

Dead Man Talking

Luke 16:19-31

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Jul 31, 2016

1. Hell is real.

We live in a day and age where, even within supposedly “evangelical” circles, people are embarrassed by, apologize for, downplay or outright deny the reality of hell. Jesus *never* did that.

- A. The most detailed descriptions of hell appear in the four Gospels, and they all come from Jesus.

Matt. 25:41,46 ⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels... ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment...’

Mark 9:48 ⁴⁸ ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’

2. Hell is a place of eternal, conscious punishment with no means of escape.

The most vivid description of what hell entails is found in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

- A. Hell is a place of *conscious torment*.

Luke 16:23 ²³ and in Hades, **being in torment, he lifted up his eyes...**

- B. Hell is a place of *fire & anguish*.

Luke 16:24 ²⁴ ...for I am in **anguish in this flame.**

- C. Hell is a place where there is *no relief whatsoever*.

Luke 16:25 ²⁵ ...but now he is comforted here, **and you are in anguish.**

D. Hell is a place ***eternally separated from heaven***. You can't get there from here.

Luke 16:26

²⁶ And besides all this, **between us and you a great chasm has been fixed**, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, **and none may cross from there to us.**'

Rev. 14:10,11

¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night..."

"In this sobering story, Jesus illustrates what it is like to be in hell. The parable makes it clear that it is an agonizing existence, full of regret, anguish, and relentless, burning torment—with full consciousness and without hope, forever and ever. There is no possibility of escape and no rest. Not one fingertip's drop of relief will ever ease the suffering or diminish the pain of a soul eternally tormented in hell. It is a horrific, heartbreaking picture of absolute damnation."

MacArthur, John. "A Lesson About Heaven And Hell." *Parables: The Mysteries of God's Kingdom Revealed through the Stories Jesus Told*. N.p.: Nelson, 2015. 167. Print.

What about *you*? How do you personally respond to teaching about hell? Does it frighten you? Does it offend you? Do you find it draws you closer to Christ or pushes you away? Why?

3. Hell will be full of people who never expected to be there.

Luke 16:22,23

²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

Jesus' hearers would've been astonished that the rich man, who appeared to have it altogether, is the one who ends up in hell. Just as astonishing is the poor man, who appeared to be under the judgment of God, receives eternal life!

Matt. 7:13

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

4. **Heaven will not be full of people who have been “convinced” by a sign or miracle.**

Luke 16:31

³¹ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’ ”

Remember—when Jesus raised the real Lazarus from the dead, there were still people who didn’t believe and plotted to kill Christ!

John 11:53

⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

5. **Remember—the greatest tool for reaching an unbeliever isn’t a miracle, a sign, or some new ministry philosophy. It’s you – “living out loud” – proclaiming and obeying the Word of God in your everyday life!**

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

1 Cor. 2:1-5

¹ And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

What about you? Do you doubt the sufficiency of the Scripture to draw someone to faith? What has been your experience? What role has the Word of God played in your own journey to faith? What can you try that might spark an interest in the Bible for an unbeliever you know?