

# Rich Man, Poor Man. Which are You?

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Date: 17 February 2013

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     When you have greeted one or two people, just take a seat. Welcome again to Watermark.
- My name is Mike. I work with the university students here at Watermark. And being a German this week has not been very interesting. It's just there's a German pope after a long time, and then after 800 years, he's the first one to just step down.
- That's not the way we would expect him to go. But in light of the events, I want to tell you another story about a pope. Because exactly 500 years ago, in February of 1513, Pope Julius II died, and he was the last pope to die before the Reformation took its full force and changed the face of the church forever.
- And as a response to the pope's death, one of the key figures of the reform, Erasmus of Rotterdam, he wrote a little booklet. And the booklet was called Julius Excluded from Heaven.
- Now today we are talking about heaven and hell, and it's not a topic that we talk about a lot. And even at the time 500 years ago, it's a topic that was sensitive, especially when you write a booklet about Julius the Pope being excluded from heaven.
- [ 1 : 18 ]     And so there was a lot of uproar about this writing. It actually highlighted that you couldn't enter heaven just because of your power and your achievements, but just because of the grace of Christ.
- So in the booklet, Erasmus actually describes a little fictional encounter that Julius and his closest advisor have at Heaven's Gate with St. Peter. And I want to read to you a few lines of that booklet.
- So here we go. So Julius and his advisor stand at Heaven's Gate, and there Julius says, What the devil is this? The doors don't open.
- Somebody must have changed the lock or broken it. To which his servant says, It seems more likely that you didn't bring the proper key. Why didn't you bring both of the keys that you have?
- This is the key of power, not the one of wisdom. To which Julius says, I didn't have any other key but this one. I don't see why we need a different key when we have this one, the key of power.
- [ 2 : 23 ]     And his servant says, I don't know either, but the fact is we are still on the outside. And Julius is getting really mad and says, I'll knock down the door. Hey, somebody come up and open this door right away.
- What's the matter with the doorman? Is he asleep or else even drunk? At this point, Peter shows up at the door and says, Who are you and what do you want? And Julius says, Open the door, will you?
- And if you were doing your job properly, it should have been open long ago, and it should have been decorated with the most beauty of Heaven. And Peter says, That's pretty lordly of you, but first tell me, who are you?

Now Julius says, As if you couldn't see for yourself. And Peter says, See, what do I see? What I see is new to me. And then Julius says, But if you're not stone blind, can you not see the triple crown, as well as my cloak gleaming with gold and gemstones?

And Peter says, And if you were triply great, you still wouldn't get in here unless you were supremely good, that is holy. Julius says to this, Well, if it comes down to comparative holiness, you have got some nerve to keep me waiting outside.

[ 3 : 37 ] Because for years, nobody has called me anything but the most holy. And Peter says, The holiness I am talking about is not given to you by fallen, is only given to you by fallen men.

But the holiness I am talking about is the one that the Holy Lord gives you, that is the Christ. Now, it's the key of wisdom, the key of the wisdom of Christ for the gate of heaven.

It's not by our power and our achievement that we will gain access to heaven. It's the grace of Christ. And the grace of Christ was seen in his crucifixion and his rising from the dead.

And today we are entering into a time of communion. We have the elements, the blood and the bread, which represents Christ's sacrifice. And that by his grace, he has given us access to heaven.

So as we prepare for this time, I want to highlight three things. First, if you are here and you're not a Christian yet, if you hold on to the key of power that you say by my achievements, but what I am doing, by the control over my life, I want to try to gain access to heaven, then we would ask you not to take part of the elements.

[ 5 : 00 ] We believe that the elements are taken by people that have said, I'm surrendering my power to Christ. And I'm relying on the wisdom that is in knowing Christ and knowing his sacrifice on the cross that we participate in this meal.

Secondly, if you are here and you have children with you, then you probably know the best where they are spiritually, whether they have accepted Christ in their lives or not. And so if they have not done that step, then we would ask you to bring them to the front and explain to them what this meal is about, but not for them to participate.

And finally, if you're here and you're a Christian and you're about to participate, we would ask you to take a moment to think about where you are, examining your heart, see how the journey has been, and come before the Lord in renewing that relationship with him.

So as the communion stewards get ready, we'll just take a minute and pray and prepare your heart for communion. on that night before Jesus was betrayed, he had a last meal with his disciples and in that meal he took a piece of bread and he broke it and he gave it to his disciples and he said, this is my body broken for you, the body of Christ, take and eat.

And in that same meal he took a cup and he held it up and he said, this is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, the blood of Christ.

[ 6 : 34 ] Let me pray. Father, we live in a city that so often relies on the key of power and achievements to open every door.

We just repent from that, we repent that, we just try to do everything by our own strengths and try to be in control of our lives so often and just pray that we would so much more turn to the key of wisdom that is you and realizing that only you could close that gap between us and God and so just pray that I, yes, as we go out into this week that just that the sacrifice that you brought would be penetrating every area of our lives, our marriages, our friendships, our jobs, our decisions, and that we would rely on that key of wisdom of your death and resurrection and how it reconciles us to us.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. We now want to dismiss the kids to their classes. So, if you are 10 or under, then go this way and Eric, the youth are with you as well.

Okay. Let me pray for the kids as well as they go. Father, just pray for the kids as they go to class that they would see you more brightly and that you just do your work in their lives.

Amen. The scripture reading today comes from the Gospel of Luke. Please follow along in your bulletin. Now, there was a rich man and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

[ 8 : 15 ] And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate covered with sores and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table.

And besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now, the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died and was buried.

In Hades, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue for I am in agony in this flame.

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

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

[ 9 : 30 ] And he said, Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father's house for I have five brothers in order that he may warn them so that they will not come to this place of torment.

But Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them. But he said, No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.

But he said to them, If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead. This is God's word.

How are you guys doing? Come on. How are you guys doing? Good? Is everybody back from a great Chinese New Year holiday?

Seems like people are kind of trickling back in. I met some people today the first time here and they're kind of trickling back in. If you are here for the first time, wow, you are like the nightmare sermon ever, right?

[ 10 : 35 ] So you heard it read out there, it's my first time ever and we're going to talk about hell today, which is everybody's favorite topic, right? My name is Tobin Miller.

I'm one of the pastors here at Watermark. Watermark has been around for about two and a half years. We're kind of on a journey exploring and walking with the Lord and seeing what that means to fall in love with Christ as we walk with Him.

If you know anything about me, a couple things to start off with. I'm deaf in one ear. So I'm deaf in my left ear. So if you're talking to me on my left side and I ignore you and I walk away, it's not a guy thing.

It's just a, I just cannot hear. I had a massive staph infection and so, and even today it happened and so it's great in bed because you're sleeping and you're really tired and you just lay on your right side and you can't hear what your wife is saying, right?

And so you go, I love you. You go to sleep really well. So that's, it's good from that standpoint. So another thing that you need to know about me besides that I love Diet Coke occasionally is that I'm a creature of habit.

[ 11 : 43 ] I don't really watch TV that much, but when I do, I usually end up watching series or because I want to understand the journey into people's stories and get to know the characters and so I get hooked every once in a while on a series and before Christina and I got married, I was in seminary studying and I got hooked on this TV show that I thought was really unusual.

The idea behind it was very unique. The show is called Early Edition. I don't know if you've ever heard of it. It was 1996 to about 2000. It lasted four years and in this movie show, it takes place in Chicago and this guy named Gary, Gary is a stock trader, broker, and he gets fired.

So I know that never happens in Hong Kong at all, but he gets fired and so he's trying to figure out what he wants to do with his life. He comes home and he's no longer interesting so his girlfriend leaves him and so one day he wakes up and there is a morning edition of Chicago Tribune in his front door.

And when he pulls that Tribune out, he realizes for some weird reason that it's the next day's newspaper. And so he looks in it and he sees the news that hasn't already happened yet.

He knows what's going to happen the next day and so the series evolves as, and he still doesn't know how it gets there, this orange card just drops it off and it's there and so he spends the next 24 hours trying to right all the wrongs that are going to happen that next day because he already knows all the wrongs that are going to happen in the city and so he's just chasing around trying to get things done and get people from getting killed and corruption and all these things.

[ 13 : 27 ] He's trying to prevent all these things and it's really interesting. He has two characters, two friends. One is a blind lady and it's interesting because it's the blind lady who always sets him straight and talks to him about truth and then he has one friend named Chuck and Chuck always wants to know the lottery ticket number.

He wants to know who won the game the next day. He wants to know what the big lottery number is so he can place a bet on it and he can just make millions, right? He wants to know what stocks go up 40% the next day so he can place money on that and so Gary is, he's just kind of going through life trying to figure out and how to stop and how to change all these things that are happening and I thought about that passage, you know, what if we had an early edition in our life, what if you could figure out what was going to happen to you the next day?

Would you want to know? What if you could figure out what was going to happen to you five minutes after you died?

Would you want to know that? That's what the passage is about today. The passage today is an early edition of Scripture.

Remember, we're on this journey in Luke and we're in Luke 16 and so far, right now, contextually, Jesus is talking to the Pharisees and he's getting in this big argument and discussion with the Pharisees.

[ 14 : 59 ] I didn't write the verse in here. I probably should have verse 15 but verse 15 basically encapsulizes this whole passage and Jesus is talking to these Pharisees, these leaders and they're debating them and they want to live their life not according to God's word.

They want to change God's word to fit their life. And Jesus is talking to them over and over again that you need to allow God's word to change you.

I don't know if you've ever experienced that in your life but usually as you're talking or you're journeying or you're going on a walk and something happens and you have this choice and you know that it's not against, you know that it's against what God wants you to do but inside, in your heart, you feel these words come up, but I really want to do this.

and if I do this, I will, I'll be happy. And it's important to be happy and I want to be happy and so often I change God's word to fit my life and my desires.

And Jesus says that's not how it should be. We should allow God's word to change us. In verse 15, he yells out at the Pharisees and he basically says to them, you are just men who are trying to self-justify yourselves.

[16:29] You're trying to find your identity, you're trying to find your value, you're trying to find your worth, you're trying to find your significance in what men think about you. And then he goes on and he says, you know, God sees your heart and the things that please men are not necessarily the things that please God.

Be careful when you try to self-justify yourself. Be careful when you try to get your acceptance in your identity from things besides God.

In verse 19, he starts off this story. And he tells this story, it's a parable, and it's a parable about a rich man and a poor man, and it's about hell, and I know we don't like to talk about hell. Most people, I think if we took a survey, most people don't believe in hell.

Hell's uncomfortable, and if there is a hell, for sure I'm not going to go there. Other bad, bad, bad people are going to go there because I'm 51% good, and 51% good is a pass, and God and I have this thing going on, and God understands me, and so no one wants to talk about hell, but Jesus wants to talk about hell.

In fact, he talks about it more than almost anything else in the Bible. He talks about it over and over and over. 40% of the time he talks about things. He talks about money, he talks about his kingdom coming, and he talks about hell, and so I want to really briefly look at this passage, and the intent of this is I want to kind of talk a little fast.

[18:00] I want to put this out there. I want to talk about three points that I see in this passage that are significant. We will come back to this passage again, I promise you. I won't tell you when because you won't want to come if we come back to it because you don't want to talk about hell, but I think there's three things that we see here, and then my hope is at the end, we'll have a Q&A; time because we want the church to be a family.

We want you to be able to ask questions. No question is a bad question, so if I say something that confuses you or doesn't make sense, write that down, ask a question at the end, so my hope is that we'll have enough time to go about talking and having questions at the end, and let's see how that goes.

There's three things that stick out to me in this passage. The first thing is that we all have eternal destinies. The second thing is that the choices that we make today determine that destiny, and the third thing is that Jesus is very, very concerned about our destiny.

We all have eternal destinies. The choices that we make today determine that destiny, and Jesus is very, very concerned about that destiny. The story goes that there's a rich man and a poor man.

They're living very, very different lives in verses 19 and 20, and then they die, Lazarus, the poor man, his body is probably, according to Hebrew tradition, his body is probably picked up, and it's thrown in a dump heap, physically.

[19:17] But spiritually, we're told that he's lifted up by angels and he's taken to heaven, and he's in Abraham's bosom. He's in heaven. The imagery there is just like the Last Supper, that Jesus is laying down and he's reclining, and John is laying on his chest, and there's this banquet, there's this party, and everybody's excited and they're rejoicing, and it's an amazing, amazing time.

And he's being comforted. It's very interesting. It doesn't say he's given a lot of things. It says he's given comfort. Now, I don't know if we think about heaven very much.

I mean, just think of the greatest place you could ever imagine, the neatest thing here on earth, and heaven is a billion times greater than that because you're in the presence of God. We're going to have jobs. We're going to have chores. We're going to do things.

We're going to have fun. All the great things that are on earth are going to be in heaven. Diet Coke's going to be in heaven, and M&M's are going to be in heaven, York peppermint patties, please, they're going to be in heaven.

All the great things will be there. And so, but our imagination, God is using these words, and our minds are like this, and God's mind is like this, and he's using these words that we can try to grasp our minds around these things.

[ 20 : 20 ] But he's speaking God talk, but he's talking to us as a little child. And so Lazarus is there, and he's being comforted. And then we're told the story about the rich man. And the rich man dies, and he probably has this incredibly impressive funeral because as you look at his lifestyle and the way he dressed, he dressed like a king.

He acted like a king. He ate banquets every day. He was so busy with his lifestyle that he didn't even have time to go to the church or to the synagogue. It says in Scripture that every day he feasted, and he did these amazing, amazing things.

But spiritually, what we see is that he runs up, he ends up in hell. Now when Jesus' listeners heard this story, they would have been very, very, very disturbed.

They would have been offended. Because what they would have wanted to hear was there was a poor man, he was poor because he was sinful, he was bad, he didn't trust the Lord, and when he died, he went to hell. And then there was a rich man, and he dressed finely, and he had great parties, and everybody loved to go to them.

He did those things, of course, because he was righteous, and because God loves them, and God loves righteous people, and God blesses people with money. And so when he dies, he goes to heaven. I don't know if you think that way, but a lot of people think that way today in our world, and the Pharisees really, really thought that way.

[ 21 : 34 ] But it says that the Pharisees went to hell, and that would have really disturbed Jesus' listeners. There's some things that stick out to me about this passage that I want to share with them.

Here's my observations. The first thing is that hell exists. It's a real place. But Jesus isn't just talking about to scare people. I mean, it's not talked about much in the Bible, but almost every time that hell is talked about, Jesus is the one talking about it.

Did you know that? Jesus is the one who talks about love, and peace, and joy, and compassion. He's the one who's almost always talking about hell. He's balancing out those things, and so it's a real place.

We see that it's a real place. It's not just an imaginary place. We see also that it's a place of pain and suffering. Verse 24, he's in agony. The word is just like you're getting your skin flayed off.

There's fire, but the fire doesn't consume the person because the person is still there. He's in pain. Incredible, incredible pain and suffering and destruction, but he doesn't get destroyed.

[ 22 : 37 ] He just continues. It's like a Greek tragedy. He just continues to be renewed and to be destroyed and renewed and to be destroyed, and it's your worst nightmare. Just think of your worst place ever you could be. Think of that terrible place like South Africa or Australia.

Where's Graham? I heard you picked on me last week, dude. Or yeah, even Texas. Think of the worst place you could be. Hell is so much worse than that.

Hell is so much worse than that. Verse 26 says that hell is a place of separation. There's this massive chasm that separates good people from people who are lost.

And it's eternal. It's there. It can't be moved. People can't go back and forth. And when they read this, people were thinking, well, who would want to go back there to help them? And there's almost this understanding in the literature that Lazarus would have done it if he could have.

but he didn't because he can't. And so there's this massive separation. You're all by yourself. It's not that you're partying there with all your buddies and it's a great time and hell is this great place, but you're by yourself and you're separated.

[ 23 : 52 ] We also see in this passage and throughout scripture that hell is a place of self-denial, self-deception. In verse 28, he says it over and over again. C.S. Lewis wrote a great book.

It's called The Great Divorce. I got it on my Amazon. I've been reading it again. Probably the fifth time I've read it. I probably should read about once a year, once every other year. It's 144 pages. It's a very quick and easy read and the story talks about people who take a bus ride from hell to heaven and what C.S. Lewis says in hell is that everybody is angry and arguing with each other.

Everybody blames each other for the reason that they're there and the passage says the same thing in verse 28. Abraham is blamed for the rich man being there. He says, if you had told me all these things, if you had sent an image to me, if you had sent somebody from the dead like I want you to do to my brother, then surely I wouldn't be here.

It's your fault that I'm here. It's not my fault. You didn't give me a sign. I wish you had given me a sign. We also see that hell is this place where you're totally self-deceived.

You notice the rich man, he's still ordering Lazarus around? Do you see that in the passage? He's still saying, hey, send him here, send him there, do these things. I mean, it's almost like your boss who's fired, he comes back into your office and he keeps ordering you around and you're like, you're fired.

[ 25 : 13 ] But that's what Lazarus does. I mean, the rich man, he thinks he's still in control. He's totally self-deceived. He doesn't realize where he's at. Do you see the rich man?

And this really is amazing. The rich man, you see what he doesn't do? Abraham, he never asks for forgiveness from Abraham or Lazarus.

Do you notice that? He never asks for forgiveness. He never apologizes to Lazarus for how he treated him. He doesn't ask to get out of hell.

I mean, he can ask any question and he doesn't ask to get out of hell.

It's almost as if he's happy to be there. Paul in the book of Romans says it this way. He says that people are in hell because they want to be.

[ 26 : 18 ] People are in hell because they choose it. We see later on that he says that hell is eternal and it means that there's no universalism.

Sometimes in the church you hear these words called universalism and it basically is God is love and in the end love wins and eventually everybody goes to heaven. No one goes to the bad place.

It's great. We're all universalist. But the Bible doesn't say that. The Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says it's appointed on the man once to live and then judgment.

The passage doesn't say that we're just annihilated. Sometimes in church and especially in the mission field when you see people and they're lost and you're crying and you're hurting and you're thinking how can this happen? I don't understand this. Maybe God's just going to send people for a while and he's going to suffer them for a while.

My family and my mom's side are all Jehovah Witnesses and this is what they believe about everybody else who's not a Jehovah Witness. Eventually you just get annihilated. You just get destroyed. Which isn't that bad, right?

[ 27 : 20 ] I mean it's better than burning forever. But the Bible doesn't say that. The passage doesn't say that. There's no such thing as annihilation. The passage doesn't say that there's such thing as purgatory.

Maybe some of you grew up in a church and you realize I died. I go to this little holding area and then I work off my sins. We were walking through Switzerland right after Christine and I got married and we walked up to this Catholic church and on the outside it said this is the year of Jubilee and everybody who enters into this church you get two million years off of purgatory.

I figured well hey what's going on in? I got that going for me, right? Purgatory's the place where you go when you work off your bad deeds.

But the Bible never says anything like that. That's adding on to grace in Christ. And the Bible doesn't say we can go to purgatory.

The Bible says that there's no such thing as reincarnation. That when you die there's just a judgment. It's final. It's just there. And the last thing I want us to see about hell when you go there and I think we need to talk about this in a church because I have a really hard time with this.

[ 28 : 32 ] God isn't laughing at people in hell. I mean I think sometimes in a church we get so prideful and smug and I'm there so you should be there and if you're not there you deserve to go to hell and the pictures we see in the museums are God ding people over the fire and oh no no don't burn me up and we just think well God's really happy that everybody's burning and everybody's going to hell and the Bible and the Bible doesn't say that.

The Bible says that God weeps at people going to hell and we need to also. So everybody has a destination.

The next thing that sticks out to me is that our choices today determine our destination. It's very interesting because again he's almost going back to verse 15 about where are you finding your identity?

Who are you finding your significance in? These are the choices that justify yourself. There's almost a sense what he's asking is what names you? What names you?

Because Lazarus in this passage he's the only person in 38 parables and stories that Jesus gives a name to. Lazarus' name Eleazar Lazarus' name means God is my help.

[ 29 : 46 ] And when you look at Lazarus' life he has nothing. He has no choices. He has no significance. The only thing he knows is he's laid at the door and he's praying that someone would take care of him and I always that weird that name weirds me out because you go up to him and he's covered with sores and he's begging and you go hey dude here's some food.

What's your name? Lazarus. What? God is your help? Come on. Your parents could pick a better name than that. What? But Lazarus knew that the only thing that he had to rely on the only thing that he could depend on the only thing that he could trust was God.

The only thing that he could find his identity in the only thing he could find his significance in the only thing he could find his purpose in was God. He had nothing else.

I often ask my questions like myself this question when I go through my day is who is my help? What am I depending on?

What am I asking to get my significance out of? What do I want to get my approval from? Who's my help? Well the rich man you know where his help is.



[ 31 : 05 ] We're told in verse 19 that his help his hope his identity is found in his wealth and in his lifestyle and his comfort his status his reputation his heritage he says Father Abraham I'm a Jew come save me Father Abraham he's playing the race card he's playing the heritage card save me save me I mean he dresses in such a way that only kings would dress this way habitually means always continually purple was a very rare color only for kings the linen when he says fine linen the Greek word is busos which it actually means is his underwear so his underwear is from the finest linen in Egypt the linen was so fine that one ounce of that linen cost more than one ounce of gold in Jesus' day so he's wearing expensive underwear he's wearing expensive everything else and his hope his significance his personality his identity are all found in what people think about him and how he's viewed and what he does why is the rich man in hell?

is it because he's rich? no Abraham was one of the richest people in the Bible he's talking to Abraham Abraham had money more money than you could count he's in hell because he turned away from God's word he turned away from God his actions and how he lived out his life pointed to a problem that was in his heart God gave him God gave us all these resources and he wants us to use these resources to love and care and reach out to the people who don't have those resources and the rich man didn't want to do that why is Lazarus laid out his door every day?

in Greek it says every day he's laid there why? because culturally everybody expected the rich man to take care of him it's the reason God gave him an abundance of everything not so that he can keep it for himself and spend it on himself and use it on himself like he did but it was so he could take care of people around him who couldn't take care of themselves that's why Lazarus is laid at his door every day that's why Lazarus is laid at our door every day I wonder what the rich man felt or thought when he saw Lazarus there every day and he walked over him I wonder what the excuses were that he used every day not to reach out to him you know if I help him who knows how many more people are going to come because you just help a beggar and more beggars come and if I help

Lazarus then just how many more people are going to come it's going to get overwhelming I'm not going to be able to control it I mean if I really don't have the time for this I'm so busy running from appointment to appointment in banquet in food I just don't have the time to focus on him what if he's cheating me what if he's really not sick won't I look foolish what if it's God's will for him to be starving that's it God's will for him to be starving if I help I'm going to mess up God's will I better not do it I'm going to walk on I wonder what excuses the rich man used every day as God continued to give him resources to reach out to the people and he hoarded them to himself we're told in verse 25 as Abraham talks to the rich man you've made your choices remember child that during your life you receive these things and now

Lazarus is the rich man's problem was his heart his heart was cold and hard to God it wasn't that he was wealthy the book of Romans says it like this that eventually God gives everybody their heart's desire whatever you desire eventually God will give that to you C.S. Lewis in his book again says that's what hell is sin is saying go away God I want to do this by myself I don't need you and hell is eventually God saying okay you can do whatever you want I'm not going to be around you anymore the rich man struggled with the resources that God gave him he didn't want God to be

[ 36 : 24 ] Lord or King or he didn't want to obey God and God said okay you don't have to some people would say that hell is your final choice that God gives you fully and truly my experience in life is that if I live with my eye on comfort if I live with my eye on comfort and wealth I tend to bend God's word and I don't obey what he wants me to do the other thing that I see in this passage is basically that your outward appearances are not very good indicators of our eternal reality your outward appearances are not good indicators of where you spend eternity the choices you make today determine your destiny and the last thing that sticks out to me and it sticks out to me and hits me in the head is basically this is that

Jesus is very concerned about our destinies he's so concerned I mean think about this Jesus is telling this story he's telling it to us and he's telling it to men who eventually within a week they're going to crucify him so he's basically telling this story as a warning as an early addition to men who are eventually going to kill him we're told that he's going to approach Jerusalem and when he sees this city he laughs at everybody in it who's going to go to hell no we're told that he weeps when he sees how lost people are without God he enters the city he weeps he's falsely accused he's beaten he's tortured he's mocked he's crucified we're told that the physical pain which is amazing and incredible if you ever study about being crucified it's terrible but we're told in scripture is that the physical pain is nothing compared to the spiritual pain he's on the cross my God my God why have you forsaken me he doesn't say the nails hurt really bad he doesn't say the crown makes me feel uncomfortable he says

God how come you've turned your back on me and as he does that he's looking at us and you can almost hear for Tobin for Susie for Andrew for Mike for Gary the passage says that Christ is totally forsaken by God he dies and many people believe that for three days he goes to hell so that you and I will never have to the question is do we accept that do we accept it we all have a destiny the choices we make today determine our destiny

Jesus is very very very concerned about our destiny so what does this tell us about Jesus love for us you know if hell isn't real then Jesus love and sacrifice on the cross it really doesn't mean that much does it I mean if we're all just going to get to heaven it's kind of stupid I mean his love if it doesn't involve a sacrifice all true love involves sacrifice just try to love your kids and love your wife and love your husband but if his love for us doesn't involve a sacrifice then it means nothing but if hell is real and the crucifixion is real then his sacrifice and his love is everything how does that affect us today as we walk out here do we choose to draw our identity from what people think of us and the amount of money in our bank account and how smart and clever we are and how good we are and how much we're into social status or do we draw our identity from him who died on the cross and sacrificed himself for us how does

God's love change our love for people around us do we understand in this parable that there's only two choices of the people that we are at and that God actually sees all of us as Lazarus a beggar broken needy helpless and that our only hope is him do we understand that or do we walk out of here after today and we see a Lazarus laying on the ground and he's kind of walk past him how does God's love for you today affect your love for those around you you look at this passage and you see that

[ 43 : 27 ] Jesus is incredibly generous he's incredibly sacrificial God gives everything for you does that make you more generous today does it make you more willing to serve now I know your husband is an idiot and he makes your life miserable but when you think of God's love for you and the sacrifice that Christ gave for you does it make you more willing to come towards him and love him like Christ loves you I know your boss is mean and he's terrible and he's just he needs to be in hell yeah sure he has a special place there but when you think of God's love for you does it change how you treat your boss and the people around you does Christ's sacrifice on the cross make us more generous with our finances or do we still feel like we need to cling to some things because maybe

God isn't my hope maybe my hope is HSBC or Apple or something like that how does it affect us this is the gospel this is the gospel message and the point of this passage is as we look at Christ we see everything he's done that it has to change us it has to affect us as we put our identity in him as we look for our significance in him as we realize that he took hell for us as we realize how incredible his love is for us it should change everything we do it should change how we walk into our school it should change how we walk into our work it should change how we walk into our place it should change how we engage people all around us it's allowing God's love and truth of the gospel to be lived out through our life and to change us through his Holy Spirit does it I mean really

I'm going to stop here we got a couple minutes I thought maybe I don't know I don't know as you look at the passage and this passage is about a lot more things we'll come back to later on but as you look at this passage you think about hell you think about things you have questions is there any question here that you would want to ask and you just stand up and yell it out and I'll repeat it Chris good that's that's that's that's like one of the hard questions right so what we would say as Christians sometimes you would say oh there's a special dispensation before Christ is born but ultimately the way we get to heaven is by faith in

God and his word before the only way I can understand this and this is a lot of greater theologians can explain it a lot better than I could that anybody pre-Christ like Abraham took God at his word they trusted God and basically because Christ hadn't come and sacrificed it'd be kind of like you going to a store on a sale and the item you want there is sold out but the person says hey if you come back next week we'll have that here let me give you this little chit right here this little disc you bring this back it's proof that you've been here and when you bring this back in you can turn this in and you get what you want and that's how we understand Old Testament believers and how they are saved it's still by faith it's still by faith in Christ it's still by faith in God's promises they just haven't seen God's promises realized like we did and do that's why when you think of the faith that Abraham had it's amazing us looking back and we see the crucifixion and we see all that God has done we say oh that makes a lot more sense but in

Abraham's day all people had was the Lord and to take him at his word to walk in faith so it's still by faith in God through Christ who was to come hopefully I answered that other questions yeah Becky right that's great so how do we know that Bible is what we talked about in one of our guerrilla sermons about the scripture and Bible and so what we're going to say as a church is that we're going to say that we believe that Jesus is who he says he is that Jesus is the son of God that you know you think about it if there if there is no hell the crucifixion means nothing right there's no punishment the crucifixion seems stupid but if if the crucifixion is real and Christ is real and true and he is God and we take him at his word then we would say that to our

[ 49 : 10 ] Muslim friends and to our Buddhist friends that we believe that Christ is God that our faith I had this discussion on the beach Tuesday night McPherson's and us went camping and the first thing we do is a pull up and there's a Hong Kong U student there who's just graduating he's Muslim he's kind of fake Muslim he's this kind of cultural Muslim from Sri Lanka and he's getting a job here and we start talking and I I don't know for some reason whenever I say he goes what do you do and I'm like I'm a pastor and he just starts talking about God and heaven and I didn't start talking about it he starts talking about it and and he said we know basically we're all the same like we're all just believing the same God we're all just believing the same truth we're all just believing the same destination and I'm like the first thing I said was dude you're not a Muslim because any true Muslim I know would never say that you're just worshiping a God that you've kind of constructed in your your head your God maybe it's you I mean that's that's one of the things when you come to the Bible in the passages don't bother you there might be something wrong maybe maybe your God is too small or you've kind of constructed him in a way that he not really is but we would say that we believe that Christ is

God and he sacrificed for us and that we take him at his word that he is the way the truth in the life and that he is the only way to do the father but there's not a there's not a back door like in the Hobbit where you get through the misty mountain with a little key there's not that type of thing it's Christ is the only way and if he's not the only way then if Christ isn't the only way guys don't come to church next week please don't you're wasting your time go camping have fun with your kids I mean if Jesus isn't if you're not going to take God at his word and if you don't believe that he is who he says he is that his sacrifice is real that atone for everything that you need that we're sinful we're broken you're wasting your time in church but if you're on a journey and you're like I don't know I want to understand help me understand I want to look at these things I want to examine scripture can you answer my questions we want you here but you need to know that we're going to say that Bible is

God's word and Jesus is the son of God and he died for you and he's the only way that you can get to be with a father and I apologize for crying this passage and when I think about lost people really bothers me it's one of the reasons I didn't go into medicine because I love medicine I love trauma medicine and I read this passage I thought you know this person's going to come I'm going to fix them up I did two years in a trauma unit I want to fix them up but eventually they're going to die what happens to him after that so these passages don't bother you then you don't understand grace you don't understand love you don't understand Christ's sacrifice any other questions one more question okay everyone has a destiny it's one of two places choices you make today are going to determine that destiny Jesus Christ really cares about your choices in your destiny and he sacrificed himself so that you wouldn't have to go to where the rich man went and be there separated another interesting thing is you know the rich man doesn't want his brothers to be there you notice that I mean it was all a party you want all your friends to come and hang out but he's like tell my brothers it's kind of like Dickens you know and the you know you know the Christmas carol go back and tell them because this is terrible I don't want them to be here

Abraham says you know you can't help your brothers you can help the people at watermark church today you can help the people in Hong Kong father we just thank you for this day we thank you for your goodness and mercy in our life we thank you for your words we thank you most of all for your son who brings us truth who brings us identity who brings us purpose who brings our lives meaning and true satisfaction who brings us to your throne where we worship you forever in heaven well I pray for those of us in here who've never heard these words before I pray that you would not allow the evil one to come in and steal those words from them but they would ponder these things they would ask questions what I pray for those in here who think hell is a joke and they're offended by me even saying things like that how primitive how unscientific how unmodern or I pray that you would open their eyes in the only way that you could that they would see that they are in slavery to their lifestyle that they are trying to justify themselves through their work through their money through their relationships through the stuff they have through their friendships through their families the same way that the rich man did and what I pray that you would show them that all of these things will ultimately fail them might not fail them here in this life they might have a couple million they can make it through but it's going to fail them five minutes after this life I pray that all of us would look to these words and see your son and how amazing he is and we would fall in love with him again and we allow the message of the gospel that Christ saves lost people to permeate everything that we do and who we are father help us to be a different church help us to be different as we focus on your love and your grace and your mercy for us may it really bother us when we're mean to people may it really bother us when we're unkind because you were none of those things to us you are none of those things to us so Lord we come before you as your people and we worship you we thank you we desperately we desperately need you may our name be forever God is our help in hope we pray these things your son Jesus holy name amen how you guys doing my hope is that you would think of the song and the words we are saying and question yourself where is your hope today our hope in our prayers it would be in

Christ in Christ alone that you would find your identity there realizing that that's the only thing that's not going to fail you in this world everything else is going to fail you not today or next week when you die Christ never fails you today tomorrow for eternity I don't know how to do announcements some people say I didn't hear this announcement I don't know these announcements what about this announcement we put the announcements in the bulletin we put them up on the screen we put them on the website in your bulletin there are four really important announcements we want you that they're basically the first four the first one is just tomorrow night at 7 o'clock we want all the men of watermark to come together to the community center there's gonna be food fellowship and we're just gonna talk about what does it mean to walk with the Lord as a man what does that look like for us as men in Hong Kong and just talk and pray about how we can encourage each other in that step on Wednesday the women's ministry is starting a book study I'm really really excited about this it's the book Tiger Mom and so it's

[ 58 : 14 ] I've listened to parts of it I think it's gonna be some very interesting to studies and discussions these these brochures out there in the back it starts at the community center on Wednesday morning grab a couple of these pass them out to your friends this is an opportunity for you to invest in those who aren't in church yet invite them into the community and enter into a discussion about what does it mean to be a tiger mom so that's Wednesday those are out there on Saturday there's an old testament class at the community center as we continue to do this part of equipping you as saints we're gonna start talking through the scripture and teaching you about how to read the Old Testament and what does that look like and how does that apply to our life so Chris and Alfie and I will be there and we'll we'll do that this Saturday and teach each other in that area and then next Sunday we have a new membership class so if you want to come and ask questions about what's it mean to be a part of watermark you'll be right after this service we want there'll be some food again it's all centers around food it seems like so there's always food so hang out for about 30 minutes after the church service is over so that means next week you'd be out of here by one if you were doing it today so next Sunday we'll do the new member class also we've been talking about taking Israel trip with people of watermark we have about a week left for signups the brochures are back there we probably will not do this trip again for about four years

Christine I've been doing it for about every other year and we just feel like oh wow it's and so we feel like this probably our last trip for about four years so if you have any questions you can talk to us we have about one more week of signup we have about five more places left so we would love for you this is a money-back guarantee if you hate it I'll give you your money back you're going with my mentor you're going to an amazing place and you're going to be at the places where Jesus spoke and taught and talked about all of these things so there's a brochure here out on the table please grab one or ask Christine and I questions and then finally we made these Lent devotions available for you guys they're for free just grab one one per adult they're out back Lent is these 40 days moving towards Easter and so we want to encourage you there's in English and in Mandarin so grab those on the way out and I think that I have exhausted all my announcements let me pray for us and thank you for your patience and yeah I think that before you go to bed tonight just encourage you to read this passage whenever Jesus taught he taught very specifically he didn't just say there were two people just for no reason or there were three people for no reason but what he meant for his listeners in his time in for you and I is always ask the question which one of these people am I really I mean who where really is my hope and you can tell where that is because if that thing gets taken away you get angry if that thing gets taken away you get depressed nothing gets blocked you get mad the Bible calls those things idols our prayer is that as you walk out these door and this week you would ask the Lord to search your heart and to show you where your idols are and what your hope is in if it's anything but Christ there's a real easy remedy for that the Bible just says you come before the Lord say God I'm so sorry I repent of my selfishness my sin will you please forgive me will you please change my heart help me to love your son I need you amen and that's all it takes scripture says and your sins are as far as the east is from the west it's why Christ came to die for us father we thank you for this day I thank you for my brothers and sisters and their patience but father I think mostly just for their journeys that they're on pray for their hearts I pray that every one of us in here would have tender hearts but I pray for our hearts that every one of us in here would have generous hearts but I pray for our hearts that every one of us in here would have hearts that are fully in love and focused on you may

Hong Kong be different because of our gathering today as we walk out of here may this western side of the island see your mercy and grace through our hands and our actions and our lives lived out in our neighborhood in the nursing homes in the university in our work wherever you have us and Lord we just come before you and we just thank you for your son who always comes right when we need him who's the hero of your story who's the hero of our story we pray these things your son Jesus name amen God bless you get some food and drinks on the way out and we'll see you next Sunday here you you