

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

**Chapter 16- Luke 16:19-31**

276- What Jesus Believed and Taught  
About Hell and Salvation- Part 2

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## **Luke 16:19-31**

19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

21 and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

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

25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.'

27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house —

28 for I have five brothers — in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'

**30 "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'**

**31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"**

To the Glory of God

Now we are continuing to explore what Jesus believed and taught about Hell. And this Parable seems to be pretty straight forward- that is- until we actually examine it. And then we are confronted with some serious problems that should make us take pause and search our *own* hearts to see if we are truly born again and not simply deceived about our Salvation.

Now, last week- we examined the twin false teachings of Annihilationism and the notion first put forth by CS Lewis almost a century ago that God doesn't sovereignly "send" people to hell but that they go there because they truly wanted to be there. And we explored those false teachings. But today I want to begin to dig deeper into just what Jesus said here in these verses and why He said what He said.

Like I said, on a shallow reading- this Parable appears to be fairly straight forward: Lazarus went to heaven and the rich man went to hell. And then Jesus describes hell in this Parable as a real place that is terrible and unspeakable- using words and phrases like:

- ✓ **I am in agony in this flame** (verse 24)
- ✓ **you are in agony** (verse 25)
- ✓ **between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.'** (verse 26)
- ✓ **this place of torment** (verse 28)

... that makes us tremble and that causes us to take heed to our own hearts to make sure that we are not going to this awful place called hell.

Now we began this New Year by looking at what the term "Protestant" means, and why we call ourselves "Protestants", and what exactly we are "protesting" against. And we also learned what the "Protestant Reformation" of 500 years ago was all about- because I want you to understand one thing (if you don't learn anything else in this

Church) and that is: words mean things. And so terms and labels are important, and words have very distinct and precise definitions, and all this really matters.

And today I want to introduce you to another very important term. As professing Protestant Christians- as heirs of the Reformation- we are often labeled with the term "Evangelical". And that label comes from the verb that means: to evangelize. And to evangelize means: to actively and consistently preach and teach and talk about and sow the seeds of the "evangel" or the "Evangelion" or the "Good News". So Evangelicals are the people who believe that lost sinners are initially saved by what they believe in and what they trust in, and *not* by what they "do" for themselves. But we go further to teach and believe that after we are saved- we are commanded to do good works, and that those good works come *after* we are saved as a loving *response* to what Jesus has already done in our hearts and minds. And so Evangelicals believe and confess several very important things- among them are:

- ✓ Jesus Christ is God Almighty in human flesh
- ✓ God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day in the very same Body in which He died
- ✓ Justification come by Grace alone through Faith alone in Jesus Personally and in His finished Work

And, of course, the only reason we know anything about these two things is because of something else that we believe and hold to as Evangelicals and that is:

The 66 Books of the Holy Bible are  
the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of the living God

And so as Evangelicals- we do *not* develop our theology and our Doctrine from personal experiences or from angelic visitations or from Church history or from human reasoning or from human logic or from Church Creeds or the rulings of Church Councils or the pronouncements of popes or other ecclesiastical rulers. But we strive to develop what we believe and what we teach from the Scriptures, and from the Scriptures alone.

But we realize that we are human, and whereas the Scriptures are infallible- we are not. And so it is possible that we still hold to aspects of Divine Truth that are not entirely from Scripture. And so when we come to realize, by God's Grace, that we have trusted in or believed something that is *not* Biblical- then we pray for strength and power to repent of that false teaching and to discard it and we seek to graciously move toward becoming more Biblical about that particular subject.

But Evangelicals are not simply content with believing the Truth of Scripture. But there are two other additional parts of the Gospel that Evangelicals believe:

1. Obeying the Gospel after Salvation
2. Proclaiming that Gospel to others

So *part* of the very definition of the label that describes us is that we believe that inherent in being saved is the mandate and the command to obey the parts of the Gospel that tells us how we are supposed to live our lives after we have been justified by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone. And *part* of being an Evangelical involves us proclaiming that Good News or the Gospel to as many people as we can every day- using every tool at our disposal- all to the Glory of God.

So while Sovereign Election is true and everybody who is chosen to be saved from before the foundation of the world will be saved- the "means" or the "way" that God has ordained that every soul who is saved will be saved- is by hearing the Gospel preached and believing in the Gospel.

So Evangelicals believe that *nobody* is saved apart from hearing and believing the Gospel. And Evangelicals believe that nobody is truly saved unless they follow Jesus into humble and joyful obedience after they are initially Justified. And we believe that part of being saved is that we proclaim that Gospel to others.

So we're called "Evangelicals" because inherent in our faith is the mandate to obey and proclaim the Scriptures. And that means that it is never enough for an Evangelical to believe and be saved for himself. It's only when- as saved people- we actively seek to be faithful to the Commands and expectations of Jesus Christ, and when we proclaim

and share the Biblical Gospel and call others to repent and believe it that we are truly "Christian".

And so before I get into all the characteristics of hell that Jesus gets into in this Parable- and what hell will be like for those who enter it- I want to first tell you how to avoid ever going there in the first place. And it is amazingly simple. To avoid hell- you need three things:

1. You need to hear the Message
2. You need to believe the Message
3. You need to act on the Message

And that is why the Message must be preached and taught and explained. Because our eternal souls depend on it.

Now a lot of people would agree that Evangelicals have the mandate and the Command to preach the Gospel to every creature. But what I find very surprising is that after 2,000 years- many people in the modern Church seem to be confused about the *method*. In fact, there are people out there today- who offer almost every conceivable kind of successful method for building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church. And because most people in America measure success by money and numbers of people- most of the leaders of the modern Church are caught up in strategies and methods and marketing- which seek to try to manipulate as many people as possible to make the patently offensive part of the Gospel- the "Bad News"- to somehow be less bad, to be less offensive, to be less frightening, to be more palatable to lost and lukewarm churchgoers.

And the leaders of the modern Church are all in a tizzy to try to find an easier method a simply way a more streamlined process where we can just "mass-produce" believers like General Motors mass-produces automobiles. So they are constantly trying to find the most effective method and technique that will produce saving faith in dead deaf and blind lost people. What simple way can we create that will cause people who love their sin to run from hell and pursue Heaven? What fancy thing can we do and what clever thing can we say that will manipulate more lost people, who love darkness rather than light, to suddenly hate their sin and love Jesus? What method can we use that will cause people, who are slaves to sin, to suddenly change them into

being bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ- who will be more willing to die rather than simply speak something untrue about Jesus?

And the simple answer is- there is no method at all. There is no technique and no marketing strategy that has the ability to do this. Because clever words don't have the power to give sight to the blind. And methods don't give deaf ears hearing. And marketing strategies don't give life to spiritually dead people.

There is no human engineered technique that has the power to overcome fallen depravity and sin and selfishness and self-will and human corruption. There is no human method. And because that is true- the Message is everything! What we proclaim and what we preach and what we teach and what we herald- the Message- is everything. And that Message is the very *same* message that Moses taught, and the very *same* Message that David sang about, and that Isaiah prophesied about, and that Jesus preached, and that the Apostles preached. What we preach today is not a new take on the "old, old story"- we do not seek to work "outside the box" or to be "spiritual entrepreneurs" or to try to "spin" the Bible a certain way to make it less than what it is. And that's why the Bible offers no method.

Here, in this very Parable- in verse 29- the fictional Abraham speaks, and he says this,

**... They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.**

... and then in verse 31- he says,

**... If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.**

Now the phrase "Moses and the Prophets" refers to the Old Testament. "Moses" is always equated with the Law- the first five Books of the Bible- that were the *didactic* or the "teaching Books" of the Scriptures until the advent of the New Covenant. These are the Books that were inspired by God the Holy Spirit as He moved upon Moses to define "right and wrong", and that taught people how to live in a way that was pleasing to the Lord under the partial Revelation of the "Old" or the "First Covenant".

And since the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead- God the Holy Spirit moved upon the Apostles and their designees to pen down 21 "New Testament Epistles"- which are "Letters from an Apostle". And these 21 Epistles- along with the four Gospel Records, and **The Book of the Acts of the Apostles**- which is a diary of the early Church during its first 30 years,. and "The Apocalypse" which full name is "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ given to St. John the Divine**", which is the prophetic Book of the New Covenant- all 27 of these Books make up the final, full, and completed Revelation of God to Man that are infinitely superior to the Revelation of the Old Covenant because they are built on infinitely superior Promises, made by an infinitely superior High Priest, brought about by an infinitely superior Sacrifice.

But it is the 21 NT Epistles that *replaced* the five Books of Moses as the "didactic" or the "Teaching Books of the Christian Church". But when you read the fictional Abraham of this Parable say- "**let them read Moses**", the 21 NT Epistles had not been written at this time and the only teaching Books that had been given by God the Holy Spirit at that time were the first five Books of Moses. And when Abraham says, "**let them hear the Prophets**", he is referring to all that the OT Prophets brought forth in the rest of OT Scripture. So the phrase "**Moses and the Prophets**" came to symbolize the entirety of Old Covenant Revelation- or what we would know today as the 39 Books of the Old Testament Scripture.

So this phrase is simply the Jewish way to refer to the Scriptures. So what Abraham is saying in this Parable is:

If lost people don't hear and believe the Scriptures- they will not be persuaded even if someone from the dead came back and spoke to them...

In other words- if God does not mercifully and sovereignly move upon lost people to give them eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe, if God does not sovereignly *grant* to them the ability to hear and understand the Gospel as it is preached- then they will *not* be able to overcome the spiritual darkness that they are already in due to the fact that they are born with Original Sin- and they will *not* repent and they will *not* be forgiven and they will *not* be saved.

And this spiritual blindness is so great and so all-encompassing that they will *not* see and they will *not* hear and they will *not* believe

and they will remain lost. And the “moral inability” that consumes them is so pervasive that they will *not* believe even if they talk with someone who has been raised from the dead- and who stands before them warning them of the horrors of hell. Here is how the Apostle Paul put it in **1Corinthians 1:18-21**- go there with me- **1Corinthians 1:18**:

**18 For the word 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 THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."**

**20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?**

**21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.**

... and Paul said in **Romans 10: 17**:

**So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**

And 1,000 years before Jesus was born- King David wrote this in **Psalms 19:7**:

**The law of the Lord is perfect converting (restoring) the soul**

So the Power of genuine conversion is in the Scriptures, and in them being preached and taught correctly, and in them being believed and trusted and obeyed fully. And so God's one single “method”, if you will, for lost people to be saved is that the gift of faith that it takes to be saved comes from hearing the Gospel as it is preached. And that's *exactly* what is being re-affirmed in this Parable.

And that is why it is so enormously frustrating to me to hear so-called Christians talk and act as though the Scriptures are the problem. These people act like we need to look at the Bible like we would some mentally weak uncle that we keep in the back room and that when he pops out his head when we have company- we get real embarrassed real quick. I have been told for twenty years- *"You can't just preach the Bible. You can't just explain the Bible. You can't just do expositional*



*preaching. You can't just go verse by verse by verse through Scripture. That won't save anybody. You have to relate to people and find some area of commonality. Brother Blair- you can't expect people in 2015 to sit and listen to a deep line upon line and precept upon precept teaching of God's Word. People need to be "wowed", they need to have their senses exercised by lights and smoke and mirrors and lots and lots of shallow music."*

And sadly, the dribble that these church growth gurus put out- dominate the thinking of the modern Church. And so I will tell you that after you get past all the clichés and all the slogans and all the bumper stickers and all the cute phrases and all the clever statements- all you have left is people who are ashamed of the Gospel. And I would suggest that that is never good and it will never bring a single person to Salvation in Jesus Christ.

We need to remember that this man was in hell and he was in hell forever because he didn't believe the Scriptures. He died and lifted up his eyes in Hades because he missed the Message. And to emphasize it even further- Jesus then went on to say that his brothers had no hope of ever missing the hell that this man was in unless they, too, heard and obeyed the Scriptures as well.

Okay, but how do we know that? How do we *know* that this man didn't believe the Scriptures. Well, the key is to look at how this man lived his life. And after we do that- we must ponder something about our own lives as well. And when we look deeply into this Parable, we see that this man wasn't in hell because he was an adulterer or a homosexual or a liar- but because he was lost. And we know he was lost because he had a problem with money and possessions.

So go with me as we dig deeper into this Parable. And first of all- we see here in **Luke 16** that Jesus is talking to Pharisees- who Dr. Luke says were "lovers of money". Notice verse 14:

**Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.**

Now Jesus had just given "The Parable of the Unrighteous Manager" in verses 1–13. And the point of *that* Parable was that the way a person uses their money (Jesus calls it "unrighteous mammon") can determine whether they are lost or saved. Verse 9 says:

**And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.**

In other words, money is going to fail you. And it will do you no good at all in the moment you pass from this life to the next. And your having an eternal habitation will depend, at least in part, on whether you used your money to advance the Cause of Jesus Christ in the lives of others, or whether you used money to advance your *own* comforts and your status symbols. And that is the point of verse 11:

**Therefore if you have not been faithful in the *use of* unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true *riches* to you?**

In other words, the possession of money in this world is a test for our eternity. How we look at money and how we handle money and possessions in this life is an outward sign of the condition of our heart toward God. So can you pass the test of faithfulness with your money? Do you use money as a means of proving the infinite Value of Jesus Christ and the joy you have in supporting His Cause? Or does the way you use money prove that what you *really* enjoy is "things" and *not* God? And the Bible calls this sinful use of money, "scoffing at Jesus".

Verse 14 says the Pharisees hear all this and they scoff at Jesus because they were lovers of money. So Jesus had touched a raw nerve with these guys. And beneath all their religious veneer- they didn't just *have* money- they *loved* money. And Jesus saw this and so He nailed it. So what is the real meaning of their scoffing? Verse 15 gives us the real meaning:

they are trying to justify themselves.

So instead of broken repentance- which would have opened the way to receive Jesus for Who He really is- the radical Teacher of Righteousness- these Pharisees try to justify themselves by making Jesus look foolish and his teaching look ridiculous by scoffing at Him and what He says.

So now we are onto something in this Chapter of Luke's Gospel. But we need to test it further. So far it looks like the love of money is a great obstacle to receiving Christ for Who He really is. It is an outward sign that we really don't believe the Scriptures. And so the preparation we need in order to truly trust in Christ for Who He really is- is something that *frees* us from that love of money.

So it is with this in mind that we come to verses 19–31. And so here Jesus tells us about hell. But, in reality- this Parable is yet one more story about money and how money separates people from God. And we know that from the fact that in this Parable that the rich man went to hell and the poor man went to Heaven. But we know that *all* poor people *don't* go to heaven just as all rich people *don't* automatically go to hell. *Some* wealthy people will rejoice in heaven with other poor people, while *some* poor people will scream in hell along with other rich people.

But if you take this Parable by itself and do not put it in context with everything else Jesus has been talking about since Chapter 14- you would come to the conclusion that all rich people go to hell while all poor people go to heaven because look at the reason Jesus gave in verse 25 as to *why* the rich man was in hell and *why* Lazarus went to Heaven:

**Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.**

So if we are to take this Parable by itself and *not* as a part of a larger discussion about the false doctrine of the Pharisees- we would have to say that those who suffer **“bad things”** during this life will automatically go to Heaven when they die, and those who **“received your good things”** in this life- will all go to hell.

Verse 19 presents us with a rich man who used his money to put the finest clothes on his back and the finest foods on his table every day- Jesus said he was **“habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.”**

And in verses 20–21 we meet a poor man with a disease- full of sores. And Jesus said that this man lay at the gate of the rich man where he would be seen each day as the rich man went in and out. And

all this poor man wanted was to eat what was left over from the rich man's table. And he was so destitute that the dogs licked his sores.

Then in v. 22- the end comes to both of them- as it will to every one of us; they died. And Jesus said the poor man goes to "Abraham's bosom", but the rich man goes to Hades where there is fire and torment.

Then in verse 24- the rich man calls out "Father Abraham!" In other words, this man is a Jew. And yet his Jewishness has not saved him. And right about now- these Pharisees are remembering what that crazy maniac- John the Baptist preached back in **Luke 3:8**. Go there with me- **Luke 3:8**:

### **Luke 3:8**

**Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.**

But now look at the next six verses:

### **Luke 3:9-14**

**9 "Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."**

**10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying, "Then what shall we do?"**

**11 And he would answer and say to them, "The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise."**

**12 And *some* tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"**

**13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to."**

**14 *Some* soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And *what about* us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse *anyone* falsely, and be content with your wages."**

Now isn't this strange? And you will remember when we went over this- we saw how strange this was. Here John is equating being a true child of Abraham or being truly saved with how a person handles his money and his possessions.

Now keep in mind that the question that the crowd asked John in verse 10, "*What shall we do?*", was not about how they could join the

yacht club or how they could have safer and more prosperous lives- but rather how could they *not* be deceived as John said the Pharisees were and how they could be a genuine child of Abraham and miss the Judgment of God and not be thrown into the fire. And John answered that question with a proper attitude about money and possessions.

So the rich man in the Parable of **Luke 16** is one of those who presumed to say, *"I am secure as a child of Abraham for no other reason than because I was born a Jew"*, which was *exactly* what the Pharisees thought and this was part of their scoffing. And yet in the Parable- this rich man bore no fruit in keeping with repentance- he had an ungodly attitude about money and possessions, and so he shared no food and no clothes with the beggar who was right on his doorstep. And so now the axe that John Baptist talked about has fallen and this rich man lifts up his eyes in hell.

So what would be the counterpart to this attitude in the Church today? It would be professing Christians- who read these Parables and see how serious God is about money and possessions, and yet they would scoff and say, *"I am an eternally secure child of God. I am justified by faith alone. Don't try to put me into bondage by saying that the way I use my money could jeopardize my eternal destiny."*

And the answer to this contemporary form of "cheap grace" is this:

The Faith which Justifies- is the same Faith that purifies

So if the Faith that you have has not purified you after you have been justified and is not *continuing* to purify you- then it hasn't justified you either. There is no such thing as being saved by faith- period. No such thing as getting your ticket punched and then stopping. The only people who might be able to say that are those who are saved just seconds before they die. But for the rest of us- who continue to live relatively long lives after we are saved- true and genuine Justification *always* and *in all cases* brings the believer into the process of Sanctification- where we are being changed and molded and transformed and shaped into the very Image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Which is just another way of saying we are being purified.

So those who stay the same and who are *not* ever changing and who are not being "holified" by God the Holy Spirit- those who are *not* becoming able to partake of Christ's Holiness through correction and

discipline and chastisement- these people have never been justified to begin with and are simply in the very same deception as these Pharisees were.

And make no mistake about it, dear friends, part of this Sanctification, part of the purification that God the Holy Spirit brings every genuinely born again soul into- purifies you from the love of money.

So the point of this Parable is that this rich man is in hell because he wasn't saved. And we know he wasn't saved because he delighted more in luxuries for himself than he did in love for Lazarus. And it didn't make any difference that he thought he had a secure standing as a supposed son of Abraham.

And so in hell he looks up and pleads for some mercy from Abraham. And Abraham responds in verse 25 by telling him *why* he is in hell, and in verse 26 by telling him that there is absolutely no way out. In verse 25 Abraham says,

**Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.**

... in other words if during our lifetime on earth we pursue after "things" instead of God- after luxury for ourselves instead of love for others- then earth will be the extent of our heaven and eternity will be our hell. Because Jesus said *that* attitude proves our lostness. But if during our time on the earth- Jesus is our Treasure no matter how many bad things happen, then earth will be the extent of our hell and eternity will be our heaven. Because Jesus said *that* attitude proves our Justification.

Then verse 26 adds, **“Besides all this** [i.e., besides the fact that your own love for money and lovelessness toward Lazarus consigns you to hell], **“between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.”** In other words, any thought of some temporary Purgatory is out of the question. Death is utterly final. The bed we make in this life we sleep in forever.

Now please understand that I am *not* teaching and Jesus was *not* saying that, by using your money for the good of others in the Cause of

Christ, that you can *buy* a spot in Heaven or you can *earn* your way to Paradise. Not at all! What it means is that the *way* you think about and use your money shows whether your heart has been radically transformed through Salvation. And this is no more “legalism” or “salvation by works” than it is to say that to go to Heaven you have to be the kind of person who has been so changed by Salvation that you prefer what is in Heaven over what is on the earth- or better yet, you have to be a person who prefers Who is in Heaven.

Then the rich man asks if Abraham will send Lazarus to warn his five brothers about the danger of hell. So evidently the rich man knew that his brothers were pursuing the same kind of life he was and were doomed. And Abraham answers in verse 29, **"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."** In other words, God has already provided ample information and evidence about the necessity of love and the danger of judgment in the Scriptures. And God is not obliged to give any more information other than what He has already given in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

But the rich man evidently knows that his brothers do not love or believe the Scriptures. They may have devotions in the morning for a few minutes and they may attend church once a week, but he knows that their whole mindset about money is shaped by the world and not by God through the miracle of the new birth. And so the rich man knows it is not going to do any good for Abraham just to say to them: “Read your Bible” or “read Moses and the Prophets”!

So because this rich man knows that his brothers aren’t saved and don’t care one whit for what God has spoken in Scripture- in verse 30 he advises Abraham (from hell!) about how to get his brothers to repent: **"No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent."**

In other words- the rich man believed that if there could just be some open show of Glory- something to “wow” his brothers like a resurrection from the dead- something really startling, some miracle- then surely they would wake up and repent. And based on having their senses exercised by some spectacular sign- the rich man thought his brothers would suddenly delight in God enough to immediately forsake their selfish luxury and start to live for others to the Glory of God.

So then comes Abraham's final, utterly stunning statement (v. 31): **"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if**



**someone should rise from the dead."** Isn't that incredible! If a person is so in love with money that he is deaf to all the Commands and Warnings and Promises of Moses and the Prophets in the OT- then even a resurrection from the dead would not bring about repentance. That is how lost- lost people are!

So here we have the same point that we saw earlier in verse 14, only here it's intensified because of a resurrection. So suppose Jesus should rise from the dead- which is exactly what Luke wants his readers to think about- and suppose this resurrected Jesus would reveal Himself in all His Glory to five brothers like these. Would they then receive Him for Who He really is?

O, they might be utterly knocked out of their senses by the miracle of an irrefutable Resurrection. But the question is, Will they be knocked out of their sins? Would they repent? Would they be saved and would they see Jesus as their Treasure and find their delight in God and not in money? And Abraham replies back, *"No"*. They would not repent and they would not be saved. But why not? What would keep them from receiving Jesus for the infinite Value that He really is?

Answer: the love of money and the love of other things.

So let's sum this up- the two parables of this Chapter. In verses 1–13- Jesus told a Parable to make the point that we should use our money shrewdly- *not* as the world counts shrewdness, but shrewdly for the advancement of the Gospel in the lives of more and more people so that they will receive us into eternal habitations (v. 9). And from that we learn that money is a test of our faithfulness to God: And if we don't use it in a way that proves that God is more Precious than things- then verse 11 says there is no reason to think that we will ever be entrusted with the true riches of Heaven. So the Holy Bible absolutely teaches that the use of money can either make or break our eternal destiny because the attitude we have toward money proves whether we have been born again or not.

And to this kind of radical Teaching- the Pharisees respond with scoffing in verse 14. Why? Because they are lovers of money and they see in Jesus a threat to their way of life. So in this text the love of money is the root cause of why these people will not receive Jesus for Who He really is.

And so then Jesus tells another Parable in verses 19–31 with basically the same point. If we use our money to fatten our *own*



cushions instead of seeking every way possible to invest in the hope of others- then we will go to the place of torment. And if our love for money and things is so deep that the writings of Moses and the prophets of God do not change our values- then we will not be changed even if Jesus Christ should rise from the dead. We will still not receive Him for Who He really is. And I beg you not to scoff at this- but rather tremble at this.

So I ask the question: **How must the heart be prepared to receive Christ for Who He really is?** And the answer from today's Parable is that the heart must be supernaturally set free from the love of money and other things. And so those who get their joy in life from luxury rather than love will not be able to receive Jesus for Who He really is. Jesus said in **Luke 18:24**, **"How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"**

So what should we do to prepare our hearts to receive Christ for Who He really is? Perhaps we should take our clue from Abraham in verse 29 of our text: **"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."** I think that is what we should do- go back to the Scriptures and read again the Words of Moses when he said:

#### **Deuteronomy 6:5**

**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**

**... and your neighbor as yourself. (Leviticus 19:18)**

... and we should hear the Words of the Prophets when they said:

#### **Jeremiah 9:23-24**

**23 Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches;**

**24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord.**

... and we should hear the Words of the Apostles . . .

#### **1Timothy 6:7-12**

**7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.**

**8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.**

**9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.**

**10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

**11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.**

**12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

So I beg you- turn back from the broken cisterns of materialism and drink freely this morning at the Fountain of living water. And may God use the Words of Moses and the Prophets and the Apostles to free us from the love of money so that we might receive Christ for Who He really is.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.