

Where Do People Go When They Die?

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Date: 05 April 2026

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[0 : 00] The former director of the CIA told a story one time, a funny story, of what was happening with an FBI investigation.

! I think it was the CIA director wanting to make fun of the FBI, just internal fun. The FBI was investigating a San Diego psychiatric hospital for insurance fraud, something that we've been hearing a lot about lately, but this is something that happened a number of years ago. There were a good number of FBI agents at the psychiatric hospital. They had it locked down. They were there for the longest part of the day. They hadn't eaten, and one of the FBI guys noticed that there was a pizza parlor right across the street from this psychiatric hospital. And so they pooled their money together and decided to order some pizza from the pizza parlor. And so they called, one of the FBI agents called the pizza parlor to place the order, and the call was recorded because they had the phone lines tapped in this ongoing investigation. And so apparently the CIA director had it and played it for a conference for the fun. And so the FBI agent called and said, yeah, we'd like to place an order for 19 pizzas and 67 Cokes.

[1 : 33] And, okay, 19 pizzas and 67 Cokes. And the guy on the other line said, okay, that's going to take about an hour. Where do you want me to deliver it?

And the guy said, right across the street. And right across the street, yep, right across the street, you are at the psychiatric hospital, and you want 19 pizzas delivered there to the psychiatric hospital?

Yes, sir. Who are you? Well, I'm an FBI agent, and there's a bunch of us here, actually, and we're kind of hungry. Is that right?

Yep, by the way, the front doors are locked, so when they're ready, could you bring them around the back side, and we'll let you in the back doors.

Okay. And then there was silence, and the FBI guy said, okay, we'll see you soon. And the guy on the other end of the line said, I don't think so.

[2 : 37] Click. Would you believe it? You talk to people today about the reality of God, the reality of heaven, the reality of hell, the reality of a coming judgment, and they might look at you like you're crazy, like you're out of your mind.

You really believe that? You really think that that's what's going to happen? The concept of a coming judgment, of the wrath of God, and people think you're crazy.

But from the same Bible, we get news about not only heaven and God's love for us and what Jesus Christ did for us when he went to the cross and rose again from the dead that we celebrate on this day, but we also find out from that same Bible things about hell and judgment and God's wrath.

Vance Havner was a preacher from a couple of generations ago. Tells the story of one time he was in the Carolinas. He was in a small church preaching.

And after the service was over, an old farmer came up to him and told him, Well, I don't think you ought to be preaching about hell and stuff.

[4 : 02] I think you just ought to be talking to us about the lowly and humble Jesus. And Havner looked at him and he said, Well, sir, that's the one who gave me the information.

And it's true. Jesus is the one who tells us out of everyone else in the scriptures. He's the one who says the most about what we know about hell and judgment and those kinds of things.

Today, we're not looking at a resurrection story today. We're going right through the gospel of Luke. We have been. And so if you're just jumping in with us today, be aware that we're still a few weeks away, maybe even a couple of months away from the resurrection story.

But we're looking at a story today that's known as the rich man and Lazarus. Not the Lazarus that Jesus raised from the dead. This is a different guy named Lazarus.

Lazarus was a very common name back then. And it means God helps. This particular Lazarus was, if you looked at his life, you would say that God wasn't very helpful to him.

[5 : 12] As you'll see as we read our way through the story. And the question that often arises with this story is, Is it a parable or is it a true story?

And there are good arguments for both sides. It really doesn't matter, even if it is a parable. The principles that are taught here are consistent with scripture throughout.

But one unique thing about this story is that there is someone here in this story, a character who has a real name, Lazarus. That's different from any other parable.

And so that's what makes some people believe. And if you had to pin me down, I would say that this is a story of something that happened. And so that makes it interesting.

And either way, again, this story is so chock full of information about the afterlife. It answers a lot of questions for us. And it also dispels a good number of myths that people have about the afterlife.

[6 : 16] And so we're going to get some good answers to that. And that's what I think makes this sermon today on Easter Sunday a very practical message. Because even though we're not directly speaking to the resurrection of Jesus, it is something that every one of us needs to deal with and come to terms with in our life.

And so, yes, today we're going to be talking a bit about hell and about judgment. These ideas are not my own. Again, these are coming from Jesus himself.

Actually, when you look at some of the things that Jesus said, we're going to kind of answer a couple of questions before we get into the story. First is, is hell real? And then there's another name for it that we're going to see in our story today, Hades.

And what is that about? And what does that mean? And is that place real? So a couple of quick verses I want to show you. First from Matthew 13. This is not part of our story.

The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers and throw them into the fiery furnace. And then notice these words, In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[7 : 29] This place called hell is not a good place. It is a place of torment. It is a place of pain. It is a place of punishment. Jesus, and again, these are the words of Jesus speaking.

The Jesus who died for us. The Jesus who spoke of his great love for us. But he also wanted us to be informed about this very real place.

He said this in Matthew 10:28, Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Don't fear man who can kill your physical body but cannot kill your soul.

Rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. And this verse dispels one of the notions that people have that hell is not really real, that those who don't go to heaven will be just annihilated, or maybe hell is temporary, and then eventually annihilation.

But Jesus, again, dispels that. Sometimes they use this verse to point to that, rather fear him who can destroy. But the word destroy here does not mean annihilation.

[8 : 39] It never does. It means comes to ruin. Jesus used the same word when he talked about old wineskins that would come to ruin or be destroyed.

That's what he's talking about here. Those people who are judged by God would come to ruin. And then in Matthew 25, Jesus tells a parable.

And at the end of this parable, he says, And these will go into eternal punishment, and the righteous into eternal life. And just to highlight here that he uses the word eternal for both, for both punishment and heaven.

And so, again, be aware that eternal is what's in view with this. And then one final one. But I would warn you whom to fear.

It's interesting. We had this conversation Tuesday night in our Bible study about fear. And what is it to fear God? And is it appropriate for a believer to fear God?

[9 : 37] And what does that mean? I'm not going to try to answer that here. But I do want to make it very clear that someone who's not a Christian, someone who does not know the Lord, someone who wants to say no to God, certainly does have a very real reason to fear God.

And I don't want to just kind of dismiss that thought. Jesus, again, these are his words to us. I will warn you whom to fear.

Fear him who has, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Now, there are some preachers and some churches who would kind of want to skip over and not really

ever talk about these passages that are found in the Gospels of Jesus teaching these truths. But nevertheless, they are there. These passages are in the text. And Jesus did indeed want us to be informed about this very real possibility for us.

And then one other truth that I want to make us aware of as we get into this text is that it is not the Lord who sends people to hell. It is we who are already.

[10:57] When God looks at us before we come to Christ, he doesn't see us as being neutral. Like, well, I have to decide which way am I going to go. That's not how he sees us.

He sees us already as residents of hell, as being positioned against him and as his enemy. We might not think of ourselves in that way.

We might say, well, no, I'm neutral. I just haven't made up my mind yet. And the reality is that's not a position that the Lord recognizes. He sees us already as lost in our sins.

And again, Jesus speaking. Did I miss that? And John, well, I'm going to skip up ahead to this. I'm going to come back.

Oh, I didn't put it in there. There it is. Truly, I say to you, I'm out of position in my notes. Forgive me. Truly, I say to you, whoever hears my words and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

[11:59] He does not come into judgment, but he's passed from death to life. When he saves us, when we make the decision to trust Christ, we don't go from neutral to life. We go from death to life.

And so be aware of that as we make our way through this. It is not the Lord who sends us to hell. We are already positioned for hell. Now, one other thing that we're going to talk about, we're going to talk about, as we'll see in our text, two places that are mentioned here.

One is Hades. One is another place called Abraham's bosom, or sometimes it's referred to as paradise. And neither one of both of these places are temporary places.

Okay? Whether it's Hades or it's Abraham's bosom, and they're actually right next to each other.

Wherever they are, I don't know where they are. The Lord doesn't reveal that to us, but we get the idea of descended.

Maybe it's somewhere in the lower regions of the earth. We don't know. But we know that these two places are very real. You might have heard of Hades. That's the New Testament word for the Old Testament word, Sheol.

[13:08] It is the place where lost people today when they die, that's where they go. Again, they won't be there forever because we know that at the end of all things, when Jesus comes back again, there will be this event, the book of Revelation tells us, called the Great White Throne Judgment, where the lost of every age will be judged and then cast into the lake of fire.

And so the word hell kind of encompasses all of that. And so even though Hades might be temporary for now, understand that the judgment of hell is eternal.

The other thing is that there was a section before the resurrection of Christ, there was a section of Hades that was not a place of punishment, but a place of paradise, a place of comfort, a place of joy, a place of ease, a place where God was not yet.

Because when the Old Testament saints died, they couldn't yet go to heaven because the price for their sin had not yet been paid. The temporary sacrifices of the Old Testament temple, and I'm getting into the weeds here, but the temporary payment of the sacrifices of the Old Testament just kind of put off that debt until Jesus paid the debt in a final way when he died on the cross.

And then when he rose again from the dead, there's something that's unique that happens that Paul records for us here in Ephesians 4. Therefore, it says when he ascended on high, talking about Jesus.

[14:40] Now, Paul is, the context here is talking about spiritual gifts, but he just kind of takes a little bit of a rabbit trail. It doesn't make me feel so bad if I take a little rabbit trail every now and again, because Paul does in his writing.

Therefore, he says when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men. In saying he ascended, what does it mean but that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth?

He who descended is the one who also ascended far above the heavens that he might fill all things. This is just a reference to that. In between the death of Christ on the cross and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, Jesus had something that he was doing.

Now, there is a false teaching out there that he went to hell and duked it out with the devil. That's a false teaching. When Jesus died on the cross, that was it.

He said it is finished. And then at the end of it all, actually there was a guy with him who was dying. Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. Again, that's a reference to this Abraham's bosom.

[15:48] He was telling the thief on the cross, today that's where I'm going to see you. The thief on the cross was only going to be there for a day or so, which is interesting.

But Jesus said when he died, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. He wasn't going to hell in that sense. He was going to paradise to lead those in that captivity where they were held in paradise in Abraham's bosom.

He was then leading them to heaven at that point. So now that when we die today, we go directly to heaven. We don't have to have this temporary stop off in a place called Abraham's bosom or in paradise.

Have I got you confused all the way now? Okay, so now we can get into our story. And so let's go ahead and do that. Luke chapter 16 verse 19 is where we're going to be spending our time there. There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. That's all the information that we get.

[16:55] We don't get his name. His name is not important because he's not the main character here in the story. He's one of them, but he's not the good guy in the story.

He's the guy who Jesus is, again, context here. He's speaking to the Pharisees. He's trying to correct their false teaching, their false understanding.

They thought rich people were just automatically blessed by God. Jesus is going to set them straight with this. So he said there was a rich man and he is, I mean, he's got it going on. He's got everything. He's saying he's this clothed in purple was something this outfit would have costed the average person three years salary to have this kind of an outfit.

That's a lot of money, three years salary. And he feasted like a wedding celebration feast. So this is how he ate every day.

[17:49] But at his gate, there was laid a poor man named Lazarus. Now this is a different guy than again that Jesus rose from the dead. And this Lazarus was covered with sores who desired to be fed from what fell at the rich man's table, the leftovers, the throwing away.

Now they wouldn't use fine cloth to wipe their hands at a meal. They would use leftover bread to wipe their hands. And then that would be thrown away.

And that's what Lazarus was hoping to get to eat. That's the picture in mind. The other part of this picture of Lazarus, he's covered with sores.

And moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. Now, when we think of dogs, you know, you and I, we probably think of our pet dogs that are part of our families.

And we love to have our, they didn't have that. Dogs were not pets back then. They were wild animals that traveled in packs. And so the idea of a dog coming up and licking your sores was not a good thing.

[18:56] It was probably something that would have been fearful for Lazarus, but he is so weak and so out of sorts, if you will, because of his condition, that even dogs were coming and in a sense providing comfort, but there would have been infection and stuff that they wouldn't have understood, but that we do today.

This is the contrast between the rich man and Lazarus. Now they both die and things get flipped. Okay? Watch this. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side, or Abraham's bosom is literally what it's referred to.

And that was paradise. It was a wonderful place, but again, God was not there. These saints, these Old Testament believers, could not be in God's presence yet because their sin had not yet been paid for by Christ, but they were not in a place of torment.

They were in a place of very much so joy and comfort, and it was known as Abraham's bosom. Oh, my computer died on this side. All right, everybody look over here. We're going to figure this out eventually.

Hopefully this stays with us for today. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. I said that already. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side.

[20:17] The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades. Now, the rich man is on the opposite side of this situation here in what we might refer to today as hell or Hades.

He's being in torment, and he lifted up his eyes, and he saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side, and he called out, Father Abraham. So he's able to look across and see who's in the other side, and he recognizes Abraham, and he says, Father Abraham.

This would have been so distressing to the Pharisees because their teaching was that, hey, we're Abraham's children. We're automatically in. We're good simply because we're Abraham's children. So Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am in anguish in this flame. It's where we get the idea of the kind of torment that hell or Hades gives to those who are there.

Now I want you to notice a couple of things. He knows Lazarus by name. He knew him by name in the previous life, and yet he did nothing to bring Lazarus comfort in that previous life, something that the Old Testament would absolutely condemn any rich person for just being able to walk over a poor person and disregard them and not help them in their time of need.

[21 : 50] So send Lazarus to dip his tongue. Notice he's still kind of, Lazarus is in a condescending position, right? I'm the rich man.

I'm the man of position. I'm the man of means. Lazarus is still someone who should serve me. So Abraham, send Lazarus off to get some water to cool my tongue.

But Abraham said two words I want you to remember. Child. Abraham recognizes that the rich man is a child of Abraham, is a descendant of Abraham, and yet he's still in hell.

So again, it's kind of a slap in the face to the Pharisees. You guys are getting this wrong. And he tells them, remember what it was like in your former life.

Hold on to that thought. That in your lifetime, you received your good things, and Lazarus, in like manner, bad things, but now he's comforted here, and you are in anguish.

[22 : 47] And besides all this, between us and you is a great chasm or expanse or gulf and has been fixed in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able to.

Lazarus couldn't to if he wanted. And none may cross from there to us. So the way between paradise and hell, Hades, you couldn't get back and forth.

Okay? It was impossible to do that. And then he said, okay, plan number two. Then I beg you, Father, send him to my father's house for I have five brothers so that he may warn them.

Okay, if Lazarus can't come to me, maybe Lazarus can go back from the dead and go find my five brothers and basically preach the gospel to them.

Warn them because I don't want them to end up in the same place that I am at. Lest they also come into this place of torment. But Abraham said, they have Moses and the prophets.

[23 : 52] Let them hear them. In other words, they have the word of God already. They have the Old Testament scriptures. They have everything they need. They don't need Lazarus to do this.

And again, now he protests. Notice he's not protesting about his sentence. He's protesting about his own need of water for his tongue and now he's concerned about his brothers but he's not, oh wait a minute, I'm innocent, I shouldn't be here.

No, he's not pleading his case that way at all. But now he is protesting against Abraham in this way. No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.

if they see a resurrected Lazarus, maybe they too knew Lazarus in the previous life. If they ever went to visit their brother and his sumptuous banquets, they would have passed by Lazarus.

Maybe they knew him as well. And again, Abraham said to him, if they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.

[25 : 01] And of course, that was an anticipation of Jesus himself who was going to rise from the dead, which speaks to the hardness of their hearts. Even when they hear the news that Jesus has risen from the dead, they would rather still live in rebellion against that and against that news than to submit their life to God, pretending that they're religious, but in reality, not at all.

Now, with all of that being said, on your notes, and hopefully the computer screens will last, and if not, I'll be repeating myself over and over again so you can fill in your notes here.

But I want to talk about ten reflections of life after death that come from this story. Because again, there's a lot of information here that we get about life after death, and we're going to dispel some myths here about what happens to us after death.

And so number one on your notes is this, that our eternal destiny is set in this present life. Our eternal destiny is set or it is fixed in this life, not after.

There is nothing in this story or any other parts of Scripture that give an indication of a place called purgatory or of a second chance of any kind.

[26 : 24] There's nothing about that. That is an invention of mankind, an invention of religion that says, well, maybe there's something that, you know, maybe someone who has never heard or which we'll address here in a little bit, but there is none of that.

Our destiny, our eternal destiny is set in this life. Now, for those of you who are hearing these words today, you have this blessed opportunity to respond, but the choice is yours. But, nonetheless, the decision is made in this life. Secondly, we don't go out of existence after death.

There is no such thing as soul sleep. There is a brand of Christianity, a denomination that teaches that when we die, we enter soul sleep.

That doesn't, you don't see that in this story at all. Abraham, I mean, Lazarus, and the rich man, as soon as they're dead, they wake up and here they are in these two places.

[27 : 33] There's no such thing as limbo, there's no annihilation, and actually, our immaterial soul, spirit, however you want to refer to that, will be given a temporary body.

I want you to notice, Lazarus has fingers. tell him to dip his finger. The rich man's got a tongue. And, and that's, that's evident in the text here.

We're not just some kind of spirits floating in space somewhere or floating in some heavenly realm. We will have temporary bodies. We will have permanent, after the resurrection, we'll have permanent when, when we are resurrected, when Jesus returns.

We'll have permanent, incorruptible, eternal bodies, but until then, we'll have a, a temporary body in heaven that's recognizable.

When he looks across the way, he can recognize Lazarus. He sees him, he remembers his, his name. Oh, it came back.

[28 : 45] Again, number three, we will be recognizable in heaven. You, you will recognize your spouse or your kids or your, your favorite uncle or, or whatever it is.

Whoever that you knew in this life, in that life, in, in heaven, you will know them in the same way. They will be recognizable as we see in the story today.

Communication will be rational. It won't be like mind melding or, we come up with some weird explanations of how we think heaven is going to be and it's just not.

We're going to talk and hear in heaven just like we do here. There certainly will be some differences, but not in the way that sometimes it gets portrayed. Moments after death, number four, we will be immediately aware of either torment or comfort.

There's no delay here. As soon as we're dead, that's it. We'll know. We will know. What's interesting to me is that when, when Jesus raised the, the other Lazarus from the dead in John chapter 11, uh, he waited four days because they had a superstition back then that if you, if, if you, the, the, the spirit hovered over the dead person's body for three days and then after three days it was like, okay, this guy's toast.

[30 : 13] I'm going. And that's just a superstition. But even in that superstition, Jesus had grace upon them and waited four days just to kind of, to demonstrate, uh, I'm not the God of your superstitions or any of that stuff.

I can raise someone from the dead. Now, what would have been interesting would have been to have a conversation with that Lazarus after he was raised from the dead and say, Hey, Lazarus, tell me what, what paradise, he wouldn't have been to heaven yet, but tell me what paradise was like because Lazarus would have been there for four days.

That's interesting. Uh, at least I find that interesting, but it's, it's a, it's an immediate experience. Life after death won't eliminate our personal memories.

Uh, sometimes it's taught that, uh, after we get to heaven, our, our minds are going to be kind of erased or cleansed or whatever and we won't remember all these bad things.

That's, again, not how it, it works. These memories that we have, even the bad memories will be ways for us and certainly we'll see them from a heavenly perspective from God's point of view, but they will be, be opportunities for us to eternally praise him for the grace that he's had to bring us out of whatever pain or torment or trouble that we've experienced.

[31 : 37] We will see them in a different way but nevertheless we will see them. We, we see that even Jesus for eternity will have scars in his hands and feet and in his side.

We're told that his resurrected body bore these, these marks. that is not something that, that makes Jesus's existence in eternity somehow less than or makes him suffer in any way.

It doesn't. And also, we, we're told in the text again that Abraham tells the rich man, remember what it was like in your former life.

The memory is not wiped clean. The whole judgment seat, all of that, we're going to be answering for, receiving reward for opportunities in heaven. It's not wiped clean.

No, that's not how it works. We will have those memories. They will just be educated by eternity, by heaven. Number six, the expanse between joy and judgment is uncrossable, unchangeable, and eternal.

[32 : 45] Again, the rich man does not protest his sentence. He knows that it's, it's deserved.

He knows that. And he accepts it. And there's nothing that can be changed about his sentence. So be aware of that. Number seven, I'm trying to go through these quickly.

The reality of judgment will make the unsaved, now get this, the reality of judgment will make the unsaved, those who are in hell, determined evangelists.

Think about the man, the rich man. What's his second request? His second request is, hey, Abraham, send Lazarus back to my five brothers so that they can be warned and not have to come to this terrible place of torment.

They will be, those who are in hell will be determined evangelists. This is something that, that in funeral sermons, there are times where at the end of the sermon, I'll talk about how their loved one who just passed away would certainly want them to make a decision to trust Christ as Savior.

[34 : 10] And every once in a while there might come a protest that would say, well, wait a minute, that person didn't live for Christ. They didn't honor God in the way that they lived. Certainly they're not in heaven. How can you say that?

Well, we can say that because we know that this rich man, while he is in torment, is very concerned about his brothers and wants them to come to faith in Christ.

Now, the hard part of this, even though they may want to be determined evangelists at this point, their position also makes them powerless to share.

They can't do anything about it from their place of torment. Won't change. Won't change.

Number eight. No one goes to hell because they lack information. Certainly this rich man, probably, we're not told, but probably because of his wealth and because it was taught that wealthy people automatically are saved because the reason why you have wealth is because you're blessed by God.

[35 : 30] That's kind of how they misunderstood, misapplied the Old Testament law. So he probably went to synagogue. He probably heard these messages. He didn't care about those who were poor who were in need, even though the Old Testament talks about that over and over again.

And it wasn't because he lacked information. He knew who God was. He was a practicing Jewish man.

He recognized his father Abraham in eternity. And yet he's still lost. The reality is people remain lost because of defiant rebellion.

And this is true today as well. We'll have people even in this room today or people who watch online who will hear a message like this and hear the warnings about eternity and still will reject.

Not again because they lack information. They will have it. But because they don't want to submit, they don't want to surrender their life to the one who would be in charge of their life.

[36 : 48] If God is real, if he is really resurrected from the dead, then he must be the only logical then connection. This is a famous C.S. Lewis quote.

The only logical conclusion then is to completely, wholeheartedly surrender to him if he really is resurrected from the dead. You have that information.

Information, lack of it, is not the issue. Even, even, extend this out. What about the people in, you know, some strange island off the coast of Asia or Africa or whatever.

People have never heard the gospel. Again, even they will refuse what information they have. They will look at creation and say, oh no, that's not a creator who put that in place.

No, that son up there in the sky is a god and I'm going to worship that thing. Or that dog or that cow is a god and I'm going to worship that.

[37 : 52] No. The reason why people end up in hell is because of defiant rebellion.

They simply do not want to surrender their life to Christ. That's the bottom line. That was true for the rich man. This is an interesting observation too.

There's no such thing as unbelief after death. Ask people today, are you a believer in Christ? And lots of folks today would say no.

You can come across people today all over the place who would say I'm not a believer in Christ.

That person will not exist in eternity. There are no unbelievers in eternity.

they will know and they will believe but for them at that point because our decision is set in this life again if you've never believed in the judgment of a holy God if you've never believed in the reality of the wrath of God if you've never believed in the reality of heaven and hell if you just refuse to accept that if you've never believed that the Bible was telling the truth all along you will believe that you will believe all of these things the moments after your death absolutely but then it will be too late and so the cry would be trust him today don't put it off there's a reason why scriptures say today is the day of salvation because you don't know what will come tomorrow you don't know if you will have tomorrow and so settle that today if you don't believe today you will when you die absolutely but by then it may be too late and then number 10 scripture provides sufficient warning warning we see this again in the story oh send

[40 : 11] Lazarus no no no they have the law and the prophets they've got all they need no if they see Lazarus risen from the dead and Jesus in his mind he knows that's what's about to happen here in a few short weeks he knows that and he's saying scripture is enough it died again we know that 2nd timothy 3:15 from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation we know that the scriptures are enough through faith in Christ Jesus because all scripture is breathed out by God it's profitable for teaching for reproof for correction for training and righteousness the man of God may be complete and equipped for every good work we have what we need in the scriptures we don't need anything else the scriptures are sufficient to tell us all that we need to know not only about how to be saved and who to trust in but how to live this Christian life once we make that decision the scriptures fully equip us with all that we need and so here's the warning dismiss God's word today awaken to torment then if you say oh the word of God is not real it's not true okay you can believe that in this life but in the next you won't believe that you will know the scriptures were definitely enough but again it will be too late so today today today trust him trust him as your lord and savior and on your notes you get a bonus one and we know this again we see this at least a little bit in this story yes acts of service will be rewarded in heaven there is a judgment for those who are believers to determine your rewards in this next life but heaven itself is not a reward you do nothing itself of yourself to earn heaven it is a gift it is completely a gift provided to you by what

Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross so that Ephesians 2:8 and 9 for those of us who are familiar with the scriptures this is a verse that is very familiar it is for me this this for me when I was 17 years old it was this these two verses of scripture that the light bulb went off and God opened my eyes and opened my heart and helped me to see that yes I need to trust Jesus Christ as my savior and not trust in my own good works so for by grace have you been saved through faith and that is not it is not of your own doing it you can't do anything to earn it it is the gift of God not a result of works religion and this is how we define religion here at Crossroads Church this is how I've been defining religion ever since I came out of religion ever since I became a Christian religion religion is man's attempt to try to reach

God it is trying to climb a ladder of goodness and good works and can I do enough good things and be a good enough person to earn to attain to get my way to heaven and the scriptures make it very clear that that's impossible for me to do the only hope that I have is to come to him empty handed and say I've got nothing the only hope I have has nothing to do about rich chassis has nothing to do about me the only hope I have is in what Jesus Christ has already done when he died for me on the cross and rose again from the dead so the only one I have to boast in is Christ himself not in me there's nothing to boast about for me nothing I did nothing

I can do nothing you can do nothing to earn God's favor it is simply by trusting him that you can be saved and you can know John wrote about this in his letter 1st John chapter 5 that you would know that you have eternal life it's not a might it's not a maybe it doesn't have to be those things it's not a wish thing it's not a hope for thing it is I can know that I'm saved because I've simply done what the scriptures have told me to do which is to trust in him trust in his finished work on the cross that's what it means to be saved that's what it means to be a Christian to be a believer to know that I'm

saved to know that I'm going to heaven when I die let's pray I want to invite you today if you've never made that decision today even now in this moment even in your own words just silently there at your seat the Lord knows your thoughts and knows your prayers and he can answer if you simply cry out to him and say yes Lord

I trust you I trust you with my life my eternal destination the rest of this earthly existence that I have however many years that I have and my eternal destiny Lord I trust it all to you I trust you with my life it's yours I know that I have sinned I know that I deserve an eternity apart from you in this place called hell that we've talked about but Lord I've heard your words and I know the story that Jesus died in my place as a substitute and he took my place place the punishment the pain of shedding of his blood took what I deserved upon himself the Bible says that he became sin for me even though he knew no sin and he took my place he died in my place and then he rose again on the third day that we celebrate today and Lord today I am trusting in you as my only hope of eternal life it is only through Jesus

[47 : 38] Christ that I am saved today I recognize that and I accept you as my Lord and Savior I trust you with my life Lord today I thank you for those even who are making that decision right now and I pray that you would bless them help them to recognize that that decision today is something that is real and is permanent it's not something that they have to do over and over again even in our own weakness sometimes we can grow to doubt that we can question our own motives at times and Lord you know that we are weak and that we are dust and Lord you love us and so you take this humble cry of ours and you answer and you give to us eternal life and we are so thankful I pray that you would help these new believers to live for you to walk with you all the days of what is remaining of this life and

Lord to remind us all that we have such a wonderful eternity awaiting for us in heaven with you that is real and is true and will last forever and we get to be with you our savior and our lord lord thank you for making us your children and we can belong to you and it's all because of what you've done for us lord we love you and we praise you and we ask all of this in Jesus name amen and we some some some some some some