

JESUS UNFILTERED

SERMON STUDY GUIDE | PART 5: Did Jesus Believe in Hell? | 2.4.18 | FOLLOW ON FB @PASTORERICHUFFMAN TWITTER @ERICTHESTORY

It seems like we're always talking about why it's important to believe in Jesus, but when was the last time you stopped to think about *what Jesus believed?* Over the next month, we're going to take a closer look at Jesus' belief system by analyzing eight of his most famous parables. Here are the parables we've looked at so far:

- + The Parable of the Reckless Farmer (Matthew 13:1-23)
- + The Parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son (Luke 15)
- + The Parable of the Vineyard Workers (Matthew 20:1-16)
- + The Parables of the Two Debts (Luke 7:36-50) and the Two Prayers (Luke 18:9-14)

Today we'll focus on the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus from Luke 16:19-31 by asking the question, "What did Jesus believe about hell?" In the Gospels, he speaks directly about hell at least fifteen times. According to Jesus, these are the people who are at risk of burning in eternal damnation: those with lustful eyes (Matt. 5:29), those with wayward hands (Matt. 5:30) or sinful feet (Mark 9:45), those who do not fear the Devil (Matt. 10:28, Luke 12:5), Pharisees (Matt. 23:15, 33), Capernaum (Matt. 11:23), and anyone who calls his brother a fool (Matt. 5:22). This week's parable is Jesus' clearest teaching about hell.

Before hearing this message, what do you believe about hell?

Luke 16:19-31: The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Who are the two main characters in this story? What were some of the differences in their living conditions?

Be honest here: how would you treat or value these two men differently?

The “rich man” was not given a name in this story while the poor man was given a proper name, Lazarus. What do you think that means?

In verse 24, the rich man is in agony, in the “fire” of hell. What does he ask Abraham to do? What does that say about the rich man’s frame of mind?

Read verse 26 very carefully. This verse describes a chasm and states “that those who wish to come over from here (Heaven) to you (Hades) will not be able, and that none may cross over from there (Hades) to us (Heaven)”. What do these verses suggest about those in hell? How does this change the way you think about hell?

Read Luke 16: 27-31. What was the rich man begging Abraham to do?

The rich man suggests that someone needs to come from the dead to warn his family. Why do you think the rich man thought that his family would need something as dramatic as this before finally listening?

Abraham said that even someone rising from the dead would not convince them. Are you waiting for one more piece of evidence before you believe? What do you think it would take for you to listen to Moses, the Prophets and Jesus?

CS Lewis on Hell:

“Hell begins with a grumbling mood, always complaining, always blaming others...but you are still distinct from it. You may even criticize it in yourself and wish you could stop it. But there may come a day when you can no longer. Then there will be no ‘you’ left to criticize the mood or even to enjoy it, but just the grumble itself, going on forever like a machine. It is not a question of God ‘sending us’ to hell. In each of us there is something growing, which will BE hell unless it’s taken care of... There are only two kinds of people--those who say ‘Thy will be done’ to God or those to whom God says in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in hell choose it. Without that self-choice it wouldn’t be hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it.”

What do you think about this idea of hell as a sign of God’s ultimate commitment to free will?