

5 Things In Hell That Every Church Should Have.

Luke 6:19—31

It is significant that we understand that hell is a real place and that those who are lost will wind up there. I know there are many in our pulpits today that teach that hell is not real, that all people will go to heaven, regardless of what they do here on earth. I know there are people who don't believe in Satan as a reality. I also know that the same Word of God that tells us about a risen savior, tells us about hell, and I can't seem to console the fact that people can claim to follow Jesus, but deny His word when it comes to hell and Satan. In my mind, you either have to accept all the Word, or deny it. I can't

see God giving us truth in multiple choice selection, for a selective belief is no belief at all in my book.

I also believe that Jesus gave us all the Gospel He wanted us to have in these 66 books of the Bible. And, in every word, there is a truth that He wants us to know. This is especially true about His portrayal of hell. It was not that He wanted to try and scare people into heaven, He just wanted all to know the consequences of not believing in Him, for death is that unknown factor in the life of all people.

So, for my message, I want to look into the very depths of hell to see what kind of lesson we can learn there that will apply to the church today. Perhaps you think this is strange to look to hell to find ways to improve the church, but who can give us better insight into what we ought to be doing than one who has done everything completely wrong and then reflects back on what he did wrong. I'm sure if we listen closely to this man's story, we'll see many things we need to be doing in the church, but I want to focus on only five improvements we need to make in the church.

Incidentally, there won't be one unbeliever in hell. They all will recognize their need for a Savior. They will recognize the important part the church plays in the lives of those who believe. They will fully understand the love of God, but too late. They have to be in hell before they will believe it exists. There they will spend eternity acknowledging the things they should have accepted here on earth.

As I read the Scripture, I'll make a few editorial comments to help set the scene the message.

Luke 16:19-20

19There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

**20And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,
full of sores.**

We can see that this is a real story Jesus telling. He actually knew about this rich man and this beggar. He tells us here that there was a certain rich man and a certain beggar. He also tells us the name of the beggar because he knows him personally. The

rich man was a stranger, to Jesus because he wasn't saved. Jesus knows His own. He will not recognize Satan's people as if he is on a first name basis. As far as Jesus is concerned, one lost person is like any other, and He is clearly going to take care of His own; but for the lost, it is up to them to get to know Him.

Luke 16:21

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Like most rich people, I suppose the rich man threw away enough food to feed many more people than this one beggar, but he didn't seem to notice. He went along as if he would live forever without a thought for anyone else. It seems the dogs were more concerned about Lazarus than the people around him.

Luke 16:22

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died and was buried.

It appears that Lazarus wasn't even buried. Probably he was taken out to the local dump and cast into the fire for his body to be consumed. But not so with the rich man, he probably had a big funeral. Most likely, there were three or four preachers there for his funeral. (Have you ever noticed that the families of the unsaved usually have several preachers for the funeral service as if one can be preached into heaven?) I suppose that there was also a large monument placed at his grave to signify how rich he was in life.

I once drove by a graveyard in a rural setting in South Carolina, and there among the tombstones was a bigger than life statute of a man. I suppose it was of the person buried in the grave beneath it. I don't know anything about the person, but if the family thought it made any difference to God, they are mistaken. If the man was unsaved, his statute is all the recognition he'll ever get.

Abraham's bosom is the Hebrew way of expressing heaven before Jesus came to clarify this issue. It is not Purgatory as the Roman Catholics claim. This is a figment of some pope's imagination, and is just another way for the Catholic Church to get money out of their people. You cannot pay one out of hell nor can one be prayed out, if a person goes there, that's it.

Our story begins to take shape now, for we see that when they both died they went to the place they deserved based on what decisions they had made here on earth. Lazarus went to heaven, and the rich man went to hell. It doesn't even address a transition. When one dies, he instantaneously is translated to one or the other places.

My grandmother died in 1947. She had been diagnosed with cancer several years earlier. On this particular day all her children were present around her bed. She had been in comma for about a week and they all knew this was her last day upon this

earth. Dad said that it was about noon when all of a sudden she sat up in the bed and said, "It is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen", and then she passed on into glory. I've often wondered if God let us have just a little insight about what it looks like on the other side. I like to think so anyway.

Listen carefully as I read the rest of our designated scripture and see if you recognize any of the five things we're going to address.

Luke 16:23-31

23And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

27Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

There are many things this story tells about living and dying. It tells us that how we live is important. It tells us that how we die is important. But, it most of all tells us that what we do live on earth will determine where we'll spend eternity. And it gives us some insight into the state of man after death.

1. Notice that when man dies, his soul either goes directly to heaven or hell depending on whether he has accepted the saving grace of Jesus Christ or not.
2. Notice also, that people have feelings after they die.
3. Unfortunately for the lost, there is a state of consciousness after death. Those who think that death is like being asleep are in for a big awakening.
4. Those in Hell can see the people in heaven. This is part of the punishment. We also see that they can recognize them. It says nothing about those in heaven seeing

those in hell for there will be nothing distasteful allowed in heaven. If we could see the punishment in hell, it would cut down on the pleasure of heaven.

This story of the rich man and Lazarus is one that has been repeated time after time in the annals of history. There have always been rich people who were only concerned with their own wants and neglected the rest of the world. If all the rich people we have in the world today were really concerned about their fellow man, we could do away with poverty and hunger. However, this always seems to be the destiny of mankind.

My former pastor, Jim Halliburton, tells this story. There was a man in the community who had just started a business. I don't know what it was, but he was concerned about getting it going. During a revival service this man came forward and rededicated his life and made a pledge to God that he would always give the church ten percent of his profits. As time passed his business became more and more profitable to the point that he was paying a large sum each month to meet his pledge. Finally it became such a great amount that he wanted to quit giving so much to the church, and so came to the pastor and ask him to release him from the pledge. Jim thought about it for a moment and then said, "I can't release you from the pledge because you made it to God, but I will pray that your business will falter so that you won't have to pay so much."

But, let me relate a modern version of this rich man/poor man story. Perhaps not to the extent of our text, but it illustrates well how our contemporary society sets up class structures and treats people differently according to how they perceive them.

You all know who Howard Hughes was; One of the richest men in the world during his lifetime. Howard was a peculiar man to say the least. If he'd been poor, we'd call him crazy, but since he was rich we called him eccentric. He did many things that a normal person wouldn't do. In 1966 when I was visiting the General Dynamics plant in Fort Worth, Texas, I was told about the time Howard Hughes wanted to buy some of their airplanes but wouldn't come to the plant, nor let the General Dynamic executives come to his place. He met them in the trash dump one night at midnight to close out the deal. I would say this was unusual behavior to say the least. Also, when I was at the Lockheed plant in Atlanta Georgia on the C - 5A program, I learned about two airplanes he had purchased from them, and they had them fueled and a flight crew standing by at all times just in case he ever needed them. I guess he died without ever calling on them.

He totally isolated himself in the last years of his life. I'm told he would trust no one but the few Mormon guards he had hired. He took sick in South America, and died in route to the U.S. seeking medical help. He had no formal funeral. He was cremated, and his ashes were scattered over the Mojave desert. His relatives are still fighting over his fortune.

Contrast this life of Howard Hughes to one of his employees, a janitor. Now we know that the janitorial position in any company is considered to be the least skilled and lowest paid jobs available. However, this particular janitor was a Christian. He worked

hard every day. Always did a good job, and got along well with his coworkers. He was an active member of his church. He retired from his job at the Hughes plant and enjoyed life with his wife, children, and grandchildren. He finally reached that time in life when his old body gave out and he was given a Christian funeral, many relatives, friends and neighbors came to mourn his death. He was buried in the church cemetery, and even today, his children place flowers on his grave and remember him for his kindness and the example he set for them.

Which of these men do you think was the wealthiest, Howard Hughes or the janitor?

Notice that I didn't know the name of the janitor. That is the way we humans are, we remember the rich, but forget the poor. But, not so with God, He remembers His own, and the accumulated wealth of this world means absolutely nothing to Him. We see the significance of this in our story. There in verse 24 we see our first of the five things I want to address tonight.

Luke 16:24

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

The rich man cried. There are tears in hell. I doubt if he knew the meaning of tears on earth, but in hell the torment was so great that the pain was more than he could bear. Every church, if it is to serve the living God must have tears as a part of what they are.

There must be tears of repentance. The cry of sinners as they accept the saving power of Jesus Christ. Do you remember when you were first saved? You cried as you realized your sins were washed clean. We need more tears of repentance in the church as we preach and teach about heaven and hell and the consequence of not accepting Jesus as one's personal savior.

There must be tears of Joy. Especially as we rejoice when a sinner is saved. There must be tears of joy as we think about our own salvation and the price Jesus paid for our own salvation.

Rejoice in the Lord and be glad. As Paul said, "and again I say rejoice."

There must be tears of mourning especially for those who die that are lost. And for our loved ones who precede us in death. We know the saved one we'll meet again, but God expects us to miss them here on this earthly plane. Even Jesus wept when he learned of Lazarus' death. He wept over the city of Jerusalem because all the people were lost and wouldn't accept His free gift of eternal life.

The church of the living God must have a burden for lost souls to the extent that it brings tears to our eyes if we are to be the kind of church Jesus Christ want us to be. The rich man cried out in hell from the pain. He finally understood the way to salvation, but too late. He's there now - still crying.

Luke 16:25

25But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Remembrance – Ever church should have times of remembrance. Death won't wipe out our memories. In fact, our memories will become more acute, and in hell, remembrance is part of the punishment. The rich man remembered now how he had treated Lazarus. But for the Christian, remembrance is part of the blessing.

Remember when you first become a Christian. Keep this in mind always. We have a tendency to become callous after salvation and forget about who we are and who our Savior is. We must at all times remember Jesus Christ and how He brought us out of the depths of sin. We must remember to think God always for all things in life. Try to always walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Every church should have special days to remember; an anniversary to remember our beginnings; a special day when we attempt to recapture the spirit of our founders as they came together to build a Spiritual place of worship.

Special days to honor special events such as **Christmas** to celebrate the birth of our Savior. **Easter** to celebrated His resurrection and ascension.

Every Sunday as we worship is a special day to remember how **Jesus Christ died on the cross and how His shed blood alone can cleanse us from sin.**

ILLUSTRATION: Golf story and rapture.

Luke 16:27

27Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

The rich man became concerned about his lost brothers, and in his concerned state, he prayed. A little late, but it shows total desperation on the part of the rich man. It is interesting to note that some people only pray when they get desperate. Every church, if it is to the true church of the living God, must have an active prayer life.

Why prayer? This is the Christians way of communicating with God. Prayer strengthens us. We get guidance from God through prayer. Jesus always prayed when HE had a decision to make or needed guidance.

There is another thing we should notice in verse 27, the rich man wanted someone sent to his brothers. He became mission minded in hell.

Probably missionaries had been by his door. He was too busy, not interested.

Missions - the great commission to tell the gospel to all the world. Every church should have a strong missionary program. Every member should be a missionary. Jesus said tell the world, and the world for this church begins just outside the front door. If we don't tell the lost, then who will?

A missionary minded church will grow. One that doesn't practice witnessing will die. A missionary minded church will please god, for that is his work

Luke 16:30

30And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

The need for repentance is recognized in hell. Jesus said for us to repent of our sins.

The only way to be saved is to repent and believe on the lord Jesus. It was Jesus who said that unless we repent we cannot see the kingdom of god. The only way to be saved is to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ

But there is more, Christians should repent daily for there is a consequence to sinning. For the unsaved, it is hell, for the Christian it is loss of fellowship with God.

Even though our sins are forgiven through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we continue to sin. we can continue to grow as Christians only as we recognize our sinful ways and ask god's forgiveness

For a church to be strong there must be a sense of repentance throughout the congregation

We have looked at a few things in hell that every church should have

Tears

Remembrance

Prayer

Missions

Repentance

Unfortunately, the rich man was in hell before he recognized these things. It was too late for him, but it is not too late for us we must strive to build a strong church based on this lesson that Jesus taught

Our mission is difficult and is well expressed in verse 31.

And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Jesus rose from the dead, the firstborn of the resurrection. Through belief in Jesus Christ, we have eternal life. The world will not believe though He rose from the dead. You and I, if we are saved, will come forth in the same manner. We have a responsibility to teach and preach the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for therein lies the only hope for a lost world.

[SERMONS INDEX](#)

[HOME](#)