the New Testament? No. No. It's explained and brought to fruition at the cross. But flip over to Jeremiah 31. Jeremiah 31. What's he say in Jeremiah 31:31? This is a good one to see with your own eyes. He says, quote, ***"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, Jeremiah 31:31, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (what's that? That's the mosaic covenant. That's the giving of the law.) My covenant which they broke, (They broke all the laws. You break one law, you're guilty of breaking all.) although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*** This is so absolutely critical. He goes on and says, I'll remember your sin no more. I'll remove it as far as the east is from the west. I'll bury it in the depths of the deep blue sea. All of this is manifest grace. I'll save you. I'll transform you. I'll give you new life. I'll give you regeneration. I'll remake you all as a work of grace.

Now get this. The new covenant grace principle was in operation in the Old Testament as well as the new. The new covenant grace principle has always been in operation and will always be in operation. You say, well, I don't understand that. How can that be? That can be because the Word of God clearly teaches it, and if I'm fortunate enough to be here next week, and you are too, we'll explore this in greater detail. There are several things that the Word of God makes clear that believers in the Old Testament had to exercise faith in. We've only covered a few so far. The righteous, holy, law-giving, judgmental nature of a holy God, the need for



repentance, the fact that God is gracious and that His covenant of grace operates throughout all time. By the way, you'll remember several weeks ago I said God is not in time. He's just as close to your birth as He is to your death, as He is to your new birth. He's just as close to the creation of the world as He is to the end of the world as He is to the crucifixion. And His Word makes clear people in the Old Covenant and people in the New are saved by one thing, faith in the Word of God. What truth in the Word of God. That's what we are unpacking.

Father, thank You for this time in Your Word on this Memorial Day. How we thank You for those who indeed gave their lives so that we can explore these truths from Your Word in such, such detail. Father, the progression of revelation through Your Word is such an exciting mystery. And yet what a thrill to see that when You hid Yourself in the cleft of the rock and when You allowed Moses to see a portion of Your glory, You identified Yourself as God. A good God. A God who is merciful. A God who is loving. A God who is gracious. A God who is slow to anger and quick to forgive. And yet a God who takes vengeance on those who refuse to repent. Father, You made it clear in the Old Covenant Scriptures they've had Moses and the prophets. That's all that they needed. And Father, Your Word is all any of us need. May You encourage our souls where needed. May You convict souls where conviction is needed. And may You be glorified in all of it. For we ask it in the matchless name of Jesus our Christ. Amen and amen.