

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 January 2023

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 0 0] Welcome to our service this morning. We come before God in worship and we look to him to grab to us the spirit of worship as we call upon him in prayer and as we praise him with the singing of Psalms and as we wait for him to open out his word to us. We're going to begin singing to God's praise Psalm 89. Psalm 89 from the beginning we're singing to verse 6.

Psalm 89 verses 1 to 6. God's mercy I will ever sing and with my mouth I shall my faithfulness make to be known to generations all. For mercy shall be built said I forever to endure.

Thy faithfulness even in the heavens thou wilt establish sure. I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously and to my servant whom I loved to David sworn have I that I thy seed establish shall forever to remain and will to generations all thy throne build and maintain.

the praises of thy wonders Lord the heavens shall express and in the congregation of saints thy faithfulness for who in heaven with the Lord may once himself compare who is like God among the sons of those that mighty are. And so on verses 1 to 6 of Psalm 89. God's mercies I will ever sing.

God's mercy I will ever sing. And with my hope I shall thy faithfulness for me to be known.

[2 : 1 8] Through generations all. War are making? Through generations all.

professions all. weit been great. Hidden family hymns everyone Parann qui are ■■■■ weit been great. Thy faithfulness for me to the house of No. The church has an awful cultivation fear. In the hell, the well is not assured.

I with my chosen one heart Now come, yon, gracious me And to myself and to my love Through him is born alive That I, thy seed is so rich Forever to remain And with good generations

Of thy human identity The praises of thy wonders O'er the heaven's righteousness And in the congregation Of saints thy faithfulness For who in heaven will have For who in heaven will have Give us his help on bed

Who is thy God And our mercy O'er the heaven's righteousness And our mercy Let us try together in prayer O Lord our God As we come with these songs Of praise upon our lips Every one of us could sing these words heartily Because we are recipients of your mercies and your grace.

[5 : 4 9] Indeed, your mercy is new each morning. Great is your faithfulness, the words of your servant who could enumerate the different ways in which he enjoyed and experienced the benevolence of a God who deals with us not as we deserve.

We give thanks for every good and perfect gift that we enjoy from your hand. We give thanks for the ways in which we are able to appreciate these good things and we pray for help to appreciate even the things that we would not choose for ourselves.

Your people, the saints, I bear your name here in this world may retrospectively look over the years that they have lived in this life.

They may recount experiences that they endured and that is the word that they would use. Difficulties, trial, hardship, many things that they would have avoided would have avoided if at all possible.

And yet it is when they look back that they are able to think of what they have learned about God in these sore points in their life.

[7 : 29] In these moments and even enduring times of trial that they discovered much more about you, the God who is their God.

Your goodness and your kindness and your ability to sustain them even when all human faculties had deserted them.

Mentally, they might have been at their parents. Physically, they had reached the point that they thought that they could not go further.

And yet, in your great grace, you came and revealed yourself to them. And you encouraged them by way of your word. You spoke to their souls even through the medium of other fellow sojourners, sojourners, some who perhaps had undergone the same trials and testings in their journey through life.

We marvel at your forbearance, how ready we are to condemn you because you are not as we would have you to be. When we think of the saints of the Old Testament, those saints who bear your name particularly as they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness, how much they experienced of calamities and of desertions and willful neglect of the means of grace.

[9 : 11] And yet they found that God to be at never constant presence. And we give thanks for the lessons that they learned and that are rehearsed to us in the world.

Even as we turn to your world today, we give thanks that we can trust it to be the world of life to us. We remember before you at this time all who have pressing needs, some who are concerned because of loved ones.

Sometimes we are visited by death and the sorrows and sadnesses that assail us are beyond measure and we cannot hope to overcome them simply by use of our own resources.

For all such, whether we know them or not, we commit them to you and ask that you would intervene compassionately and speak into their darkness that they would discover the light of your own countenance lifted up upon them.

We pray for others who may be concerned for the living, some who have serious illness to contend with, some hospitalized, some in the weakness of old age confined to their homes or homes set aside for that end.

[10 : 34] Others, within our own homes, we pray for them that they might recover their strength and that all that is done to them and for them might be a means by which recovery is aided.

We remember all the needs that are before us and some of these are hidden from us and we live in a world that is so full of perplexing circumstances and situations that we never envisaged.

We pray for our nation as we see yet again so often presented to us the wanton corruption that lies at the heart of all man exposed.

It is exposed when it is publicized and yet it is not new, it is not something that we should be surprised at because you tell us in your word that the heart of man is desperately wicked, who can know it?

And yet when it is highlighted and when it is deliberately set in the spotlight of man's reckoning, we seem surprised by it.

[11 : 55] We would wish better for ourselves when those who serve us would follow the path that would be an example to others.

But unfortunately too often we see this to be the situation that confronts us. Lord have mercy upon us as a generation.

To that end we pray for our King and pray for his family with the complexities of what being part of that family involves.

May the King of Kings raise up his banner over them and may they be drawn into this circuit of his love.

We pray for your blessing on the parliaments that represent the nation whether it be in Hollywood or in Westminster. First ministers or Prime ministers and those who govern with them.

[12 : 58] May you mercifully undertake for us as a nation turning us once again to yourself. For we see that so often the legislations that are imposed upon us cannot possibly work for good because of the simple reason that they are contradictory to your word and your law.

And your law is good. Your word is life. And those who usurp it or replace it with their own will find that that will be deemed foolish not only by the God who is responsible for such laws but the outcome of the dereliction that is enlisted.

We pray that you would mercifully draw us back to yourself that we would be shepherded by the good shepherd and that his voice would be to us as the sheep of his fold that we may recognize it because he has nothing but good for us and we pray that you would remember each one that we entrust to your care today that have a special need of his shepherding.

Remember the nations of the earth we pray for them with all their varying needs whether there is flood or famine or war and all of these things are to be found at this present moment in the world a world that should have access to peace the boundaries of the land are there for all to enjoy and yet these things are rather than being surplus we are deprived of them because of the wickedness that is in the heart of man we pray forgiveness for the manner in which we conduct ourselves as a generation so bless your word to us today bless the gospel that is preached the world over bless those who go out with the word fearfully not knowing whether they will be able to conduct their service or complete the exercise of worship such as the nature of the enmity that is in these parts of the world that are forbidding of the name of

Christ to be mentioned we pray for the missionaries of the cross that they would have their arms strengthened and that power would accompany the word that is proclaimed we seek that for ourselves we give thanks that we try and to the best of our ability to proclaim the truth but most of all we want the power of the almighty God to accompany the proclamation that it may touch hearts and minds and lives return us to yourself and enable us to walk in the path of righteousness for thine own name sake forgive us every sin in Jesus name Amen we're going to hear God's word as we have it in the gospel of Luke the gospel of Luke chapter 16 and we're reading a parable of the

[16 : 40] Lord Jesus Christ we're reading from verse 19 to the end of the chapter Luke chapter 16 at verse 19 there was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen and feared stentuously every day and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus which was laid at his gate full of sores and deciding to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table moreover the dogs came and licked a sore 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 and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments and seeth

Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom and he cried and said father Abraham have mercy on me and sent Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame but Abraham said son remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things but now he is comforted and thou art tormented and besides 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 then he said I pray thee therefore father that thou would send him to my father's house for I have five brethren that he may testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment

Abraham saith unto him they have Moses and the prophets let them hear them and he said nay father Abraham but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent and he said unto him if they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead amen and may the Lord add his blessing through this reading of his word unto his name be the praise the boys and girls before you go to Sunday school Jesus tells us many stories such as this parable that we have read today tells us these stories some of them when we read them they think you think that they might be true stories and in that sense we we have to be careful because in one sense they are stories that are true because they have a truth to tell us they have something to say to us that is true and sometimes the story is based upon some real life event that

Jesus himself witnessed and that he used to apply so that whatever he had to teach by way of truth that is what he used some think that in the parable of the seed that was sown by the farmer and some of it grew amongst thorns some of it grew on stony ground some of it the birds of the air ate and some of it grew to produce fruit some believe that it was Jesus wandering and walking he always went with a purpose wherever he was going he knew where he was going and on his way there he observed what he saw and he used what he saw to teach others so maybe on these occasions his mind was always trying to find ways by which to tell us truth to tell us what we need to know and one of the things that he wanted us to understand and to know was the importance of being able to forgive others to show forgiveness to others because it is one of the things that we find so hard to do we at times may want others to forgive us and when they do we're thankful for it but when we do something and we need to be forgiven it is it is happy when it is shown to ourselves but if it's the other way around if we do something wrong and we need to to be forgiven and it's not shown to us we are annoyed by that forgiveness is not easy for us to show it's pleasant when we enjoy it it's pleasant when we receive it it's always something that we appreciate when it is shown ourselves but more often than not if it is the other way round if we need to forgive somebody else for the wrong that they have done us it is it is something that we find so very hard to do sometimes we say yes sometimes we say

I forgive you but then they show when they do the same thing again that that it stirs up in our heart the fact that we haven't really been ready to forgive as much as we had been ready to say as much and it's quite interesting that this is something that Jesus teaches again and again forgive say about say about us and what would it say about us we would expect

[25 : 04] Jesus to forgive us and what Jesus wants us to understand that we would learn from him to show forgiveness to others even when we know that they have wronged us and that their wrong is very hurtful it is something that we need to learn to be able to forgive others as we are forgiven by him simple lesson a simple truth but one that is so difficult for every one of us to actually put into practice because I'm sure every one of you here can think of maybe someone who has done something bad to you you have been told they've said sorry forgive them but how how often do we find ourselves that simply saying sorry was never enough for us but we have to remember that it should be and may

God encourage us with these thoughts we're going to sing now from psalm 88 psalm 88 as we go out to Sunday school we'll be singing these verses we're going to sing from verse 12 but we can read from verse 10 to the end Chrom Wellington Shall thy great wonders in the dark, or shall thy righteousness be known to any in the land of deep forgetfulness?

But Lord, to thee I cried, my prayer at morn prevent shall thee. Why, Lord, dost thou cast off my soul, and hide thy face from me?

Distressed am I, and from my youth I ready am to die. Thy terrors I have borne, and am distracted fearfully. The dreadful fierceness of thy wrath quite over me doth go.

Thy terrors great have cut me off, they did pursue me so. For round about me every day, like water they did roll, and gathering together they have compassed my soul.

[27 : 40] My friends, thou hast put far from me, and him that did me love, and those that mine acquaintance were to darkness didst remove.

These verses we can sing from verse 12 to the end of the psalm. Shall thy great wonders in the dark, or shall thy righteousness be known to any in the land of deep forgetfulness? Jesus.

All thy great wonders in the dark, or shall thy righteousness be known to any in the land of deep forgetfulness?

O divine, O divine, O divine, O divine, O divine. But Lord, to Thee I cry my prayer, and mourn Thee and shall Thee.

Why, Lord, to the Lord, to the Lord, O my soul, and help Thy use from me.

[29 : 18] It's rest of my own for my good, I pray Thee unto the light.

Thy death, O my heart, O my heart, O my heart, is Thine, and fearfully.

The dreadful earnestness of Thy love, wide over me, Thine love, Thy heralds, How God we all, they give her to me, so.

Far round above me every day, Thy water is drawn, And gathering together, they have compassed my soul.

My friends, thy hands are hard on me, and them have given me love.

[31 : 30] and those of mine who live down there, the darkness is revealed.

Amen. The way that Jesus, as we said to the children, communicates the truth, shows us that he was somebody who was a student of human experience.

You would expect him to be that anyway, but he observed the world round about him. He observed how people behaved in that world.

And he was able to communicate truth, looking to what he saw, to provide lessons and instruction that was meaningful and that because of the exposure that was round about him to these situations, they would understand exactly what he was saying.

They would appreciate, through the message and the use of illustration, what the message was all about.

[33 : 45] And there are many, many people who have looked at this parable and have read some of what they've said and I suppose there is lessons to be learned from the way that they try and understand and apply the message of this parable because it is so full of different parts that may have significance and that can be applied as a central core to what is being taught.

And yet there is a variety of different opinions as to what exactly does Jesus mean as to learn from what he has to say.

I mean, it's clearly the case that, as we said, Jesus wants us to understand something from this parable.

He wants us to understand a particular truth and some would insist that it is a particular truth, not many but one. And there is the difficulty.

What truth does Jesus mean us to learn from this parable? What are we meant to take away from this parable?

[35 : 34] And, you know, those of us who preach the gospel, we are taught, in my case, not very successfully, but we are taught to go to the congregation with a message and that you should have one clear objective in mind so that whatever it is, whichever part of the scripture that you're preaching from, that there should be one main idea.

And that nobody sitting in your congregation should go away from hearing the sermon that is preached without grasping what that one idea is.

It's one truth, one doctrine, one lesson that you want everybody to take away with them that whatever you say, everybody understands that at the heart of what you've said is this one thing.

Now, reading and listening to what some people have to say about this parable, it is not clear that they took from the message what God or Christ meant them to do because there are certain things that Jesus says that people shy away from.

And as you can imagine, it's not really a topic that people are comfortable with. If we talk about Lazarus and we emphasize the fact that Lazarus died and went to be with Abraham, went to Abraham's bosom, which is really just an expression descriptive of heaven.

[37 : 47] And you'd be content and comfortable with that notion that there is a heaven and that when a person dies, he goes to heaven.

But Jesus isn't talking just simply about heaven. He also introduces into this parable the idea of hell.

And not only does he introduce the idea of hell in it, it is the strongest part of the parable that he wants to share.

Now that doesn't mean, and I think that's where the difficulty arises, that doesn't mean that the parable is really about hell, per se.

Because when you look at what he is saying about hell, there are many things that are said by him that are deliberately vague.

[38 : 56] But he wants us to understand that there are certain ways in which we prepare ourselves for death that does not take full cognizance of the fact that there is, beyond death, both heaven and hell.

Now there's two characters here. And there's, you know, subtle nuances in the way that the parable is told. We are given one name of the principal characters.

Yes, he mentions Abraham, he mentions angels, but the two principal characters are Lazarus, who is named, and the rich man who is not.

Now why does he do that? Does he lack imagination? Could he not give him a name similar to Lazarus?

There's one other Lazarus that we know something about, and it's not that one. So there's no connection between the other Lazarus who was a friend of Jesus, but he gives the name Lazarus to this man.

[40 : 16] But he doesn't give a name to the other man. And yet, the focus of the parable is not on the man called Lazarus, but on the man with no name.

Now think about that. The focus of the parable is on the man with no name. And why he doesn't give him a name he doesn't explain to us.

But I want us to think our way through this parable, and try and understand what we are being taught. If we are being taught anything, I hope that you'll take these lessons with you, and ask yourselves the questions that need to be asked, because every one of us are in the same boat in many respects as these two men.

We are all going to go at one point to meet with our maker. We are going to experience death. We can begin with what is a glaring contrast that stands out.

The contrast that there is between these two men. And that is that one was exceedingly rich and the other was exceedingly poor.

[41 : 43] The rich man, and he's given that name for a reason, because clearly he's meant to be seen as someone who was rich.

He was dressed in purple, we are told. Fine linen, and fared subduously every day. What could be better than that? In a few short words, Jesus describes to us somebody who was elite, comfortably, well off, would be an understatement.

And the other person, we are told, his name is Lazarus, but I'm beggar.

And he is laid at the gate of the rich man full of sores. And even in these words there, it gives you not just an image of somebody who is poor, and somebody who is unwell.

But clearly we are meant to understand that. He is laid at the gate of the rich man. In other words, he doesn't make his own way to sit at the gate of the rich man.

[43 : 02] Recently I was in Edinburgh, and if you're in any of the cities, what you'll find walking down the streets and you'll see these poor men and poor women sitting on the street, wrapped up in blankets on the kind of weather we've had recently, in the kind of weather we've had recently there, with a cap or a tin or something beside them.

And they're begging why they're there. We don't know. We don't engage in conversation with them because clearly they're wanting your help.

and if your help was all that it required then it would be easy for you to give them something. But very often what they're wanting is something more than money to buy food.

It is money to buy whatever it is that they need to feed their habit. And you can tell that simply not just by looking at their demeanour but the pallor of their skin tells you that they are enslaved to some drug or other.

Anyway, can you imagine these people go there and find their pitch and sit there but this man was placed at the door at the gate of the rich man.

[44 : 33] He is physically incapable of making his own way there. And he is clearly physically unwell. He has sores on his body and his desire is to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

And you can read this and read carefully. Jesus describes to us this predicament or the predicament of this man who is physically disabled, incapable of moving himself around.

the dogs are part of the picture that was meant to convey to us. And it's not clear whether it's describing to us the measure of comfort the dogs give to him by licking a sores, which is one interpretation, or are the dogs there to strive for the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table.

They're competing for the scraps, but the dogs lick his sores, and even that is considered by him to be some kind of comfort.

comfort. That's the picture. The picture of extreme poverty, extreme want, extreme need, contrasted with the picture that we have of somebody who lacks nothing.

[46 : 25] Two pictures, two extremes, and Jesus conveys these pictures to us for a reason. But if you move from this glaring contrast to the comparison, where both men are alike, and we are told where they are alike, we are told that the beggar died, we're told that the beggar died, we're also told that the rich man died.

There's no difference between them at that point. Death overtakes them, and they suffer death. In the Psalms, Psalm 89 that we began with there, if you follow that psalm through to the end, the psalmist asks the question, what man may see that liveth here and death shall never see, or from the power of the grave, what man his soul shall free.

You don't have to answer the question, it is a hypothetical, well not a hypothetical, a question, rhetorical question, that is asked, that doesn't really require an answer, there is none, statistically, 100% of mankind will experience death, be they rich or poor.

Lazarus died, the rich man died, there they shared the same experience. We don't know the pains that were in the rich man's death, we don't know the pains that were in Lazarus' death.

Jesus doesn't need to tell us, and we know that a person can die and that in their death it can be laborious, it can be prolonged, it can be painful, it can be sudden, it can be unexpected, unprepared.

[48 : 38] The person who experiences this might be unprepared for it, we're not told, but that they both experience the same. Not one of us will avoid death.

Jesus makes it almost as a matter of fact, that's the way it is. And the only way that any one of us will avoid death is if Jesus comes before we experience it.

I was thinking you would be a fool to imagine that you're not going to die. But would you not also be a fool if you imagine that Jesus is not going to return?

Maybe you're willing to acknowledge the fact, yes, death is imminent for every one of us, however soon it may come, we don't know, but it will come.

but for Jesus coming, well that's not a given. But the same Bible, the same world tells us, however much your experience tells you about death, and it does, the word of God says that the experience of death is certain because God has made it so.

[50 : 11] The coming of the Son of Man is equally so. But we are told anyway, that when they died, their paths parted again.

They were the same in death. The cessation of life was the same, the soul parting from the body was the same, but we are told that the angels came and took Lazarus and carried him to Abraham's bosom.

It's quite interesting the way that Jesus describes it to us, but he means us to understand that this was true of this man.

He went to heaven. He went to heaven. And he doesn't tell us much about the process of death, but simply that this is what was true of him.

But also interestingly, he says that the rich man died and was buried. Now, why is it not the same?

[51 : 33] You would think that Lazarus died and was buried would precede the rich man died and was buried.

But it doesn't. Why does Jesus subtly draw attention to that? Well, we're not, it isn't given an explanation, but I suspect that what it means is that when the rich man died and was buried, there was a lot made of his burial.

Being a rich man, it wasn't enough just to take his body and lay him in a grave. As you see with many rich men and many famous people, their funerals attract a lot of attention.

Many people attend their funeral, many people pay homage to their lives, to their possessions, to what they said, what they did, when they did it, what the outcome was.

But through Lazarus, nothing is said about him. That doesn't mean he wasn't buried, because even the Jews, though they despised some of those who were impoverished, they still respected death.

[53 : 04] And his body would be taken and put into a grave, even a poor man's grave. Aside, away from it all, not much ceremony, but he would be buried.

He would be given dignity and death, even grudgingly. death. But Jesus seems to emphasize that the burial of the rich man was important.

But what makes it so pathetic is that although it is important, as far as we are concerned, as far as men are concerned, as far as our involvement in it is concerned, what follows is that the rich man also died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes.

it's almost as if Jesus is saying, well, this is the way it is. This is how it is for some.

In hell he lifted up his eyes. And it's a solemn thought, but we don't give much thought to it.

[54 : 30] But there's only the two choices. if you like. When we die, we're either going to go to heaven or we're going to go to hell. The Bible speaks about both.

The Bible warns us about the possibility of dying Christless, that it means that we will go to hell. The detail of what hell is is variously found within the scriptures.

It's Gehenna, it's the rubbish dump, it's where the warren dieth not, where all the imagery taken from worldly experience describes to us the horrors of hell, and the pains of hell, and the torments of hell, and the ongoing experience of hell.

hell. But that's not what Jesus means as to he's not talking really about the physical nature of hell, although it comes into it, obviously.

He can't not talk about hell without reference to it. You have to understand that. You can't just glibly pass over and use the word and not give any mention at all of what it means.

[55 : 53] You know, I was thinking, I was given a book, and I've been to Waterstones, the book seller, looking at the sections there on religion, and within that section of religion you'll see all kinds of religions mentioned, and no religions at all.

I don't know why they're in that section of religion, but they are. But supposedly in the section of Christianity, one thing that you'll come across occasionally are books by people who have had near-death experiences.

I suppose near-death experiences would cover it. But usually what these books are about, if a person, for example, suffered a massive heart attack, and that person was given emergency treatment, where they collapsed.

and they were given the ability to recover. Their heart was kept going by purely emergency action on the part of those who were there.

But then some of these people are able to talk about the moments that they experienced between them, their heart stopping and their heart being restarted.

[57 : 43] And in some of these books they describe to you their experience. And they talk about going to heaven encountering certain experiences that are out of this world.

Now, there's no warrant for that in the scripture, I have to say. There's no warrant in God's word that tells us that such out-of-body experiences are possible, although people may have them.

I don't know how they have them or what it means to them. For example, another Lazarus died and rose from the dead.

There's ample opportunity for you to read in the Bible what Lazarus experienced while he was in the grave. But it's silent.

What Lazarus experienced in between the time that he died until the time that Jesus came and brought him back to life.

[58 : 59] And, you know, I read something yesterday. Somebody said, it just tells you that we've got it all wrong. Jesus said that Lazarus sleepeth.

And when we talk about a patient dying, we should be talking about a patient sleeping. not dying, but sleeping. And that's their experience. Everybody who dies just sleeps until Jesus comes again.

And then when he comes again, those who are asleep, he will waken from their sleep. But again, there's no warrant for that in God's Word.

Whatever people may want to present by way of evidence, there is no evidence for it. God's love. But Jesus, remember, he's not talking here, he's using a story, he's using an illustration based upon his own knowledge.

And he is describing what it would be like for a person such as the rich man, when he died, he was found in hell.

[60 : 07] Not in Abraham's bosom, but in hell. not one of us wants to spend time talking about that.

And that's the thing, when I talked about these books, not one of them tells you about an experience where they went to hell. Not one of them.

Why is that? You would have thought at least one passion would have written about an experience where they died.

And instead of being in heaven or surrounded by angels or ethereal beasts or mysterious spiritual creatures that barely can be described, yet not one of them talks about hell.

Why is that? I wonder if they believe that there is a hell. Jesus clearly does. Jesus clearly means us to understand that there is such a place.

[61 : 14] Jesus means us to understand that not only does a person go to heaven, Abraham's bosom, they go to hell. R.C.

Sproul, the American Divine Rights, and I suppose he writes this on the basis of what people look at in this passage, and want to see more than anything else.

It is true, he says, that the rich man's riches undoubtedly worked to his hurt, for he apparently lived for those and nothing else.

Lazarus' poverty, on the other hand, worked to his spiritual good, for lacking earthly joys and comfort, he undoubtedly turned his eyes to heaven and sought divine consolation.

Now, what he is saying is quite true, that because of the life style that they had, the rich man gave little or no thought to the hereafter, whereas the poor man, because of his circumstances, found himself often thinking of these things.

[62 : 34] that's not always the way it is. Just because a person is poor doesn't mean that they're going to be heavenly minded. Just because a person is rich doesn't mean that they're going to have no thoughts of the hereafter.

That's wrong. but it would be a consequence perhaps of their suffering that they would think of a time and a way by which that suffering would be at an end.

Now, Jesus is not teaching us here that if your life in this world is misery, then you can expect joy in the world to come. That's not what he's teaching.

There are many religions that do teach that. If you are poor, then you'll be wealthy in the world to come. If you're suffering from injury or from disability, then in the world to come you will be whole.

That's not what Jesus is saying. there is no such promise attached to it. It seems strange that Jesus has nothing to say about Abraham's bosom and heaven, but it doesn't mean that the Bible is silent on it.

- [63 : 58] The Bible has much to say about heaven and the enjoyment of it and those who go to it and what they will be doing when they get there. I'm sure you're aware of that. but his purpose in teaching this truth is to try and enter into the heart and mind of the person who has gone to hell.

And it's quite strange that he would talk about hell in this way, but what he is saying about it is that unlike the person who has gone to heaven, this person has for the first time realised that he is not going to recover from this.

It doesn't enter into the mind of the person who has gone to Abraham's bosom that something better will come along. Because something better won't come along.

He is in the full enjoyment of the presence of God in heaven with all that that involves and he will have no desire for that to conclude or come to an end.

Whereas in the mind of the person who has gone to hell, he wants it to end. He desires it to end, but it won't.

- [65 : 24] the rich man is in torments. That is his final state. We are told that the great gulf is fixed. He is not going to be transported from one place to the next.

It is not going to happen. The gulf is fixed. Hell is his final experience. The question about the desire for relief cried and said, Father Abraham, mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the finger, tip of his finger in water, cool my tongue, for I am tormented.

And Jesus adds to the story. He, Lazarus, is comforted. You are tormented. You didn't appreciate your comforts when you had them.

You didn't appreciate his discomfort and you did nothing to alleviate it. And now you will know what it is like. But that's not what he's in hell for.

He says, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot. Neither can they pass to us that would come from hence. you would think that at that moment that he is compassionate and he's saying my suffering is such that I don't want anyone to suffer what I'm suffering.

- [67 : 01] But that's not the reason for his statement. That's not what moves him to say what he does. To send someone to speak to his brothers because he knows that the presence of his brothers where he is will add to his grief.

He understands that. There is a clarity in his thinking and he wouldn't want that. The horrors of hell are there before us.

I've often heard people say they don't want to be in heaven because they have no interest in anyone who's there.

And their image of their eternal destiny is a place where they will be with their friends those who have a share in the experiences they had in life and who will continue to share in these experiences.

It's a wrong understanding because one thing that won't be in hell is companionship. One thing that won't be in hell is friendship.

- [68 : 22] One thing that will not be in hell is the remotest possibility of their suffering to come to an end. They will despise the God who has ordained their end and that will create in them the bitterness that stimulates the desire of this person for it to be alleviated in this way.

Perfect enmity directed against God. Imagine a place like that. Imagine a place where all all that is in there is not just those who are suffering eternally but those who cannot but express the bitter hatred they have against the God who put them there.

And people don't believe there is such a place. People don't believe that such a God who created this exists.

Well, they don't want to believe it. Nobody in his right mind would want to believe that such a place exists. especially if you go especially if you are going there.

You know, he wants Abraham to send someone to speak to others. And it's not a crying shame.

[70 : 16] And that's what Christ tells us. If they don't believe, if they don't believe Moses and the prophets, supposing somebody came from the dead to speak to you, you know, that's what you want to hear, you see.

You want somebody to convince you. You want somebody to persuade you. You want somebody to come along with proof positive. God's word is the proof that you need.

Because God's word tells us that he prepared a place for the devil and his angels. And those who are his enemies will be sent to that place.

A place from which there is no recovery, no relief. why would Christ say this if it was not so?

What's the point of preaching the gospel if it is not so? You know, if there is no heaven, if there is no heaven, I think we could leave it to one of our politicians to teach you how to live to the best of your ability.

[71 : 37] They could teach you ethics, they could teach you morality, at the end of the day, all will be true is that you will die. That's the end of the story, nothing beyond that.

You've done your best, and your best will be marked, or it will be ignored, or it will be ignored. But that's not the way it is.

The way it is, is that God saw fit to send his son into the world to seek and to save the lost, those who were and are destined to go to the lost eternity that God has pronounced upon this world for all who deny his grace.

If it was not so, why would Christ say to us? May God get you to think your way through this passage, a parable, a story, a message from the Lord Jesus Christ to every one of us.

Those words tell us it doesn't matter. We die and that's it. And have some notion of what lies beyond.

[72 : 59] But it is but a notion based upon a fiction and a proof that it is so will be a bitter day for many who choose to deny the truth that God has set before us in this word.

Let us pray. The Lord your word is full of hard messages and we acknowledge that there are many truths that we would shun that we would much rather talk about love and the fruit of it glory and those who will enjoy it the passion of Jesus Christ and the place prepared by him for his people but your word also tells us that there is a place that is prepared for the devil and his angels and all who have continued in a state of estrangement will go to that place never to be taken up teach us oh lord to heed your word and to dwell upon it to the saving of our soul by looking into Jesus bless us in his name give all sin through him amen we're going to sing in conclusion the last three verses of psalm 33 psalm 33 the last three verses behold on those that do him fear the lord that set his eye even those who on his mercy do with confidence rely from death to free their soul in death life unto them to yield our soul doth wait upon the lord he is of help and shield in his holy name we trust our heart shall joyful be lord let thy mercy be on us as we do hope in thee these three stanzas in conclusion behold on those that do him fear the

Lord doth set his eye kalo me hold on inertia from b Lord dy that adult say night Whole that may may hiel not to Pin his either quam With confidence rely.

From death to fear, their soul in air. Life unto them to yield.

Our soul thou wed upon the Lord.

[76 : 17] He is our help and shield. Set in his holy name with us.

Our heart shall join only. Lord, let thy mercy be on us.

As we do hope in thee. Amen. May grace, mercy and peace be on God the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit rest.

And I abide with you more now and always. Amen. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you.