

No Second Chances – Luke 16:19-31

Just started new series – “**Ready or Not, Here I Come**”

Looking at life, death, and the return of Christ – as finish Luke this ministry year

The point of the entire series is to *be prepared* . . .

Because Jesus is coming again whether you’re ready or not

If that doesn’t happen in your lifetime, you will also die – ready or not

Last week started the series with a foundational message on the Love of God

Told you it was critical that you have that firmly in mind as we work through the rest of

Jesus’ teaching here in Luke – because it doesn’t get any easier

In fact, it gets much harder, especially as we talk about death and what follows this a.m.

Some of these truths are hard to swallow; Uncomfortable; Wish they were different

But however you feel, whatever you do – don’t ignore them

Because your life literally depends on believing/accepting them

Read **Lk 16:19-31**

This parable drives home 3 truths, the first of which is that . . .

There’s more to life than meets the eye (v19-22)

Looks can be deceiving

Jesus sets us up for a surprise on this, with a series of contrasts

Covered with beautiful clothes – Covered with filthy sores

Feasted sumptuously/extravagantly – Hungered desperately/simple

Attended by servants (presumably due to royalty/purple clothing) – Licked by dogs

One of the surprises he sets us up for is that . . .

• Just because you’re rich, doesn’t mean you’re righteous

Just because have treasure on earth, doesn’t mean you’re storing up treasure in heaven

Totally contrary to the Jewish mindset

They expected the rich/wealthy to be the first to inherit the kingdom of God

The first to occupy heaven; And to occupy the first place

Would have been a shock

Not that much different now

We often presume that because someone is wealthy, must be doing something right

Can’t be all bad

Jesus is like – ya, can; Looks can be deceiving when it comes to wealth

Money and wealth is not an indicator of righteousness any more than poverty is an

indicator of depravity

Second surprise . . .

• Just because you’re healthy, doesn’t mean you’re holy

Rich man was a picture of health, but he wasn’t anymore holy than a hole in the ground

Physical health is not an airtight indicator of holiness, any more than chronic sickness is

an indicator of sinfulness

Having said that, God does use sickness at times to get our attention, discipline us, or

refine us – no doubt about it

Often, sickness is a consequence of not living right

But just because you’re sick, doesn’t automatically mean you’re sinful

Just because you’re healthy, doesn’t automatically mean you’re holy

There’s more to health than meets the eye

• Just because you’re savvy, doesn’t mean you’re saved

This guy was savvy for sure

How else could you pass by such a needy person day in / day out, and feed nothing?

How else could you maintain appearances, with such a loathsome beggar at doorstep?

You have to be savvy to do that; Have to be smooth to rationalize that one away

Joke it off with your buddies

He was savvy, but he obviously wasn’t saved

Appearances tell a lot, but they never tell the whole story

Just because you look good, feel good, and live good – doesn’t mean you are good

There’s more to life than meets the eye

Huge issue in our culture

We tend to equate good looks with a good heart

If lined up beautiful vs average – you’d think beautiful people were going to heaven

Good health with a good future

Good friends with a good standing before God

This parable blows that kind of cultural Christianity out of the water

A white picket fence, a fine suit, fit body, nice car, lots of friends, and lots of influence –

Has nothing to do with your eternal destination

There’s more to life – especially *eternal* life – than meets the eye

There’s more to death than some expect (v23-26)

Contrasts continue

Buried by men (22) – carried by angels (just a metaphorical way to illustrate favor)

Existed in hell – lived in heaven

Alone and lonely – Together and fulfilled

Tormented in anguish – Comforted and content

Dying of thirst – Quenched with living water

What a huge reversal of fortune

All of which shows that there’s not only more to life than meets the eye, but . . .

There’s more to death than some expect

4 Truths Concerning Death

1. It’s not the end of the road

Bible does not teach annihilationism – there’s life after death

Not only is that clear in this parable

But it’s affirmed by Jesus in Lk 20:37-38 – *That the dead are raised, even Moses*

showed . . . [God] *is not the God of the dead, but of the living*

Referring to people who had already died – implying that they live on spiritually

Confirmed by Paul in 1 Cor 15 – If Christ has been raised, then we will as well

We can expect real, physical, tangible life after death

2. It leads to either heaven or hell

Those are the only 2 options; Whichever it is, it’s immediate and forever

For believers, it’s heaven

Upon death, we immediately go to be with the Lord

2 Cor 5 – To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord

Lk 23 – Christ told the criminal on the cross – *Today you will be with me in paradise*

Heb 12:23 – says that when we come together to worship, we come not only into the presence of God in heaven, but also into the presence of *the spirits of just men made perfect*

We're not in some state of limbo – we're with God in heaven when we die

And we will be there forever and ever (Rev 22:5)

Doesn't mean that we receive our resurrected and glorified *bodies* when we die

That happens at Christ's second coming (1 Cor 15; 1 Thess 2)

Our bodies, alive or dead, will be resurrected, renewed, and glorified

Until then, our souls go immediately to be with the Lord

Theologians call that time between when you die and when you get your glorified body – the Intermediate State

We're with the Lord heart and soul, but we don't yet have our new bodies

For believers, death leads immediately to heaven

For unbelievers, it leads to hell

While the Bible is not as explicit that it's immediate, the implication is certainly there

See that in 22b-23a – the death, burial, and consequence of hell is an unbroken seq.

Heb 9:27 does the same thing – *it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment* [punishment]

More importantly, it's forever

Mt 25:46 – the unrighteous will go into *eternal punishment*

Rev 14:11 – *The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night*

Death leads to either heaven or hell; Whichever it is, it's immediate and forever

3. There's no such thing as purgatory

It's not mentioned in the Bible; It's not implied

Huge stretch to even infer it from Scripture; Even if you ignore the context

Purgatory is neither a real place nor a real time

There is an Intermediate State, but it has nothing to do with purgatory

According to Roman Catholic doctrine, purgatory is the place/time in between death and heaven, where a believer is punished and *completely* purified for their sins

It was first defined and declared as "truth" by the Catholic Church at the Council of Florence in 1438 – that's 1400 years after Christ and the NT

Other than not being mentioned/described in Scripture . . .

The biggest problem with purgatory is that it implies that Christ's punishment and sacrifice for your sins wasn't quite enough

You need to do something more to be completely holy before God

That's a direct contradiction to the crystal clear teaching of Scripture

Col 2:13-14 – *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh* [sinful nature], *God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all*

our trespasses [past tense], *by canceled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

Through faith in Jesus Christ, God has forgiven *all* our sins, and canceled the punishment we deserved – there's nothing left to pay

Heb 10:14 – *By a single offering he* [Christ] *has perfected* [completely forgiven/washed] *for all time those who are being sanctified* [those being saved].

In God's eyes, it's finished – for all time; There's nothing left to be done

No price yet to pay

Rom 8:1 – *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Because we've been declared righteous by faith, and have peace with God

through Jesus Christ, there's no remaining punishment/consequence for our sin

There's more to death than some expect, but it doesn't include purgatory

4. There are no second chances

Read v25 – he's not saying that if you're sick/poor, you're going to heaven . . .

If you're rich/healthy, you're going to hell

Belief, or the lack thereof, is implied here in light of the whole of Scripture

What he *is* saying – the rich man got what he wanted in life . . .

He's getting what he deserves in death

Meanwhile, Lazarus got what he *didn't* want in life . . .

And is now getting what he deserves in heaven

Quote – Pitied is the man who is successful apart from God, for that will be his portion in the end

That will be his reward for all eternity

If your primary goal is to make lots of money for yourself; have lots of fame; have lots of ease and comfort here on earth . . .

You better do it up big, because the memory of it's going to have to last a long time in the torment of hell

The point here is that death is final – there are no second chances

It's heaven or hell – God has forever fixed a separation between the two

If it's heaven, you'll never want to leave; If it's hell, there's no way out

There's no crossing over; no excuses; no purgatory; no indulgences; no prayers on your behalf; No nothing

Nothing will change your destination once you die

Which means that . . .

The time is NOW to choose your way (v27-31)

Time is now to choose your destination

The rich guy got it – he knew it was too late for him

But there was still time for those still living – read 27-28

He knew that the decision for eternity had to be made on this side of life – he got it

Abraham's response in v29-31 is one of the strongest endorsements for the sufficiency of God's Word you'll ever find – read 29-31

• There's no excuse for unbelief

They had everything they needed for life and godliness – in Moses/Prophets; the OT

If that was true then, how much more so is it true now?

If the *OT* was sufficient for belief then, how much more is the *NT* sufficient now?

How much more are we without excuse . . .

With the death and resurrection of Jesus behind us?

With the NT's explanation of it?

With the examples of the early church and those who choose their way?

If *they* were without excuse *before* Christ, how much more are *we*, *after* Christ?

Please, on behalf of the proverbial rich man – choose your way *now*

Because there are no second chances

Pray

If your eternity doesn't look good

Or you're not *sure* where you're headed . . .

The time is now, today is the day, to choose your way

Because if you die, there is no later

The events of this week at VA Tech are a brutal reminder that you never know

Prayer of salvation

Rich or not, I know I'm not righteous

Healthy or not, I know I'm not holy

Savvy or not, I know I'm not saved

And I want to be

Forgive me of my sins – I believe that Jesus died for me

Come into my life – change me and lead me

Save me for all eternity

I love you, and commit to live for you, the rest of my days

Close

In light of the offerings recently – want to thank you for your faithful/consistent giving

As with a new home or business, we have many unexpected bills

And with the cold weather and construction the first few months of this year, our operating costs have been far higher than we anticipated

But the offerings the last few weeks have enabled us to pay our bills as they come due and stay right on track . . .

Assuming we continue to meet our budgeted need each week

That's on the *operations side* of things

On the *building front* . . .

Still have outstanding bills to pay over and above our mortgage

Trusting God that through our weekly giving, we'll be able to pay those off by the end of the year

There's nothing to do except continue to pray, say thank you as God provides . . .

And keep giving back to him a portion of what he's given you

Next week – take break from series

Preaching about baptism

I can't wait – hope to see you then