

JESUS ON HEAVEN AND HELL

Luke 16:19-26 IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS!

This is my last message in this series on **vision**. Today's **VISION** is the most **important** one of all! Today you **MUST** catch a **VISION** of Heaven and Hell! **Why?** Because your **ETERNITY** lies in the balance!

Many Americans do **not** believe in **God**. Others **SAY** they believe but have no **room** for God in their **lives**. Many say the **Bible** has errors; or Jesus was only a good man; or there is no **Hell**. Many professing "**believers**" only attend church when it's convenient, on Holidays, or when there's nothing **else** to do. I've heard them called "Chreasters" (C&E Xians). It's all a **trend** in our **post** Christian increasingly **godless** society.

Presidential candidate Cory Booker recently **mocked** Christianity, saying "thoughts and prayers" for people after violence is (bad word DELETED). It **saddens** me and breaks my heart that entertainers, athletes, and politicians make **light** of **God** and **Christianity**. They have no **idea** how **Glorious Heaven** will be or how **Gory Hell** will be! As **believers** we are at **war**, fighting for the **soul** of our nation, and I've got **news** for you today. America's **hope** lies **NOT** in **politics**; it lies in **JESUS**. The **ANSWER** for America's **future** can be found in **JESUS CHRIST** and no one else!

Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus can help us better understand our options for eternity.

1. FIRST, LET'S UNPACK THE PARABLE.

Many people try to make their **beliefs** about God fit their **lifestyle**. Our "gotta feel good" society has created a new syndrome. I've named this weird new "**syndrome**" the "**needy infant world view**." Let me explain. When an **infant** is born they think the **entire** world revolves around **them**. Everyone within **earshot** is **expected** to **attend** to this **baby** who is **totally** dependent on others. **Baby** is the **center** of the universe and the whole **world** revolves around **them** and their **needs, wants, and desires**. As long you **cater** to them, "**It's all good!**" If you **refuse**, that **small** human will do **everything** in their limited power to completely **destroy** your life, or at least **destroy** your **mental** and **emotional** well-being! And frankly, in a **baby's** world, that's how we **expect** it to be. But here's the **RUB**. We expect **adults** to meet their **own** needs and not **depend** on others. The **problem** is our world is **full** of **people** who **still** believe **they** are the **center** of the universe, and the entire **world** revolves around **their** wants, needs, and desires. They believe **they** have the **right** and the **power** to make the **rules** for **everyone** else, including **God**! Their "**needy infant world view**," makes them believe God **HAS** to **love** them and **give** them **everything** they want, **including** **eternity** in Heaven.

This parable proves them **dead** wrong. God's **Word** is Truth. **Absolute** Truth, without any mixture of error. God's **truth** can be very **comforting** and **uplifting**; but it can **also** be very **scary** and **painful**.

Jesus uses the **parable** of the **rich** man and **Lazarus** to give us a **brief VISION** into **Heaven** and **Hell**. As **image** bearers of **God** we have **two** parts; a **physical** body and a **spiritual** soul. Because of original **sin** we **all die** physically. Our **body** goes into the ground but our spiritual **soul** continues to live **beyond** death. The modern concept of "Soul sleep" is **not** biblical! Scripture says for the believer, "to be **absent** from the **body** is to be **present** with the **Lord**." (2 **Corinthians 5:8**). We die **physically** but we continue to live **spiritually**. When **Jesus** teaches about heaven and hell, he **speaks** as **God**; he **teaches** as the **only** one who has **conquered** death and **risen** from the dead. Jesus **alone** can give us a **VISION** of what **awaits** us on the other side.

In **Luke 16:19–31** Jesus tells a **parable**, a story. It's the story of the **life, death, and eternity** of **two** men. **This** parable is very **unusual** because the **people** in Jesus' parables are **usually** not **named**. **This** story is about a **man** named **Lazarus**. He was **crippled** and his body was **covered** with open **sores**. His life is pictured as **bleak, stark, and impoverished**. But he **believed** in God. The **religious** leaders of his day **believed** if **you** loved **God** and **God** loved **you**, you would be **blessed** with **health** and **wealth**. **Lazarus** was neither healthy **nor** wealthy, so he **must** be **curled** by God. Their **MISTAKE**? They suffered from "**needy infant world view**."

Lazarus would **lay** outside the estate of a **rich** man. The **rich** man was **healthy**, ate gourmet **meals**, and lived in **luxury**. He wore very expensive **purple** linen clothing. When I studied in Israel in 1985, I learned that

people living around Tyre made purple dye by crushing up **murex mollusks**. It took 10,000 shellfish to make a single **gram** of dye! It was a lengthy, complicated, difficult process. So **purple** became the color of **wealth** and **royalty**. If you wore **purple**, you were considered **wealthy** and **blessed** by God.

Why did Lazarus lay outside this **rich** man's **gate**? Because he was **starving** to **death**! He hoped the rich man's **servants** would have some leftover **scraps** from his **feasting**, and would **bring** them out to **him** instead of **feeding** them to the **dogs**. Can you **see** it? The rich man's **Dogs** ate better than **Lazarus**! Every time the rich man left his home he walked right past poor crippled Lazarus, perhaps even stepping **over** the beggar in disgust and displeasure.

Here's a word of **encouragement**. In the nearly 17 years we've been at HBC, you have ministered **well** to the poor and less fortunate. I know **many** of you sacrifice from your **personal** resources to help others. Our men's group uses our benevolent funds **well**. Our Renew Krew keeps vehicles **running** so single parents can keep **working**. They've kept folks from **choosing** between medicine, groceries or transportation. You've also shared your wealth with the **poor worldwide** through **missions**. I commend you for your **generosity**.

Now let's throw some **grease** on the fire. **Both** men died. But here's the **difference**. **Lazarus** was dumped in a **peasant's** grave. **No** funeral, **no** grave marker, **no** mourners. He was **ignored** and **abandoned**. **However**, when Lazarus' crippled, sore-covered, starved **body** went into the **ground**, his **believing**, healthy **soul** went to **Heaven** to be with the Lord. His **body** is in the **ground**. His **soul** is in **Heaven**. He's at the **bosom** of Abraham. **No** longer sick and **suffering**, he's **healthy**. **No** longer **hungry**, he's **full**. **No** longer **cursed**, he's **blessed**. **No** longer **hated**, he's **loved**. **No** longer **sad**, he's **happy**. **No** longer a beggar, He's a child of the King!

The **rich** man died **thinking** he was **chosen**, **blessed**, and **avored** by God **because** he was **healthy** and **wealthy**. When **he** died, there was a **large** funeral with **lots** of paid mourners. He had an auspicious grave site and a large headstone. His **OBIT** was in all the **papers**. "He is **surely** in the presence of God," they read. In **reality**, the **rich** man died and went to **hell** where he **cries** out in **anguish**. He's **tortured** and **tormented**. Last week I saw a **minivan** beside the road on James River Freeway. It was burned up and looked **horrific**! The **windows** had all blown out; the **paint** was burned off; the **tires** were melted and the **interior** was burned to a crisp. I prayed, "O, Lord, I **pray** no one was caught in that **awful** fire." But **Hell** is **worse**! **Hell** is like sitting in the front seat of that van while it **burns** non-stop, and you don't **die**, you just continue to **suffer** the **torture** and **torment** of those **flames** forever! Jesus is describing **hell** in the **gentlest** terms **possible**. "Needy infant world view" people say, "The **God** of the Bible is **loving** and **kind**. **Hell** is **not** loving or kind, **therefore** God would **never** send **anyone** there." That's **partly** true. God doesn't **SEND** anyone to Hell! But He **ALLOWS** you to **ENJOY** Heaven or **SUFFER** Hell based on **YOUR** personal **choice**. **Jesus** told this story **Himself**. And **Jesus IS** God! The **tormented** rich man in **Hell** sees Lazarus in **Heaven** with Abraham. **Heaven** and **Hell** are **REAL**!

Family, "**death** is the **fate** of **every** man and woman on earth." **Nobody** gets out of this life **alive**! Death comes to every **one** of us, and we will **spend** **ETERNITY** in **Heaven** or **hell**. Those are the **options**. Those are the **ONLY** options. My job is to tell you the **Truth**. **Your** job is to take that **Truth** and make a **decision** about your **eternity**.

Even in Hell, we see the rich man's "needy infant world view." He has the "**Hoodspa**" to ask God for a **gift**. "The **rich** man **SHOUTED**, 'Father Abraham, **have** some **PITY**! Send Lazarus over here to **dip** the **tip** of his **finger** in water and **cool** my tongue. I am in **anguish** in these **flames**."

Have **you** ever been **thirsty**? I mean **REALLY** thirsty? I can remember **numerous** times I was **so** thirsty my **tongue** literally **stuck** to the roof of my mouth and I had to **pry** it loose with my **finger**! I'll never forget my **last** day in **Airborne** School at Ft. Benning GA. That morning the entire Battalion gathered for a unit run that was **supposed** to be 5 miles at 8 minutes per mile. **Timekeepers** were posted every mile along the route. The **Commandant** was so **inspired** that day, we ran 7 miles in 48:50! It was the **only** time in my **life** I ran that **far** that **fast**. But **anyone** who dropped out of **THIS** run did **NOT** graduate Airborne School even after four weeks training! I **made** it, but my body **completely** dehydrated. When the unit formed up for dismissal, I was **dizzy**, **disoriented**, and was **about** to pass out. I reached out and **grabbed** the **belt** of the soldier in front of me to **steady** myself, and a **DOGGONE** Drill SGT was standing at the end of the row **right** behind me. He **grabbed** my arm and said "Chaplain, **fall** out!" I thought I was **D-U-N Done**! In slurred speech I said "Good to go DSGT!" **Luckily**, DSGT's are trained in first **aid** and he knew the signs, so he took me to the **water** table to

hydrate, telling me to drink at **least a quart. NO PROBLEM!** But - **what if** that DSGT had said, “C’mon Chaplain. You’re totally **dehydrated**, so I’m going to **dip my finger** in the water bucket and **touch** your tongue! That’ll **fix** you right up!” **WAIT! WHAT?!** How much good would **THAT** do? **BUPKUS! NADA! WELL**, imagine the **TORTUROUS, INSANE DESPERATION** that caused this man to **believe** a damp **finger** would bring him **significant relief!** The crowd **understood** life in the **desert**, and they **understood** **extreme THIRST**. Jesus was explaining **Hell** as **gently** as He **could**, but these people **KNEW** the **significance** of His **words!** **HELL** is a **HORRIBLE, TORTUROUS, REAL** place!

Abraham tells the **desperate** man “This **chasm** is an eternal **separation** between you and us and there is **no** exception.” **Safe** in **heaven** or **stuck** in **hell**. Your **eternal** destiny is **sealed forever** the **instant** you die. Your **only** opportunity to **come** to Jesus and **experience** Heaven is during **this** life. There are no **DO-OVERS!** No more **second** chances! No **MERCY!** You **justly** receive the **eternity** you **CHOOSE** before you **die**.

2. IT’S IMPERATIVE TO UNDERSTAND DEATH AND ETERNITY.

LISTEN: You’re gonna die. **I’m** gonna die. **He’s** gonna die. **She’s** gonna die. “**All** God’s children gonna die!” **Many** people ask “what **then?** What’s **waiting** on the **other** side? **What happens when we die?!”**

I don’t **presume** to know **all** the answers about **Heaven** or **Hell**. I’ve never been to **either** place. But I take my **ministry** very **seriously**. Because I **love** you, I **want** you to know God’s **Word**. I **want** you to be **sure** you’ve made the appropriate **decision** about your **eternity**. As a pastor I’ve been at the bedside of people who were dying. People who **knew** Jesus and people who **didn’t**. Once you take your **last** breath in **this** life, your very **next** breath will be in **Heaven** or **Hell**, and **that’s** where you will spend **eternity!** If you don’t have a personal, life **changing** relationship with Jesus Christ, **don’t** put it off. I **told** you about that truck that nearly **hit** me a couple weeks ago. In 1.5 seconds I could have been **dead**, and if I **hadn’t** known Jesus, I would be in **HELL** right now! Just that **quick** it would have been too **late!** You say, “That’s not **fair**, preacher.” **SURE IT IS!** Every time the Holy Spirit **pricks** your **heart** and **asks** you to **repent** and come to **Jesus** and you **don’t** say **YES** – you’ve said **NO!** We **ALL DESERVE** Hell! **Heaven** is a **gift** from Jesus! I **KNOW** I will spend **eternity** in **Heaven** because I’ve **accepted** His gift! Do you **KNOW** where you will spend your **eternity?**

When it comes to life, death, and **eternity**, I **trust** the **Word** of God and the **Words** of Jesus. **However**, not **everyone** believes the way **I** do. There are **other** views out there. Here’s what some of those **unredeemed** “**needy infant world view**” folks believe about **eternity**. **LOOK AT ME:** These are **ALL LIES** straight from the pit of **HELL!** They are **NOT** scriptural; **none** are **TRUE!** But the **unredeemed** believe the **lies** of Satan!

A. The **naturalists** believe you don’t **have** a soul. You’re just a **body** and when you die, you **cease** to exist.

B. The **universalist’s** teach that **everyone** goes to heaven. **Hell** will **only** contain Satan and his demons. They say **all** religions lead to Heaven. That’s **SUPREME MOOSE NUGGETS**. In **John 14:6** Jesus says “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. **No** one comes to the Father **except through** me.” **Acts 4:12** says “Only **JESUS** has the **power** to save! **His** name is the **only** one in **all** the **world** that can **save anyone.**” (CEV).

C. The **reincarnationist’s** say we have **multiple**, successive lives. You will die and return, die and return, and die and return because you have to **pay off** your karmic **debt** to the gods of the universe. **Utter Stupidity!**

D. The **Annihilationist’s** say **eternal suffering** is **incomprehensible**. Therefore, **wicked** people are simply **destroyed** at death and cease to exist.

E. The **Catholics** believe sinners go to **purgatory** to **suffer** while they **somehow** finish their **works** of salvation so they can eventually go to heaven. That **doctrine** is **NOT** found in scripture.

So let’s get to the Hog Killin.’ **What** does the **Bible** say? What are the **words** of **Jesus?** What’s in the **BOOK?**

WATCH THIS: Jesus tells us more about **hell** than anyone else in the **entire** Bible. Jesus speaks of hell **13 percent** of the time in His teachings. Roughly **half** of Jesus’ **parables** are related to punishment, hell, and judgment. I’ve heard people say “**Jesus** is so **loving** and **kind** He **can’t** believe in **hell.**” **BELOVED** – Jesus **not only** believes in hell, He **clearly, emphatically** and **repeatedly** teaches about it, **meaning** - our **sin** is more **horrible**, more **terrible**, more **repugnant** to God than **we** could ever **fathom!** Jesus **died** on the Cross of Calvary so **YOU** could go to **Heaven** **instead** of **Hell!** Jesus desperately wants **YOU** to spend **eternity** with **Him!** Jesus’ teachings about **HELL** are **intended** to **convince** you to **CHOOSE** Heaven! **SO,**

3. CHOOSE YOUR ETERNITY WISELY.

Why don't we **RUN** to **Jesus**? I guess there are as many **excuses** as there are people. So let me break this **down** for you. If you **don't** open your **heart** to Jesus for **redemption**, you will spend **eternity tortured and tormented** in the **never ending flames of Hell**. If you **give** your **heart** to **Jesus** and make Him **Lord** of your life, you will spend **eternity blessed** in the **Glorious** presence of **God** the Father and His beloved **Son** Jesus Christ. The **point** is this: **when you die**, your **soul** will spend **eternity** in one of **two** places. You spend **eternity basking** in the **Glory of Heaven** if you're **born** again and **committed** to following Jesus. You spend eternity **separated** from God, **suffering** in the **Gory** flames of **Hell** if you do **NOT** turn from your **sin** and **trust** Jesus.

NOW WATCH THIS: the **wrath** of **God** is in the Bible **more than six hundred** times. God's **WRATH** is His divine **punishment** for **sin**, because God is **holy**. He will not **look** on the **face** of **sin**. If you do **not** repent, you **DESERVE** God's **wrath**. But here's the **GOOD NEWS!** God **loves you** so he sent **Jesus** as the **substitute** for your **sin**. **Jesus** went to the **cross** in **your** place. **Jesus** died **your** death, to pay for **your** sins. That means if **you** do **not trust** in Jesus; if you do **not repent** and **come** to Him by **faith**; if you do **not believe** in and **belong** to **Jesus**; you **DESERVE** God's **WRATH**, which **culminates** in conscious, **eternal torture, anguish, and torment** in the never ending **flames of hell**, which Jesus says **Himself**.

Most scholars **believe** this parable was about **actual** men, since **Lazarus** is named. Which **means** - for the **rich** man, **this** life was as **close** as he **ever** got to **Heaven**, and he's **still** in **hell today!** For **Lazarus**, this life was as **close** as he **ever** got to **hell** and he is **still** in **Heaven** today.

I will **always** tell you the **Truth** from God's Word, **even** when it's **hard**; **even** when it **hurts**. That's what God **called** me to do. I will **ALSO** be sure you **know** what God wants you to **do** with His **word** each time you **hear** it proclaimed. How **God** wants you to **apply** His **Word** to your life **TODAY**. I've often said "The **main** thing is to keep the **main** thing the **main** thing." So **what's** the **main** thing **today**?

In **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** Paul emphatically says "I'm passing on to **you THE MOST IMPORTANT THING!**" **Danny's WOW Epistle** says "**Here's** the **MAIN** thing!" "Christ **died** for our sins, just as the scriptures said. He was **buried**, and He was **raised** from the dead on the third day, just as the scriptures said." **John 3:16** "For God loved the world **so** much that He gave His one and only Son, so that **EVERYONE** who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." **John 3:18** "There is **NO** judgment against **anyone** who believes in Him. But anyone who does **NOT** believe in Him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only **Son**." **John 3:35-6** "The Father loves His Son and has put everything into His hands. And anyone who believes in God's **Son** has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't **OBEY** the **Son** will **NEVER** experience eternal life but remains under God's angry **judgment** (or wrath)." **1 John 5:11-13** "And this is what God has testified; He has **given** us eternal life, and this **life** is in His **Son**. Whoever **has** the **Son** has **life**; whoever does **NOT** have God's **Son** does **not** have life. I have **written** this to **you** who **believe** in the name of the **Son** of God, so that you may **KNOW** [that you **KNOW** that you **KNOW** that you **KNOW**] you **HAVE** eternal life."

WATCH THIS NOW: God **WANTS** you to spend **eternity** in Heaven with **Him!** **Jesus** wants **YOU** to spend eternity in Heaven with **Him!** And I want **YOU** to spend **ETERNITY** in Heaven with **ME** and **Jesus!**

LISTEN TO ME: **Heaven** and **hell** are **not** the **ULTIMATE** issue today. The **DECISIONS** you make about your **relationship** with **JESUS CHRIST** right **now** are the **ULTIMATE** issue! **Heaven** or **hell** will be the **END RESULT** of those **DECISIONS!**

Bottom Line – **VISION MUST** include an **understanding** of **Heaven** and **Hell**. Without **that**, our **MISSION** has no **purpose** beyond the **present**. So in a **nutshell**; The **BAD NEWS** is this: **you** are a **sinner**, destined to spend eternity **separated** from God, **tormented** in the eternal **flames of Hell!** The **GOOD NEWS** is this; God **loves you** so much He sent His Son **Jesus** to **redeem** you from your **sin** by making the **sacrifice** you could **not** make for yourself. **BLUE** - If you **repent** of your **sin** right now, **turn** to God by **faith, believe** and **trust** in Jesus, you **will have** eternal life. **Unless** you place your **trust** in **Jesus** and **follow** Him, you will **NEVER** experience **eternal** life. I **can't** make the **truth** any **plainer** than **that** today.

QUESTION? Will you **leave** here today **KNOWING** that you **KNOW** that you **KNOW** that you **KNOW** Jesus Christ as your personal **redeemer**? If that truck hits you head on and you **die** today, are you absolutely **certain** you will spend **eternity** in Heaven with God? Are you **obeying** and **following** Jesus and His **Word**? If not, let's **fix** whatever needs **fixing** today.

Heaven or Hell! Where will **you** spend **your** eternity? I'm spending **mine** in **Heaven** with **Jesus!** If there is even a **smidgeon** of doubt in your **heart** today, come **talk** with me and let's **settle** the issue **once** and for **all**. **HEAVEN** or **HELL!** **Which** will it be? Make your **choice** right now!