

What if we reject Jesus?

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Date: 15 June 2025

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning, brothers, sisters and friends. A joy to worship the Lord together. A few intimations.! There should be hopefully some sheets left to the back door. First of all, this evening, Reverend Thomas Davis and myself are doing a swap.
- So I'm off to Carloway and Thomas, God willing, will be with ourselves. So please do pray for him and please do come along if you're able this evening. It's encouragement for us when we go somewhere different and there is a crowd in front of us.
- To note, the Kirk session is tomorrow night. I advertised it last week, but it's actually tomorrow night. Tomorrow night at 7 for the elders, but also for all of us. Please do remember us as elders.
- We are here to serve the Lord, but also we're here with that to serve you as a congregation. So please do remember that. We are here to serve you. We are here to spiritually look after you.
- That is our duty. That is our calling. That is our burden. So we meet tomorrow night at 7 in the hall. Thursday, as always, midweek meeting. Everyone very welcome along to that.
- [1 : 0 5] Now next Sunday, to draw your attention to that, it is our family service and our Sunday school service. This is the final, next week. Today is the final Sunday school, I guess.
- Next week is the family service. We call it prize giving. We'll save us more next week. It's not a prize for attending. It's not a prize for being good.
- You're all very good, boys, girls and teens. The teachers enjoy teaching you all. It's a prize. It's a gift, really, to show how much we as a congregation, how much we care for you guys, and how much we appreciate you guys.
- So that's next Sunday, family service. That's open to every family. If there are any families in the village who you might think are wondering if church is for them, or who are wondering if they're welcome along, next Sunday is a good chance.
- It'll be a much shorter service with a really simple gospel message. So that's next Sunday, family service, followed by the Sunday school prize giving.
- [2 : 0 7] Also, next Sunday evening will be the last YF before the summer starts. So teens, that's your last YF, and we hope to have a guest speaker.
- So a change from hearing us speaking. Hope to have a guest with us. One other thing to note is a thank you. A thank you on behalf of WFM to all the ladies who work so hard, both in preparing and also in the serving and organising of the soup and pudding lunch yesterday.
- I'm seeing just now that over £780 was raised in a few hours. That is incredible. So £780 was raised. I might go towards WFM projects.
- That's all intimations as they stand. So family service next week. I'm pleased to invite any families along. We're here at our call to worship.
- Let the rivers clap their hands. Let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord. For he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world of righteousness and the peoples with equity.

[3 : 16] Let's sing together in God's praise. We can sing in Scottish Psalter, Psalm 49. All our sung worship today will be from this psalm. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 49.

That's on page 274. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 49, page 274.

We can sing first of all verses 1 down to verse 7. Psalm 49, verses 1 to 7. Hear this, O people, and give ear, all in the world that dwell.

Both low and high, both rich and poor. My mouth shall wisdom tell. My heart shall knowledge meditate. I will incline my ear to parables. And on the harp my sayings dark declare.

Psalm 49, verses 1 to 7. To God's praise. Jesus, O people, and give ear, all in the world that dwell.

[4 : 31] For through all of us, O people, and give ear, all in the world that dwell. For through all our night, your great shall be.

My heart shall wisdom tell. My heart shall knowledge meditate.

I will incline my ear to parables.

How long on the harp my sayings dark declare.

I'll incline my ear to parables. I'll incline my ear to parables. I'll incline my ear to parables. I'll incline my ear to parables.

[5 : 42] I'll incline my ear to parables. I'll incline my ear to parables.

Who were living without them, their wealth, their confidence to judge, and who were living without them, their wealth, their confidence to judge, yet none of this is but the land, written by any way, your family and to God for his salvation and song, great.

Let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Amen.

A time that is unique from the rest of the week. That this is not just a pattern we follow, but at this moment, in this place, that together as brothers and sisters, that together as friends watching on, that we are here in the presence of the holy, living and through God.

That at this moment that you have made your home in this place, and you are moving amongst your people. But at this moment, we are, as it were, side by side and face to face with the one who made us and sustains us.

[8 : 16] Help us then to grasp the smallest reality of that and to conduct our hearts and our minds in a way that understands that. But this is not just a public lecture.

This is not just some teaching. That just now, as we sing words, we sing words from your word. We sing words to a God who hears the prayers and the praises of your people.

And just now, as we pray publicly, your people also pray privately. And together with one voice, we address you, the living and through God. In a short while, we will read from your living word.

A word that is not just a collection of stories, but a word that is your true and perfect word. Its truth is shown throughout all of history.

Its truth has been shown to us in our experience. Our truth is shown in the fact that it is clearly your word. That all you have said in it has come to pass. All you have said in it has been true thus far.

[9 : 18] And we trust wholly and fully we'll be true in the years to come. We pray just now for those missing from our number. Those who are away for various reasons and those who are absent for various reasons.

We pray just now for those again going through bouts of ill health. Those who are finding themselves in times and perhaps in days of great distress.

Physically and mentally and emotionally. Be with them, Lord, we ask. We pray just now for those who have duties to attend to. Who are loving and looking after family members.

Those who are committing and involving in works of necessity. Those who are absent, although they would desire to be here in any other circumstances. Be with them, Lord, we ask.

They would know that despite their at times frequent absence from us. That they would know that we care for them. But more than that, they would know that they are yours. Pray just now for those who are here today.

[10 : 17] Those of us here today who know you and who love you. We give you praise once more for the chance to gather. Pray just now for those here today who as of yet cannot say that they know nor love Jesus.

We ask as we come around your word again later on. You would use that word to impact us. As we look later on to challenging passages. To passages which make us stop and think.

We ask, Lord, you would do that work in our hearts. As we look to ourselves, we look beyond ourselves today. As we are aware of the reality of this world.

As we have seen both yesterday and over the weekend and into this morning and last night. We are seeing, we know, the escalation of what looks to be the next phase of war and trouble in this world.

As we see the reports of bombs again landing in Israel. And this time of Gorge's bombs now landing in Iran. As we see the continued destruction of Gaza.

[11 : 17] As we see the reality of bloodshed and warfare. As we look past the politics. As we look past the manoeuvring of it all.

As we see the reality that on all sides we see suffering. We see loss. We see children without parents. We see parents now having lost their children.

We see the reality of sin and evil manifest. And we see that politics. National borders.

National histories. Yes, the impact they have is real. But the reality is that on all sides there is suffering. We see the same of continued conflict in Ukraine and Russia. As we see aggressing nations.

As we see Russia seeking to dominate. As we look past the politics there and see women and children. Fathers from both sides. Mourning. Devastated.

[12 : 18] Livelihoods destroyed. Whole towns having been levelled. And we come just now and we say that we have no idea what we should say. We have from this privileged position here.

In this place of peace for us now. We have little understanding of what their reality is. For we come understanding that our peace here is fragile.

That we have no guarantee of continued peace in our own nation. In our own island. We do ask for peace. But we understand that whatever may happen. That you are in full sovereign control.

Give us then, we ask for confidence. To trust in a sovereign God. That all things are plain and clear to you. All things are known to you. That they are outwith our understanding.

They are escalating beyond the understanding and ability, it seems, of the most powerful nations of this world. But yet you are on the throne. When we find ourselves in great fear and great trembling.

[13 : 21] When the earth itself seems to give way from underneath our feet. We see that you are on the throne. When we find our own personal lives in turmoil. When we see anxiety perhaps overwhelm us.

When the evil one attacks us. And all the reality of that. Again we are reminded that you are on the throne. We give you praise for that. That whatever may happen to us.

To our country. To our fellow people. To our world. Lord, that you remain seated on that throne in your full power. Placing the nations underneath the feet of our Saviour.

Awaiting the day of his return. He will cleanse the world. Make all things new. And bring his people into the new heavens and the new earth.

Time without end. Until we see these days. Lord, give us encouragement we ask. Would you pray for ourselves locally? Would you pray again for those in our village who are mourning at this time?

[14 : 21] We pray for those especially attached to our congregation next door who are mourning. Lord, for one who has lost a husband. We do pray. Lord, for the extended family.

We do pray just now for the congregation. Both next door. But also everyone here. Who knew and who now mourns a loss. We understand that we are here but for a while.

And even many years may be granted to us. These many years still feel but a while. And many years soon pass away. Give us, we ask then, the sense to make sure that we are right with you.

Whilst we have the privilege and the chance to do so. Whilst you afford us life. Help us to be careful with our days. To count our days. To measure the time as it were well.

To understand that the privilege of life is a privilege and not a guarantee. That day by day you are removing from our number the evidence. That you are sovereign over life and death.

[15 : 23] Forgive us for backsliding. Forgive us for waverness. Forgive us for sin. And help us in all things. To look to Jesus. As he offer, finisher, perfecter of our faith.

It's in his name we ask these many things. Amen. Let's turn to read in God's word. And turn to the gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 16.

Luke 16 and verse 19. Luke 16 verse 19.

That's on page 823 of the church Bibles. Luke 16 verse 19. Page 823.

Page 823. Luke 16 verse 19. Let's hear together the word of the Lord. There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen.

[16 : 32] He was feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus. Covered with sores. Who desired to be fed with what fell from a rich man's table.

Moreover even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died. And was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

And in haze being in torment. He lifted up his eyes. And saw Abraham far off. And Lazarus at his side. And he called out. Father Abraham.

Have mercy on me. And send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger into water. And to cool my tongue. For I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said.

Child remember that in your lifetime. Received your good things. And Lazarus in like manner. Bad things. But now he is comforted here.

[17 : 33] And you are in anguish. And besides all this. Between us and you. A great chasm has been fixed. In order that those. Who would pass from here to you.

May not be able. And none. May cross from there. To us. And he said. Then I beg you. Father. To send him to my father's house.

For I have five brothers. So that he may warn them. Lest they also come. To this place of torment. But Abraham said. They have Moses.

And the prophets. Let them hear them. And he said. No. Father Abraham. But if someone goes to them. From the dead. They will repent. He said to him.

If they do not hear Moses. And the prophets. Neither will they be convinced. If someone should rise. From the dead. Amen. We give praise to God.

[18 : 30] For his holy. And his perfect word. That's the boys and girls and teens. Making it in for the last time. This year. This year. About here.

Can we squeeze in the middle somewhere? A bit of. A bit of squeezing. There we go. There we go. Can we all breathe okay? Okay. Okay.

So it's like in my pocket. Okay. I'll show you in a second what that is. I'll show you now what it is actually. Pass it along. Have a think. So. That.

Is. One example. Here's a clue. Listen to the clues. This is one example. Of the thing. It appears in other ways. In lots of other places. If you get it.

I'd be very impressed. What it is. What does it do? Well as you pass it along. I will. Tell you a story. Of every single day.

[19 : 41] Of the last two months. In my house. So. My study faces. The front garden. And I sit in the morning. And start typing.

Or reading. Or whatever I'm doing. Open the window. What happens straight away? Within five minutes. Every morning. Eyes start streaming. Even just now.

Nose. Is all horrible and full. My throat's sore right now. My eyes are actually really itchy right now. Why? What is wrong with me right now? That I didn't take a tab before this morning.

Hay fever. Do you guys have hay fever? It's miserable. You guys are suffering just now too. How is it? Is it bad this year? You bad. When you run around in the grass.

Is it ten times worse? Uh huh. Yeah. Emma's got hay fever. You guys okay? No one else has hay fever? Just two out of. Wow. I'm jealous.

[20 : 37] It's bad this year. This is really bad. So bad. Emma's bad too. Emma's not bad compared to me. Emma's bad this year. My mum. Who hasn't had hay fever since she's a teenage girl. Who is not a teenage girl anymore.

Is having hay fever this year. What causes hay fever? Go for it. Cut grass. Cut grass. And why does it cause hay fever? What happens when you cut grass?

Or when you go close to a bush? Or something happens. What's happening? What's causing great hay fever? I can't even show you because it's so small. What is it? What comes from the grass? What comes from the flowers?

What comes from the trees? Go for it. Just go. Wee pollen isn't it? Wee bits of pollen. Wee bits of dust that the trees or grass puts out.

And they put it out so they can spread and grow more places. It's tiny. Think of sand right? Think of how small sand is. And pollen is so much smaller. What? That size.

[21 : 34] Tiny bits of just dust. Now a bit of dust goes into your eye or up your nose. And your body realises this is dangerous. And your body does everything it can to stop it going in.

And it makes you all horrible. And it makes your nose be all full. And your throat all swelling and sore. And your eyes all itchy. Okay. What's that wee thing I'm passing along?

What is it? Any guesses? What does that do? I'll give a clue. That attaches to our Hoover. It's basically a dust catcher.

It's a filter. So that wee thing, in theory, stops all the dust from coming out of the Hoover all around the house. And it's in cars. It's in lots of machines and things.

So you're driving, hopefully, in your car or a bus. When you put the air conditioning on and the wind and the air comes from outside, that catches that, hopefully cleans it, so you aren't all full of dust and pollen and things.

[22 : 39] Okay. What does the Bible speak about? Things are often very small, but can be very dangerous. One word. Because of S.

It's got three letters. Sin. Thank you. Okay. There's lots of sins we can talk about. Let's think of one sin. Right? Okay. You tell boys and girls, mums and dads, grans and granddads.

We tell one wee lie. Okay? One wee lie. It's one lie. But then, very quickly, that one wee lie, you think, oh no.

We're going to find out I'm lying. So what do you have to do? You have to tell then another lie to cover the first lie, sometimes. And then very quickly, you're telling bigger lies and bigger lies.

And what happens? So you find out, perhaps, you get in trouble. But sometimes, it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. And lies and other sins. They don't just hurt you, do they?

[23 : 42] They hurt other people sometimes. And even more sad than that, and the Bible is very clear about this. Every time we do something bad like that, we're doing it not just to ourselves or to other people.

We're doing it against God. And sometimes, like pollen, a wee thing can cause a big, big problem. What is the good news?

So this pollen catcher, this air filter, hopefully catches some of the bad stuff and looks after us. Who is someone who the Bible tells us takes all the bad things onto himself if we believe in him?

You guys want to answer that? God, Jesus, isn't he? God, in the person of his son, as the sun comes down, Jesus became like you and me, guys. He became like us. And he took on all the punishment of all the sin.

All the bad things we say and think and do from wee lies up to big, awful things. Jesus took all the punishment on so that we could be made clean, hopefully like the air that passes through this filter.

[24 : 49] So remember, when we do bad things, we all do bad things. Elders, ministers, boys, girls, mums, dads, grans, granddads, we all do bad things. We say sorry to God.

We say sorry to everyone who's done the bad thing too, if we can. And remember, if we trust in Jesus, he promises that he has done all the hard work for us. That he will forgive us if we believe in him.

Will we pray? This is the last thing. Don't go that door. Or by next semester, by next term, we hope we'll go through that door. But today, still go through that one, okay? Okay, let's pray. Lord, we thank you for everyone here.

We thank you especially for the boys and girls and teens. We thank you for the reminder that although we often say and do and think bad things, things which distract us and things which take us away from you, you promise in your word that you have sent Jesus, that he has suffered for us, if we come to him and believe in him, he promises that even though we have done and said and thought these bad things, he promises that he will make us clean again.

Ask all these things. We thank you, Lord, for the year we've had. Thank you for the teachers this year. Thank you for all the bits and pieces that boys and girls and teens have learned in Sunday school and also in YF.

So my opening illustration in a second is completely nabbed from the faith mission preacher, and he himself admitted to have stolen it from someone else.

There's no shame in preaching other material, illustrations and examples. Spurgeon himself would often say that. We've covered, in recent weeks, remember we said we take a few weeks break from looking at David in the morning, and we're looking at David in the evening.

[31 : 33] Taking three weeks break, this is the final week of that break. And we saw, remember two weeks ago, we saw the call of Jesus, of who Jesus calls to follow him.

Everyone, everywhere who will hear him. We saw previously how easy, how free it is for us. All we must do is believe, repent, come to him.

How it cost him, of course, his life. But by his precious, precious blood, we can freely come to him. We've seen, I hope, week after week, the last two weeks, why the gospel is called the good news.

But the thing is, the good news is only good news when it's against the backdrop, the contrasting backdrop of bad news.

Again, as we're all aware, when you see the bad news, the bad news of the news just now, of last night and today, as we see missiles flying again in the Middle East.

[32 : 44] If you were to hear tomorrow morning, there's been a ceasefire that will last 20 years. That's good news. But it's good news in contrast to the bad news that there's homes and towns being blown to bits just now.

Think of a ring. Those of us who, at some point, went ring shopping, perhaps, for our halves.

Those of us who bought engagement rings or wedding rings. Think how beautiful the ring is. When they show it to you. Then they put, often, a black card.

Or, if you're very, very posh, a posh place. I never saw this. But black velvet behind the ring. To make that ring even more sparkling. Even more beautiful.

There is beauty today. But to get there, we are passing through this section which speaks so much about darkness. So much about darkness.

[33 : 50] See, the good news is that Jesus saves his people. That Jesus rescues people. But the question has to be answered. What does he save us from?

What does he rescue us from? And this parable, at least, helps us to understand. To give us a glimpse of what Jesus is saving us from. What is he rescuing us from?

He doesn't just rescue us from ourselves. It's part of it. But he rescues us from something greater. I'll see in detail later on what that is.

But in summary, he rescues us from hell. Now, we must never, ever preach about hell on its own.

And never mention the good news of Jesus. That's why the last two weeks we've focused on who Jesus is, what he has done. But also, conversely, we must never speak about the good news of Jesus.

[34 : 52] And never mention hell. Because why else did he come? What is he saving us from? To preach Jesus and not preach hell is to not preach a full gospel.

And any preacher who does that, they are failing at the most simple, basic point of our very calling. Which is to preach the full truth of God as best as we can.

Now, preaching on hell, even here today, will cause problems for some people. Now, I won't see that.

We're all very polite. We'll all sit and smile or however we listen. I won't see in your faces. I can't read your minds. But the chances are, and I know for certain, because we are all the same, at the end of the day, preaching on hell for some of us here today, it will make you switch off almost instantly.

If your brain hasn't already, your mind hasn't already switched off already, you're still there nodding perhaps or smiling perhaps or whatever. But you've switched off already. You've heard, we're talking about hell, and your mind's gone off.

[36 : 06] I've heard it before. I don't want to hear it again. For others, we hope this will cause you to ask, I should say, more questions.

To dig further into the truth of the gospel and to see that if this is true, then we need rescuing from this reality. And rescue is only found in Jesus.

Now some will say we should not talk about hell much. It makes people too uncomfortable. Good. Others will say, well, it's purely symbolic.

Well, to that I would say Jesus, the great saviour, Jesus, the son of God, he speaks about hell. Interestingly, Jesus speaks about hell almost double the amount.

He speaks about heaven in scripture, which is his own study. And Jesus speaks about it in very real terms. Now today we come to a parable just to say this is a story Jesus is telling to make a point.

[37 : 14] And in parables, we don't focus on every single detail. Because in this parable later on, we'll see that the one in heaven and the one in hell are having a conversation of sorts.

That won't happen. But it's a story. But there's truth in this parable that is repeated and reflected elsewhere in scripture.

Elsewhere by Jesus again and again and again. Take a very simple look at the parable. First of all, looking at the two lifestyles we find described here.

Who are the two characters, you could say initially, of this story, of this parable that Jesus tells? Well, first of all, verse 19, we meet the first character.

It was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, who feasted sumptuously every day. This is a rich man, literally there, an incredibly wealthy man, the Greek makes clear.

[38 : 15] This is a man who had it all. In our modern equivalents, this is the VIP. This is the top of the top.

This is a man who had everything he could possibly have wanted in his day. And we see that. We're told he wore clothes of purple.

Now, we've covered this before in a different context. But purple clothes were kept. And eventually, by law, under Roman law, only the top generals, the top council members, and the emperor himself and those he chose, could wear purple.

Purple is extracted. It's a long story. Basically, it's a sea slug you go to find. They were horrible creatures. You go to a sea slug. You have to come squish it and dry it and burn it and crush it down.

It's a whole process. It's impossible to do almost. And it means that purple dye was so expensive. This is a man who lived the top, as they were, 1% lifestyle.

[39 : 26] Nothing bothered him. Nothing touched him. Purple clothes. His clothes themselves were fine linen. And note what his daily life looked like.

He feasted sumptuously every single day. Every day he had a feast. Every day, as it were, through a banquet. Jesus is painting here a man who has no worries in life.

A man who has the best of this world. A man who is fully self-confident, self-assured, who can handle himself.

Who perhaps has been successful. Perhaps has worked very hard. Who has everything he wants and needs. This is not a sermon.

Indeed, it's not a parable about money. Not really. Money itself is not good or evil. Neither is success in life, good or evil.

[40 : 26] A big bank balance is not sin. If it's been built up in legal and God-honoring ways. But scripture is very clear.

But a love of money, of course. The love of money is sin. Placing your hope in your wealth is sin. And take money here and add in any other idol you want.

What Jesus is painting here is this is a man who had no time for God. Who gave little thought to anything else but himself. This is a man who worshipped the idol of money.

Others of us here, perhaps our bank balances aren't full. But we are full of ourselves. We perhaps worship ourselves. We worship our own goodness.

Others of us, we perhaps are relying on the fact that we are incredibly, so to speak, religious people. We know our Bibles.

[41 : 24] And we've had some contact of a church. Our family has for generation after generation. Your forebears sat in these pews. And so on and so on.

This is a man who symbolizes those who trust in anything and everything to save themselves. Who's the second character?

We find him in verse 20. Again, the contrast is clear for us.

He's not even at the man's house door. He's at the gates at the bottom of the long lane up to this man's house. This man's private walled garden.

And here is the beggar. And it's even worse than we think. He hasn't walked himself there. He's been placed there. Really, depends how you read it.

[42 : 38] He's been laid there. He's been put there. You might translate it. He's been thrown there. The wording is clear. This is a man who is disabled somehow.

He hasn't got use of his legs. He's been placed there at the gate. He is somehow disabled. He is full of sores.

There is no national health service. There is no, as it were, social security net to catch this man. There is no help available to him. He is on his own in this world.

Uncared for. Unloved, it seems. And here he is. And what does he want? Does he want any of the wealth of this rich man? No. He wants just some crumbs.

He wants what the dogs are getting from the rich man's table. He wants a single crumb or two. Just to get him going. Just to get him through. Hour by hour. He wants absolutely a bare minimum from this.

[43 : 38] Man. He lies there. The dogs are licking his sores. Not pet dogs. These are the wild, roaming dogs of the city. Not friendly animals.

These are not dogs you pet. He's just completely helpless. Helpless. Hopeless. At least to the watching world he is.

Two lifestyles. Then eventually, as all things do, lead to the death of these two men. Two lifestyles lead to two deaths. First of all then, verse 22.

Very simply, we are told the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. There's no burial.

There's no funeral. We know from culture. We know from history. The common practice was, up until not that far away in our own culture, is that, never mind back then, is that the beggars would be dragged, their bodies, dragged outside the city walls.

[44 : 48] And thrown into a mass grave, into a pit, into a valley, and is left to decay there. He dies. He's dragged out, thrown into a pit, on top of all the other decaying beggars with him.

No one cares for him. No one misses his earthly passing, it seems. But what we're told about him. He dies.

But he is carried, his soul. He is immediately, as it were, carried by angels. Again, note the care there. He is privately, it seems, escorted into glory.

No one cared this side for him, it seems, but he has been cared for. It shows that despite what the public saw, that this man had an inward life, an inward care, love for God.

This is a man who was saved, you could say. He is carried by angels to Abraham's side. Now, again, it's a story. And Jesus, note, he is speaking to Jewish people here.

[45 : 59] He's speaking to the Jewish leaders, ultimately. And he uses a symbol they understand. Abraham's side. It was shorthand. A phrase they used in the day.

To talk about heaven. It's a phrase they used. Because Abraham was there waiting for them, they believed. So, Jesus uses the phrase of the day. He uses the imagery of the day. To paint the picture they understand. Jesus is the best preacher.

The best storyteller. Every preacher aspires to be clear. But Jesus is the ultimate model we follow. Faithfully so. Jesus uses the words of the day to say to them, he died and he was carried into the very centre of heaven.

Beside father Abraham. The faithful one who was there before him. And the image is clear.

Jesus, in shorthand, is saying, this man now had nothing on earth. But now he has been given as a well, as a well, full honours when he entered into glory. Note the next death.

[47 : 06] At the end of verse 22. The rich man also died and was buried. He gets what the poor man didn't get.

He gets a funeral. He gets the full, you can imagine, procession. He gets the full, perhaps, celebration of life.

He gets the full acclamation and praise of the city, of the town, of who knows what. He gets the full honours. The note what happens to him.

We'll see in a second. Death comes to all. It doesn't take a minister to tell us that. And often it is said that death is the great leveller. It's perhaps true in a sense that it levels us and that we all must pass away.

We all must, as it were, reach that point. But death, in a sense, does not level. Because death is not the end.

[48 : 13] To say death is a leveller is to say that death is the end. And we're not allowed to think that. We have no permission to think that from scripture. Death is the next stage.

It leads to the next stage of our existence. All are not equal in death. We'll see that in a second.

Now the poor man, not because of his poverty, gets into heaven. There are plenty of poor people who are also going to hell. It's going to do with your bank balance or your life circumstances.

But the poor man is clear, goes to glory because he trusts and he knows and he believes in God. And the rich man, well, he of course is not in heaven.

Where is he? As Jesus teaches here, the rich man also died, was buried and in haze, being in torment and so on. Again, he's using the language of the day, but essentially he's saying the rich man passes away and he goes to hell.

[49 : 21] Now, the next section from here down to the end, we have several lessons about hell that scripture teaches us. Several lessons. I want to go through these lessons just now.

These are solemn. Very solemn. And however you might think, I assure you, there is no joy in preparing, nor even in preaching, sermons like this.

This is not performative. This is not just ticking the box. This is God's true word. And if God is saying it, and if God is true, then this is true.

We find out, first of all then, the first lesson is that hell is real. The first phrase there of verse 23. He is in haze. He is in hell. Hell is real.

An obvious lesson. An obvious conclusion. But one that is often pushed back against. Even by those who claim the name Christian.

[50 : 29] It's symbolic. It's symbolic. It's just describing bad, darkness. Bah, bah, bah. Oh no.

You can't use symbolism to escape here. There is no Shakespearean theology who said, Shakespeare wrote, whatever play it was, I didn't look it up.

But it's a phrase we know. Hell is empty because the devils are all here. It's not symbolic. It's not symbolic. We also are shown here, there's no purgatory.

There's no intermediate, as it were, place to try and perhaps, maybe escape from. Enough people pray for you on this side.

Or give offerings or money for you to the church on this side. No. Not there. There is no reincarnation.

[51 : 28] There is no second chances. There is no other option. The chance you have on this side is the chance you have. You close your eyes and you open them somewhere else.

And where you open them, there you are, effectively. For all time, time without end. Scripture is clear.

It's appointed once for man to die. Then after comes the judgment. But there's no annihilation. Some will say, well, hell is really at the end of things.

God will just make all the sinners, all the bad people, he will annihilate them. He will just remove them from space and time. Again, that's not found in Scripture.

Hell is real. It is permanent. It is conscious. It is ongoing. It is a real place that real people enter and that real people will stay in for all time.

[52 : 33] They will be there with their resurrected bodies. Again, if you haven't been to the prayer meetings, please come along. I know in our culture of prayer meetings, we've made it into something strange.

There's Bible teaching, there's several prayers, a few Psalms, and we go home. Please come along. We've been studying the new heavens and the new earth for weeks, it feels now. And we saw that there's various stages.

But in shorthand, at the end of time, we're all raised when Jesus comes back. All are raised again from the dead. All are given new bodies.

And those of us who know and love Jesus in our new bodies, we experience the new heavens and the new earth in life, joy, peace, and love. And here we find the opposite.

In the new given bodies that will never die, that will never decline, those who in this life did not know, nor love, nor turn to Jesus will face the opposite.

[53 : 33] Verse 23, the second half. Hell is real, but also we find out, quite bluntly, that hell is torment.

Hell is torment. Being in Hades and being in torment. Some will say that hell will just be an absence of God.

In darkness you'll be there, absent from God's presence, and that is hell. Scripture doesn't give us that. The truth is far more harrowing and far more terrifying and far more solemn.

God is not absent from hell. God is present in hell. What is absent from hell is God's love, God's mercy, God's care, God's goodness.

God will be present in hell in that he is present in his wrath, in his judgment. In his full power against those who did not turn to him.

[54 : 36] That's heavy. That's dark. That's terrifying to preach. And I know it's terrifying to hear. The word torment there, it has its roots in the Greek of being ground down.

Literally in hell, in Hades, being ground down. It's a place where you are subjected to eternal physical, emotional, and spiritual torment.

We have no way to stop. You're not there with your friends and family. Our media, and by media I mean paintings, going right back to the start.

Plays, poems, right down to modern media. It portrays hell as somewhere fun where all the bad people go. Or somewhere where the devil's in charge. He's there with these demons poking us with pitchfork.

Nonsense. Who is hell made for? Especially the Bible. It's a good revelation we find out. But hell will be created, especially at the end of days, for the devil and his angels. They're the first inhabitants.

[55 : 51] The devil is not in charge of hell. The devil is in hell alongside everyone else. Torment. It is real.

The start of verse 24 also gives us a harrowing reminder. But there are people in hell, or there will be people in hell, who on earth knew their Bibles very well.

Verse 24. And he called out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me. And so on. It's a story. There's no calling out in real heaven and real hell.

But in the story, Jesus makes clear one thing here. That the person in hell, he knew Father Abraham. He tries calling out to Father Abraham. What does that show us? It shows us that the man in hell, he knew his Bible.

He knew his stuff. He knew who Father Abraham was. He knew he should try and call to Abraham to have God, to be merciful to him. He knew his scriptures. This is a man who is in hell, who had good theology.

[57 : 00] One of the most solemn truths. And as a minister, the most painful things you can see is people in front of you who you know know our Bibles.

Who you know know the gospel. Who have heard it year after year. Decade after decade. Remember we did the maths before. Who have sat perhaps some of us under thousands of sermons.

And as Spurgeon once preached to great horror and great outcry to his congregation. He preached at the end of a sermon on hell.

He said very simply. There are millions who go to hell with their Bibles clutched firmly in their arms. He's not wrong, is he?

This is not saying those of our denominations or our peculiarities. No. There's one church.

[58 : 06] We're saying there are those who believe that their own righteousness has made them right with God. There are those who know and who think in their minds that their own good deeds have leveled them with God.

But he will get them in because they've tried hard enough. And they've done everything the Bible has asked them to do apart from the one thing. Which is trust in Jesus and him alone for your hope and help and salvation.

A solemn truth. But there are many in hell as aware who are religious. The act of Christianity. The act of church going. The act of Bible reading.

It is good. It's good. It's how we come to know God. How we come to know Jesus. But attending church alone. Reading the Bible alone. And then nothing else progressing from that.

It does not save. Many go to hell with a good theology. Many go to hell with a good biblical knowledge. Many go to hell having heard the gospel proclaimed to them.

[59 : 12] Generation after generation. Decade after decade. Knowing all about Jesus. Knowing the good news. Means nothing whatsoever.

If you never actually listen to it. Or respond to it. In hell there is no mercy. Second half of verse 24.

In the story here. In the story of the parable of Jesus. The man in hell cries out for just a drop of water. Just anything. Send Lazarus.

Send Lazarus. Dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I'm in anguish in this flame. The answer. Effectively it's no.

Child remember that in your lifetime. Received your good things. And Lazarus in like manner bad things. But now he is comforted here. And you're in anguish.

[60 : 13] You had your chance. In your lifetime. And you squandered it. You had every available chance. To hear.

Respond. To the good news. And you squandered it. You were rich. In this case. In every way possible. But poor. When it mattered. You did not listen.

You did not hear. You did not respond. Therefore mercy has been cut off. Now here and now. Friends. Here's the good news. That is mercy. This sermon.

Hell is heavy. It is painful. I know it is. But right now. We're not here. We're here. And whilst we're still here. And not there. There is mercy.

Today is a day of salvation. The Bible makes clear. Today is a day that God says to us. Come and hear. Come and listen. See what he has done for us. By providing us the Lord Jesus.

[61 : 12] Who has lived and died and rose again. Who offers free. Full salvation. To everyone who responds. To save us from hell. Today there is mercy.

Just now there is mercy. Tomorrow that is not guaranteed. Next year that is not guaranteed. And in hell. It is certainly not available.

Today salvation is offered. You can see that the final lesson. We find out.

There's more lessons. But just for now. The final lesson. Turn to verses 30. And verse 31. We're following as he says. To Abraham.

Father Abraham. If someone goes to them. From the dead. Talking of his brothers. They will repent. And he said to him. If you do not hear Moses. And the prophets.

[62 : 07] Neither will we be convinced. That someone. Should rise. From the dead. The final solemn teaching here is. There is.

No. Excuse. There is no excuse. The rich man here begs. Begs that Lazarus would be sent. Back down to his family.

At least. At least. If he can't be saved from hell. At least. Warn my living brothers. About it all. Now. Surely. Surely. If they see Lazarus.

Back from the dead. Surely. If they see a miracle. They will believe. And the response. Is stark. And clear. It's no.

This is shown to us. In real life. As Jesus. Raises. A real man. Called Lazarus.

[63 : 01] From the grave. Jesus. Jesus brings Lazarus. Back from the dead. The town. Has seen it. The town. Saw the man die. He's in the grave.

For three plus days. He is. Absolutely. Gone. He wasn't gone. On entrance. He's certainly gone by now. Very much dead. In the grave. The crowd.

Behold. The risen Lazarus. Healthy. Happy. And alive. They see a man. Being raised from the dead. And the crowd. The town. The so called.

Religious leaders of the day. What is their first thought? Seeing. Having seen Jesus. Take a man. Who was very dead. And make him very alive. The first thing they do. Isn't worship.

Isn't praise. Isn't believing in him. The first thing they do. Is the Bible tells us. They start planning. Even harder. How now to kill. Both Lazarus.

[63 : 57] And now Jesus. The response to seeing a miracle. Is to hate him even more. And some will say. Well if only Jesus. Would appear to me. Then I would believe.

Well. In Jesus' day. They saw. Hundreds. Of miracles. And the Bible is clear. John is clear. That not every miracle. Is recorded for us. That Jesus did. So many more things.

Than is recorded for us. They saw all that. They saw men. Being raised from the dead. They saw men and women. And children. Being healed. They saw Jesus. Do incredible things. And they didn't believe.

What makes us think. We're any different. Our issue. You might disagree with this. But. If you disagree. Please look.

Down. And think to yourself. Why disagree. Our issue. Is not. Evidence. You do not believe. In Jesus. Or trust in Jesus. Because of lack of evidence.

[64 : 56] It's there. If you look for it. Our issue. Is not intellectual. There are those. Who have. Little. Intellectual ability. Who believe in Jesus.

There are those. Who have great. Intellectual ability. Who believe in Jesus. The man. And he won't mind me saying this. Well he will mind me. But I'll say it anyway. The man coming this evening. To preach to you. Thomas Davis.

Is doctor. Reverend. Thomas Davis. Reverend doctor. He's a man with a PhD. He's quite smart. He knows his stuff. Thomas.

Of a PhD. Who stands here. Believes in Jesus. And the youngest person. In his congregation. Believes in Jesus. Intellect's not the problem.

What is the problem? The issue is spiritual. The issue is spiritual. There is.

[65 : 53] No fence. To sit on. That's the real. Truth here. There is no fence. You're either. Right now.

In a right. Relationship. With the Lord. Jesus. And you're secure. And safe in him. Or. You're not. Now.

There's different degrees. Perhaps. Off that. Perhaps. You don't yet know him. But you're asking big questions. And you're seeking. Keep on going. That's good. But ultimately. You either know him. Or you don't. You're dead.

Or you're alive. You're with him. Or you're not. Now that changes in a second. But it's true for right now. Where you are. I want to conclude.

By thinking of. The words. Of perhaps. The best known. Verse. For most of us. In scripture. John 3.16. We've seen. The horror. Of hell.

[66 : 51] So that backdrop. That dark backdrop. Let's think again. Finally. Of the hope of Jesus. For God. So loved. The world. That he gave. His only son.

That whoever believes. In him. Should not perish. Should not. Go to hell. But. Have. Eternal. Life. If you remain.

How you are. Without. Change. Without. Coming. To Jesus. As John 3.16. Made clear. You will carry on. As you are. You will go on.

As you are. And you will perish. Eternally. But. But. If. You accept. The three. Gift.

That is. Salvation. In. And. Through. Jesus. Then you. You. Right. Now. Can have.

[67 : 48] The full. And sure. Hope. Of. Eternal. Life. The gospel. Is that simple. There is no. Other tricks.

To be seen. There is no. Other great procedure. So before. We are not the masons. There is no secret. Handshake. And secret. Knowledge. To be found. That is a simple gospel. Without. Jesus.

Hopelessness. Eventual. Hell. With Jesus. Hope. Love. Peace. And the sure hope. Of heaven. The gospel.

Is that simple. Again. Any thoughts. Or questions. Please. Please. Think about these things today. Please contact me. On the email. Phone. Come to the manse. Speak to any other Christians.

You know. Don't let these things. Just sit in your mind. And do nothing with them. But please respond. Let's bow our heads now. A word of prayer. We thank you Lord. For the gift of your word.

[68 : 44] Even as we come to texts. And to portions of it. That challenge us. Portions of it. That. At times. Give us. Great concern.

Portions of it. That bring about. The stark reality. Of what lies. Or may lie ahead. For some of us. Give you praise. That in the. Truth of the gospel.

We see that there is no finished story. Until it's done. There is no. As it were. Forgone conclusion. That all may come. That all may cry out. That all who hear.

May respond. And come. And find our hope. And place our trust. In Jesus. And know that life is theirs. Life forever. Peace. And joy. We ask Lord.

That any here. Who as of yet. Do not know him. That today. May be the day. That this afternoon. That this evening. May be the time. That they. Begin this new week. Having called out to Jesus. For help. For salvation.

[69 : 40] That he. May hear them. And he would save them. Encourage your people here. As we are reminded. Of what we were saved from. And what we will never. Have to encounter. Because he himself.

Faced it all. On the cross for us. He took on our hell. He became sin on that cross. He endured. The horror of it all. So we may never endure. A minute of it. A second of it.

We may never even behold it. Instead we have free. Full access. To the kingdom now. And then forevermore. In his name. We ask. And give thanks. For his many things.

Amen. If you are paying attention. As we are singing. Through Psalm 49. You will see. A psalm. And we are concluding. With Psalm 49. A psalm.

That speaks very plainly. And very bluntly. Speaking of. The death of those. Who do not know Jesus. The death of those. Who do not know God. And you see in verse 8.

[70 : 35] Verse 7 and verse 8. The horrifying reality. That those in wealth. For confidence to pitch. And they boast themselves. Because they become exceeding rich. Verse 7.

Yet none of these. All the wealth in the world. All the power. Yet none of these. Can redeem. By any way. Nor can he unto God for him.

Like sheep. They are in grave. They in the grave are laid. And death shall them devour. And in the morning. Upright men. Shall all them have power. Their beauty. From their dwelling shall.

[71 : 29] Psalm 49. Verses 14 to 20. To God's praise. Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing
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Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing
Bumboing Bumboing Bumboing B Then you live from their dwelling, shall consume within
the grave.

For He shall carry nothing ends, when death is still end.

Each rest of our race shall go. They never shall see light.

Thank you.