



A Testimony from Hell – The Rich Man and Lazarus

May 3, 2026

Luke 16:19-31

Well, we have taken a detour for three or four weeks. We left Romans 15 and we started on Easter Sunday and took a little detour because we wanted to explore some principles and aspects, of course, of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in doing that, we wanted to explore some of the various imports of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And one of those imports we saw was that the resurrection of Jesus Christ makes the future coming of judgment a certainty. That, of course, led us into another discussion. Well, what about that judgment? And we talked about the atoning work of Christ. Well, we said, well, wait a minute, what about people who died as believers in the Old Testament economy, if you will, before Jesus went to the cross, was crucified, died, buried, and rose again, affirming that His atonement was sufficient for the sins of the world? What about those individuals? Where did they “go”? And so we talked about the ‘two sides of Sheol’ theory, where there was a “bad” side of Sheol, where the wicked or the nonbelievers in the coming Messiah, they went to the bad side of Sheol and suffered torment. And the believers, Abraham, Moses, et cetera, they went to the so-called “good” side of Sheol and suffered bliss, if you will, or harmony and peace and so forth. And we went on and explored a lot of passages of scripture that I believe support just the opposite, that there was no ‘good or bad side’ of Sheol, but that absence from the body is presence with the Lord, that in the Old Testament, as well as the New, when an individual who was a believer in Messiah, a follower of God, a God-fearer and so forth, a follower of the truth and righteousness, as was revealed in the sacred scriptures, longing, as it says, about the holy ones of Israel who looked for the Consolation of Israel, if you will, the Simeons and Annas, if you will, of the Old Testament and so forth, they immediately went into the presence of Almighty God. And in doing that, we looked at 1 Peter 3:18-22, and last week we looked in



detail at Ephesians 4:7-10. Why? Because those are some passages of scripture that we felt were misunderstood, misinterpreted, that supposedly supported a “two sides of Sheol” theory, but in reality they do not. They actually support something just the opposite. As a matter of fact, one that I left out was Matthew 17, the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ. What happens in Matthew 17 when the Lord is transfigured? You’ve got Peter, James, and John there, you know, and they’re watching on, and it says what? Moses and Elijah appeared and are having a conversation with Christ about His coming departure, if you will. They weren’t in the good side of Sheol. They were literally present with Almighty God, as evidenced by the fact that they’re there speaking with Him.

Well, something came up though. Well, there’s one other passage of scripture. What about Luke 16:19-31, the one that Jim Claypool, there you are, just read for us a moment ago? That talks about a rich man being in pain and agony on one side of Hades and Lazarus on the other side of Hades, and doesn’t that support the ‘two sides of Sheol’ theory? Well, actually it doesn’t, okay? And so why would you discuss that at all? Why not just, you know, bring up a few points about the reason why it does not and then just get on with it? The reason why I wanted to go into Luke 16, and by the way, we’re going to do it this week and at least next week as well, is because first of all, ‘the two sides theory’ of Sheol. Why? If you believe in that, you’re not a heretic, it’s okay. If you know the Lord Jesus Christ, you’re going to heaven. But, so if that’s the case, why belabor the point? Belabor the point for several reasons. First of all, we want to strive to be biblically accurate. But second of all, many, many heresies have developed as a result of what I think is an incorrect understanding of those passages. Purgatory for one, the second chance theory for another. Third, I also think it denigrates, to an extent, the nature of Almighty God. God is holy other. He’s not like you and me. Okay, He doesn’t exist in time. Meaning what? He’s just as close to the creation of the world as He is to



the end of the world. He's just as close to your natural birth as He was to your spiritual birth. He's just as close to the cross of Christ. Just think of it. This very minute, right now, from God's perspective, He's at the creation of the world. He's already at the end of the world. And He's right here with you and me. He's outside of time. He's in the eternal now. And therefore, it is not inappropriate at all to think that that God, the salvation comes from the Lord anyhow, would make His atoning work at Calvary applicable to those before the cross who believed in the coming Messiah, who looked for the Consolation of Israel, who were God followers of the truth of the Scriptures, as well as those who were born and came to belief in saving faith after the cross of Christ. So for a lot of reasons, I think it's important that we're [going into it], well, and then when I got into it, and I started preparing this a week or so ago, and then all through this week, and looking at different commentaries, listening to different men and their sermons on it, reading some of their sermons, reading little snippets from their books and so forth about this particular account, this story in Luke 16, I came to realize the incredible significance it has for 'now', for our culture, for us now.

If you have hung around Christianity at all, if you have hung around people who have studied or talked about the Bible to any extent at all, almost everybody you know knows the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Why is it so critical that we drill down to the details and understand it? Because most people, certainly most people in Western culture, most people that you talk to think they're going to heaven. 90% of the people in America say they believe in God. 85% of the people in the United States say they believe in Jesus Christ. Now, they don't all say that He's necessarily God in the flesh. They might just say He's a good man or a teacher or a historical figure. Every time they write down the date, they acknowledge His birth, but they all say that. However, most of those people who think they're going to heaven, sad to say, most likely are not, because they do not believe in the truth and the authority of scriptures.



Interesting statistic that Terri and I just heard Saturday morning from a speaker. Over 60% of so-called evangelical Christians do not believe in absolute truth. That's why you can believe in God and you can believe in Jesus. And you can still say, and by the way, 65% of so-called evangelical Christians think there are many ways to God other than Jesus Christ. That is a huge statistic. That's why I say most people who think they're going to heaven have a surprise, sad to say, coming. And one commentator said it this way. *You ask most people in the West, are you going to heaven? And they will say "yes." And they will answer it, "Well, I'm a good person. I'm a religious person. I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. I'm going to heaven. God certainly would not send me to hell."*

Friends, the most compassionate thing you can ever do is to tell people the truth. It's not hard. It's not hard-hearted. It's not mean-spirited. It's not unloving. You need to hear the truth. Hell is populated by, mostly populated, by people who are shocked that they're there. Totally shocked to find themselves there. And that's why this parable is so critical. The only way to teach this parable is to do what I'm doing; give you the background, then get into the details of it. And as I talked to Bob Winkle earlier this week, I'm going to take the time to give you the background.

My wife Terri's favorite word in the entire Bible, favorite biblical principle, is hope. And I dare say hope is absolutely critical to everybody who lives. Actually, hope is a common grace that Almighty God gives. When I say common grace, I mean He gives a certain measure of hope to nonbelievers as well as to believers in Christ. Why? Because hope is a necessary faculty that you have to have to be able to cope with life; to mitigate our pain, to mitigate our suffering, to mitigate our sorrow. Life, we were talking to a dear couple on Friday, and we all acknowledged, Ecclesiastes is right, a man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Life is full of heartache, sadness, disappointments, difficulties, struggles, broken bodies, broken



relationships, broken homes. You have the joy of a splendid relationship that gets exploded and is no longer there and on and on and on. I can, by the way, this coming Thursday, May the 7th, will be 45 years to the day that Terri and I rolled into Phoenix in a Jartran rental truck with not much money in our pockets, but with a whole lot of hope in our hearts. We'd left a lot of heartache behind, and we were looking with hope. As a matter of fact, this is sort of a euphemism when you think about it. For the 250 years they've been saying in this country, go west, young man. Go west, young man. Why? Because you can start again. Hope, get this, one commentator said, *is a gift from God that makes life livable*. I love that. It's a gift from God that makes life livable. It's a fallen world. It's a sinful world. We're sinners in a sinful world, and there's heartaches and struggle. This life would not be bearable were it not for hope.

As a matter of fact, the Word of God says that. Proverbs 13:12, Hope deferred makes the heart what? Sick. ***Hope deferred makes the heart sick.*** 1 Corinthians 15:19, Paul is in the middle of a chapter talking about the resurrection. Almost the whole chapter is focused on it. And what does Paul say? ***If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*** In other words, if you've got no hope other than in this life, we are most to be pitied. One commentator put it this way: *At whatever point your hope runs out, your misery begins in its most profound sense. People survive the tragedies of life, the sufferings of life, the unexpected disappointments of life, the agonizing promise of life by hoping for a better future, a better job than the one they had hoped for, a better career than the one they had planned for, a better relationship than the one that just exploded, a better cure than the one they just tried for their illness.* To live life without hope would make life absolutely excruciating.

Now, that's all background to get to this thought. I want you to seize on this thought. What if you took every pain, every heartache, every failure, every 'F' on your test, every broken relationship, every financial mistake, every relationship mistake, every slanderous word you



ever said, every one that was ever said to you, every emotional heartache, every painful experience, physical, mental, spiritual, relational, that you've ever experienced in your entire life and you could ball it up and have it all hitting you at one time, one time, and then when you're in the midst of that most severe mental, physical, emotional, spiritual torture that you have ever could possibly experience in one moment, take away the fact that there's no hope, that there will never be a moment break. There will never be a moment of rest. There will never be a measure of relief. It is never, ever going to end. I have just described Hell.

Why are you going into this, John? Luke 16:19-31 is the only place in the Word of God where we have a testimony from an eyewitness in hell. Jesus gives it to us in this account. It's a story about a rich man. The rich man is the main character. The poor man, the beggar, is not the main character. The rich man is. The rich man is the one who speaks. The beggar does not speak. Now, one more thing. Is it a parable or is it a true historical account? I believe, I'm not alone in this, it's a parable. It's not a true historical account. By the way, if you look at any commentary (you can check me out on this), you take any commentary you want off the shelf and to try to see whether or not it's a parable or a historical fact, you will find out, it is. The only reason they give for it being a historical account is that the man's name is given, Lazarus, a proper name. But what you're going to see is that Jesus gives us a proper name because the meaning of the name is absolutely critical to the point He's trying to make in the story. The other, you say, well then, doesn't this support that two sides of Sheol theory? No. What Jesus is doing here is He is using an example to meet the mindset of the Jewish people of His day. I told you last week that the Jewish tradition had developed over the previous 100, 200, 300 years, this idea of Sheol having two sides, if you will, two areas, two holding tanks, so to speak, for the wicked and the righteous to go after death. They had developed that. Jesus is dialing in to that traditional belief to make a statement to them.



They had their own sort of prosperity religion in Jesus's day. They believed, point blank, that if you were a wealthy individual, it was a sign that you were blessed by Almighty God. If you were a poor person, it was a sign that you were a sinner and unrighteous and were not blessed by Almighty God. That's the, think of John 9. Remember the blind man that's drug before the council, the Pharisees? And what do they say? He was born blind. What do they say? Teacher, which was it? Did this man sin or did his parents sin? In other words, he was born blind. His parents, or he, had to be horrible sinners to have such a bad thing happen to them. The hero to the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders and most of the Jewish population's mindset in Jesus's day, the hero of this story would be the rich man. And the antagonist, if you will, and the "loser" in the story would be the poor man, Lazarus. You need to realize this story.

People make this mistake all the time. We take the Bible and we try to bring it into our day and age. The first thing you need to do to understand the text is to go back into the time that the scriptures were written and put the passage into context; to whom is this parable primarily directed? If you look at the passage before and if you look at the context afterwards, you will see this parable is primarily directed to the Pharisees and the religious leaders around Jesus at the time. You can see in Luke 17:1, it says Jesus turns to His disciples. After this, He turns and talks to his disciples. But He's telling this account, this story in order to make a point to the Pharisees and the religious people of His day. So when He does that. The other thing is that the rabbis taught with juxtaposition, with comparison, with contrast. This story is one of the most richest, richest parables you'll ever get with regards to contrast. You say, well, what do you mean by that? Well, let's just take a look at some of them. You've got a poor man and a rich man, obvious contrast. The poor man becomes rich, the rich man becomes poor. The poor man becomes richer than anybody could ever be and richer than the rich man ever was. The rich man becomes poorer than anyone could ever be. The poor man



is outside of the house, the rich man is in the house, but then death comes and the poor man is in God's house and the rich man is outside of God's house. The parable breaks down to life, death, and life after death. Two lives, two deaths, and two lives after death. The poor man has absolutely no food. The rich man is living a life that absolutely has got food and banquets and feasting to the max. And death comes and the poor man's in a heavenly banquet, and the rich man is looking for just a drop of water to cool his tongue. The poor man has maximum needs. The rich man is said to have absolutely no needs. Death comes and the poor man has every need satisfied and gratified, and the rich man literally has absolutely nothing satisfied. The poor man has his desires forever fulfilled. The rich man, who on earth had every desire fulfilled, never can get what he truly desires fulfilled. The poor man suffers, the rich man is satisfied. Death comes, the poor man is satisfied and comforted, and the rich man suffers. The poor man is humiliated, the rich man is gaily happy. Death comes and the poor man is honored with joy beyond measure. The rich man is humiliated and so forth. The poor man is starving. Death comes and he's at a feast. The rich man is at a feast. And again, death comes, and he needs massive help. Very important truth. The poor man has a name. The rich man doesn't have a name. And by the way, one of the great underscoring teachings of that is that what's it say in Revelation 2? Those that know God, those that know the Christ are given a white stone and on it is a name, a new name. And when you know Christ, your name is known to Him in the sense it's written, if you will, spiritually speaking, in the Lamb's book of life. But if your name does not appear in the Lamb's book of life, then you are not Christ's. And so it's very instructive that the rich man is never named. By the way, if it was intended to be a true historical account, if you're gonna name the beggar, why don't you name the rich man? But as we're gonna see, this is a parable. While it's unique, it's the only parable in which a proper name is given. This is a parable in which the name of the beggar is critical. Most importantly,



in this earthly life, the poor man is seemingly without hope. The rich man doesn't even need to hope for anything. When death comes, the poor man has all hope fulfilled and the rich man has absolutely no hope.

There's two things that this parable is gonna teach us. One, it's going to teach us how the rich man went to hell and it's going to teach us some aspects of what hell is like. It's a parable designed to speak to a certain point. And the other thing about it, the reason why I believe it's a parable is because it starts out and has the traditional language of a parable. There was a certain man who went down to Jericho, a parable. There was a certain man who gave a large dinner. There was a certain nobleman who, all those parables. There was a certain man that had two sons. There was a widow who lost a coin. There was a certain man who had lost a sheep and on and on. All of those parables start out with the exact same parabolic language and Jesus is using that same kind of language here. By the way, there's also no rule that I know of that you can't use a proper name in a parable.

Okay, with that background, let's jump into the text, the story. Let's look at the story. Luke 16:19, ***Now there was a certain rich man and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen...*** Let's stop right there. A rich man. We're going to talk about their lives. How rich was he? Well, it says there he habitually, ***habitually dressed in purple and fine linen*** and ***living, in splendor every day***, every day. There's a lot here. I'm always impressed with an economy of words, how much the Word of God teaches us. He was how rich? Extravagantly rich. Luxuriously rich. By the way, okay to be rich. Abraham was fabulously wealthy. Jacob was fabulously wealthy. Job actually at the start and the end was fabulously wealthy. Nothing wrong with riches. The issue is: who's your God? Who's your God? Immediately before this parable, Jesus has made the point to the Pharisees, you cannot serve both God and mammon. You cannot serve both God and money. To their mindset, the pursuit of money and having



wealth and pursuing it was literally glorifying God because that was the mindset of the day. Okay, he was extravagantly rich and because of that, in this culture, because of his wealth, he would be highly respected, immediately honored by all. He would be viewed as totally blessed by God, by everyone with whom he came into contact. He would be seen to be a religious man because you would have to be to be so “blessed,” by God. He's in Israel, he's a part of society, and everyone would say, “Look what God has done for this man.” Now, it says there in verse 19, **he habitually**, that's a key word, it means literally ‘every day’. This guy, basically you and I might put on a tuxedo to go to an inauguration of the President of the United States, and we might put on a suit and tie to go to a special event of some sort or to come here to worship as I do or whatever. This guy literally dressed to the max, it means ‘constantly, every day’. He literally was dressed, there was no casual day, let me put it that way, no casual day in this guy's life. He dressed to the max every day. What did he wear? It says **he wore purple and fine linen**. By the way, there was a type of wool garment that they wore, that wealthy people wore, called fulled, F-U-L-L-E-D, fulled wool. It was available only to the fabulously wealthy, and it was, I should say wealthy at least, and it was that type of wool that was particularly susceptible to receiving a particular purple dye. So when it says he wore these wool outer coats, these garments, the wool was a process, the material was put in clay, and it was laborious, a lot of chemicals, and a lot of things were done to it to “full” the wool, and that's the garment this guy was wearing. Why? Because he had a colorful wool that was a fine purple. This purple, it was at what they call a Tyrolean purple, it came from Tyre, and in order to make this purple dye, to dye their clothes, and as a matter of fact, you remember in the book of Acts, Lydia is described as a seller of purple. To make this dye, they had to get a little type of shellfish called a Murex, and they would take this little Murex, and they would crush it and maybe get a little drop or two of this purple substance. They had to take thousands of



these Murexes and crush them. I mean, to get a half gallon or a gallon of purple dye, I don't know how many thousands upon thousands they would have to crush. Now, and that's entire, and so you can imagine, if you will, the expense and the effort that would have to go through to dye this fulled wool a particular purple. This guy dressed this way every day of his life. Notice it says fine linen. Linen they would wear as an undergarment. Well, the word there for fine linen is talking about linen that has literally the most maximum thread count imaginable. You women probably know what a thread count is. I have a rudimentary knowledge, but basically, the finest, finest linen, this word refers to the finest linen imaginable. In Jesus's day, it most likely came from Egypt because they grew the type of cotton from which that linen fabric could be made. By the way, do you know where the finest cotton, even finer than Egypt, is grown in the world today? It's all around you. Long staple Pima cotton right here in Arizona is literally the best cotton in the world to make this fine linen out of. In any event, this guy is wearing the highest thread count, the finest linen, the deepest royal purple every day, and it says he was gaily [joyously] living. The word there is *euphrainō* (G 2165). It means he was joyous. It's the same word that's used over in Luke 12 when it says, well, let's eat and drink and be merry. That word for merry, be merry. This guy was having a party a day. One commentator said, you remember the parable of the two sons? And when the wandering son came back, the father says, let's slay the fattened calf and have a feast. This guy was slaying the fattened calf daily, daily.

So verse 20, here's the contrast. You've got this rich man, purple and fine linen, living in splendor every day. And verse 20, here comes the contrast. ***And a certain poor man named Lazarus...*** Now the word 'poor' there, it doesn't just mean having little. It means having nothing. He had nothing. And he was named Lazarus. We're coming back to this. Not the Lazarus, by the way, of John 11. We're coming back to that. He ***was laid at the gate, covered***



with sores, ... I want to stop right there, **covered with sores**. The word used there for 'sores' is like ulcers, open, oozing lesions. In Revelation, the first bowl of wrath that's poured out in Revelation 16:2 & 11, it says it creates these, same word sores, that appear on men. He is laid at the gate. You say, well, where did the sores come from? Most likely, and you're going to see the word laid there is *ballō* (G 906), B-A-L-L-O. It doesn't mean that they carefully, gently, carefully laid him down. Oh, no. It's got a whole different connotation. It's basically to throw down, to flip down, or to discard, to just put down. Not necessarily in a harsh way, but to put down in an uncaring kind of way. This guy, and by the way, the same word for laid, *ballō*, is used over in the Gospel of Matthew when it's with the word paralyzed. And it was describing the paralyzed man who was laid down. Most likely, this individual had to be laid at the gate because he was paralyzed. He literally could not walk and move for himself. So what's that got to do with where the sores came from? Most commentators think that the sores are the result of, we call them bed sores today, of basically being lain down so long and not attended to, not rolled over, and so forth, that open sores are created. And the fact that, as you'll see later in the account, it talks about dogs coming and licking his sores. It shows you the ragged nature of the man. His sores are clearly exposed. To some extent, he's paralyzed. To some extent, there's a certain level of nakedness in that a lot of his body is exposed, all right? He's not a typical beggar, pardon the expression, sitting by the temple gate asking for alms. This guy cannot fend for himself at all. And the word *ballō*, like I said, means: to throw, to let go of without caring where it falls; is the idea of laid, to be totally discarded. Matthew 8:6 is where that paralytic is, where the same word is used. Okay, so what? Well, by the way, he's laid by the rich man's gate. That word for 'gate' there is not, oh, your garden gate where you walk into the garden. It is a word that is always used in Greek literature for a massive, huge, ornate type of doorway, portal, or gate. Most likely, this rich man lived in a massive mansion, at least



for his day and age, a major estate, and they theorized that basically this poor guy was probably cared for by friends as much as they possibly could. His situation was totally hopeless. He's paralyzed. He can't move. He's not getting any better. He has nothing. It's 24-7, constant caregiving care. Finally, the people got to a point where whoever they were, family or friends, and just said, hey, let's just lay him by this rich guy's house and maybe... we're done. We just can't do it anymore. This guy is abandoned. This guy is helpless. This guy has nothing, has nobody. It is the worst situation you can possibly, possibly imagine.

Now, he's given a name. His name is Lazarus. His name answers the question of how the rich man ended up in hell and how this man ended up in heaven. The name Lazarus is the Greek for the Hebrew Eliezer or Elazar or Eliezer, and the Hebrew name Eliezer, the Greek name Lazarus means (I love this): whom the Lord saved, whom the Lord has helped. Well, how much help did God give him? He saved his soul.

By the way, we're going to wait to the end of the story before we get to all the teachings. But you know what? One of the great teachings that comes out of this story, and Christians, we stumble into this sometimes. We tend to think that hard circumstances is God's disfavor on our life, that sickness and illness and disease is God's disfavor on our life, and that if we had wealth and money and this and that, that that's clearly God's favor on its life. I will tell you, I've had conversation, I've had conversation with believers just this past week who will tell you health and wealth can be one of the biggest curses you could ever have happen to your life, and heartache and suffering and sadness can be used by God to be one of the greatest blessings that could ever happen to your life. But the point is, it's got nothing to do with your eternal condition. God may indeed chastise you by taking something away, but more often than not, He's using everything in your life to conform you and me more to the image of God, more to the image of Christ.



Well, let's continue on real quickly. He was laid by the gate covered with sores, and verse 21, he was *longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table*. Now stop right there. The word 'crumbs' is in italics. But it's not a bad translation. But if you listen to, he's gone to be the Lord now, but if you read the commentaries and the sermons by Stanley Toussaint, great, wonderful man of God, Dallas grad many years ago, Stanley Toussaint says what they're really referring to here is the garbage that's taken off the man's table and thrown out. You got to understand, and we'll get into more of this next time. But the culture in biblical times, it was not sanitary and was very crude, in many ways very gross. And they got rid of the garbage by simply pitching it outside. But several commentators say they don't think that's exactly what this is referring to. And by the way, the reason why this guy is longing, why didn't he just go pick up some of those crumbs? Because he can't move. That's why they surmise he can't fend for himself, or he would go shuffle through the garbage, or do what street people perhaps do today, going through the garbage bins or whatever. He would do that, but he can't. He's immobile. That's why he's laid down there by others. And so what does it mean, *crumbs from the rich man's table*? He most likely was laid by this gigantic ornate gate, which by the way, assured you that the rich man had to see him every day and every night. Every day he went out, every day he went in. And the connotation in the context is that he gave this guy no mind at all. But later on, when it says he looks up and he sees Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, or face to face with Abraham, we'll talk about that, he recognizes him and knows his name. So it underscores the fact that he saw this guy in poverty. And by the way, the Pharisees in Jesus' day, for the most part, I'm sure there were exceptions, like maybe Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea and people like that, and Simeon and Anna or whatever. But the Pharisees in Jesus' day, for the most part, would have treated this beggar, Lazarus, the exact same way the rich man treated him. I don't want to be around that sin. He's



obviously a sinner. God is obviously punishing him. I don't even want to soil my hands and be around that. I don't even want to look in his direction. That's what's going on here. Okay, ***crumbs from the rich man's table***. They didn't have cutlery. They didn't have fine silverware in China and so forth. Like I said, it was basic existence, even for the wealthy. Now they could have maybe wiped their hands with cloth or some sort of a napkin. But even the wealthy, and most likely this rich individual, this rich man, they would have a common staple at every meal would be bread, and bread they would take, and Jesus even does it at the Last Supper, he dips it in the sop. They would eat with their hands. They ate with their fingers. And they would take bread, if they had something juicy or some jam or something like that, to pick it up, to eat it, they'd either pick it up with their fingers or they'd dab bread in it. If it was some sort of soup, if you will, or liquid, they would do that. Well, in the course of eating with your fingers and your hands, what happens? Your hands get wet, and they get junk on them and gunk on them, and they need to be wiped off. They would always have some stale bread, more stale bread, I should say, on the table. And just like bread would soak up a liquid that you could eat with, they could take stale bread, and they were a little bit harder, didn't crumble as easy, and it would soak up, and they would rub and wash their hands off with that stale bread. And they would discard it by literally throwing it under the table or throwing it aside. And I won't do that in my house, but that's what they did in Jesus's day. And so those crumbs that fall off the table, many commentators think he was [inaudible]. Now, how would he even know? Many, many times, they would eat outside for that very reason, in the cool of the evening, if it was a cool time of the year. But he's probably lying at the gate, looking through the grate of this gate, and seeing this sumptuous meal, and seeing this rich man clean his hands with that stale bread and throw those crumbs on the ground. And they had their own cleanup crew in those days. They would let dogs, and the dogs, these are not the suds and duds with ribbons in their



ears, you know, foo-foo-la-la dogs that we, you might see that these were, everywhere dogs are referred to in scripture, they're, they're cur's, they're considered mongrels, they're almost like jackals, they're scavengers. And they would literally open the courtyard gates and let these dogs come in and eat up all the crumbs and everything, where they had eaten dinner outside in the courtyard and thrown all that stuff under the table, maybe even thrown some of the garbage aside, and they'd let those dogs go for it. And the dogs would roam around the environs of Jerusalem and so forth, and, and literally eat in that fashion. As a matter of fact, you'll remember the account, I'm trying to think of where it was in Matthew, I'll have it for next week, when the woman comes to seek healing from Jesus, and he says, well, and she's a Samaritan woman, she says, why should we give the bread for the children to you dog, to you, to you, you know, Gentiles? And what does she say? She comes back and says, well, even the wild dogs, even the mangy cur dogs are allowed to eat the crumbs from the table. It was a common custom in that day that they would allow dogs to do that.

Well, the bottom line is, we're going to have a guy who's going to die, and they're going to be shocked when Jesus gets to the end of this story. The listeners are stunned. It is the great reversal. The guy they thought was absolutely deserving of hell ends up in heaven, and the guy they thought was absolutely blessed by God ends up in hell. And the question becomes, how did he get there? And hopefully, Lord willing, when we're here next week, we'll get a chance to look at that. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for this time in Your Word. Thank You for enabling us to start unpacking these precious truths. Father, we live in a world that's for the most part under an illusion, a deception, the confusion that the arch enemy of truth, and as we sang about earlier this morning, or at least talked about in our memory verse, I should say, the great liar of all liars, Satan and all his myriads of emissaries want to perpetrate those lies. There is a heaven and



there is a hell, and most people sad to say who think they're going to heaven are not. They're going to be so sadly surprised, Father, like this rich man with no hope for anything ever changing. Father, as we go through this parable together, help us to come to grips with the reality of it, to consider the seriousness with which our Lord gives this message, the compassion, the sympathy, and the love that's in it, and the warning. Father, we know that only those whom the Lord helps, the Lazarus's, the ones whom the Lord has saved through faith in Christ, will escape the reality of hell and that torment. We thank You for the glorious, wondrous gospel of Christ in whom is our eternal deliverance. We thank You for your Word, which opens up to this truth about everything, everything we know, we know because of Your Word. We thank You for such revelation, for such a warning, which can lead us to repentance and to trust in Christ. To that end, we pray that we would be faithful in proclaiming this warning message. Use us, Lord, in that way. We pray it in Christ's name, amen and amen.