

IF THE DEAD COULD SPEAK

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Luke 16:19-31

1. Jesus had just finished telling His disciples a parable that illustrated how we should use our resources and who actually owns them.
 - a. Use your resources for the spiritual and temporal benefit of others.
 - b. True riches are entrusted to those who make right use of temporal riches. 11
 - c. We are to be faithful in the use of what belongs to God—we are only stewards. 12
 - d. We cannot serve God and live selfishly at the same time. 13
2. The passage we just read was meant for the ears of “the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, (who) were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.” 14
3. In verses 15-18 Jesus confronted the Pharisees in two areas.
 - a. Their tendency to evaluate themselves and others based on external evidence.
 - Externals do not always reveal a person’s character or relationship to God.
 - The Pharisees would view the rich man in the story Jesus told as a person with whom God was pleased, and they would see Lazarus as a sinner.
 - b. Their low view of marriage. Hebrews 13:4
“Marriage is to be held in honor by all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” (NASB)
4. It is important to remember that:
 - a. Lazarus was not in Paradise because he was poor, but because of the fact that he, like Abraham, had believed God and was counted righteous.
 - b. The rich man was not in Hades because he was rich, but because he had failed to believe God and was therefore unrighteous.
5. Eventually both of the men died.
 - a. When Lazarus died his body was probably thrown into the landfill outside of Jerusalem, but he was escorted by angels into Abraham’s presence in Paradise.
 - b. The rich man died and was afforded a great funeral, but in Hades, the place of the departed dead, he found himself in torment.
NOTE: Though both men died their death only impacted their bodies. They did not enter a period of soul-sleep as some teach.
6. Hades, the place of the departed dead, was divided into two areas.
 - a. Paradise where the saved went to await the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—now empty.
NOTE: Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross, “Assuredly, I say to you, today, you will be with Me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43
 - b. The place of torment where the unsaved await the Great White Throne Judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15
7. There is no indication that Lazarus had any interest in communicating with this world.
8. There is every indication that the rich man wanted to find a way to communicate with his friends and family. (**Can you imagine being in hell with the knowledge that your family and friends will soon follow?**)
9. What would the rich man have had to say if he could have spoken to his loved ones and friends?

I. I was wrong.

- A. About what is really important in life.
- B. About who my wealth really belonged to and how I chose to use it.
- C. About my relationship with God because I embraced man's theology rather than God's truth.
- D. About Lazarus. (Whom God helps)

II. You don't want to come here.

- A. Where your cry for mercy will not be heard.
- B. Where your appetites will continue but never be satisfied.
- C. Where your eternal destiny is fixed.
- D. Where you will remember for eternity.
- F. Where you will pray for those you love and not be heard.

III. Believe and respond to God's Word.

- A. The former rich man was sure that if Lazarus could return from the dead his five brothers would believe him.
- B. Abraham responded that those who will not believe God's Word will not believe based on some miraculous event.

1. Romans 1:14-16

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. 15 So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to (for) salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

2. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

3. The signs and miracles Jesus performed during His early ministry did not sway His enemies.

IV. Believers pray for and work for the salvation of lost people.

- A. If we could hear those voices in torment we would hear:
 - 1. "Please reach out to, pray for, and witness to my children, my brothers and sisters, my mother, my father, my friends."
 - 2. "Please warn them lest they come to this place of torment."
- B. "Everything the Bible says about this place is true."

APPLICATION: Herbert Lockyer, “All the Parables of the Bible”

1. Man cannot serve two masters. If he gains the world, and loses his soul, his loss will be eternal.
2. The choice made on earth determines the life to come, and such a choice is final. The grave can work no miracle.
3. In the future, personality continues—feeling, knowing, seeing, reasoning and remembering. Are these faculties to aid our bliss, or add to our torment?
4. Heaven and hell are realities, and our eternal destiny depends, not upon wealth or poverty, but upon our relationship to Jesus Christ, who came as prophesied by Moses and the prophets as the Savior of the world.