**Special Presentation**

Luke 16

Michael Rush

July 12, 2024

**Michael:** All right. Good to see everybody; it’s such a nice day here. Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, we’re thankful today, Lord. We thank You first of all for who You are, Lord. We thank You for bringing us all out this morning, Lord, that we might hear and discuss and talk of Your word. Lord, Your word is truth, and we’re thankful for that, Lord. In a world that is filled with lies and under the relative dominion of the prince of the power of the air, Lord, we thank You for Your truth. Lord, we thank You for brothers who are interested in hearing truth. Lord, we know this is a sign of Your grace. Lord, now we ask that Your word would go forth this morning, Lord, that it might be edifying to the men here and that it might be glorifying to You, Lord, and ultimately, Lord, that we might be able to use it as we go from this place this morning.

Lord, we lift up Don. We pray that his headache and things like that are just the result of him partying too hard last night. And if not, Lord, we ask that You would just touch him and heal him, Lord. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Michael:** Amen. All right. So as we get into this I have chosen to go through a very well-known passage in the Bible: the rich man and Lazarus in chapter 16 of Luke, verses 19-31. Many of you know it. Many of you may have read it. You kind of know it peripherally; some of you may know it well. What I would like to do though is to go through the whole 16th chapter, so I’m going to ask for some readers. Could I ask someone to start at 16 verse 1 and read 1-9? Somebody else can read 10-18. Could somebody do that for me?

**Don Rimbey:** I’ll start, Mike.

**Michael:** All right. Thank you, Don.

**Don:** Luke 16: *“Jesus told the disciples: ‘There was a rich man whose manager was accused of lazy business ethics. So he called him in and asked him, “What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management because you cannot be manager any longer.”*

*“The manager said to himself, “What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do so that when I lose my job the people will welcome me into their houses.”*

*“’So he called each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, “How much do you owe my master?”*

*“’”Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,” he replied. And the manager told him, “Sit down here and make it four hundred.”*

*“’Then he asked the second, “How much do you owe?”*

*“’A thousand bushels of wheat,” he replied. He told him, “Take your bill and make it eight hundred.”*

*“’The master commended the dishonest manager because he acted shrewdly. The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use your worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.*

***John Gratner:*** *“’ He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much, and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. And if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?*

*“’No servant can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.’*

*“Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one letter of the law to fail. Everybody who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced commits adultery.’”*

**Michael:** Thank you. *“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and he feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores. He desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover even the dogs came and licked his sores.*

*“The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame!’*

*“But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things. But now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’*

*“And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house. For I have brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’*

*“And he said, ‘No, father Abraham! But if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ And 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.’”* May God bless the hearing of His holy word.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Michael:** So here we went from verse 1 to what I just read. Does anybody have any thoughts about what some of the common themes were about what we just read, some commonalities here?

**Ted Wood:** Eternal reward and punishment.

**Michael:** Okay, eternal reward and punishment. All right.

**John:** He’s showing us in each of these passages that we should read what it says and think about it.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**John:** I don’t know what a lot of these things mean.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**John:** What does it mean that *“the Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it?”*

**Michael:** Interesting.

**John:** I was going to say, why does God include divorce in there?

**Michael:** Yeah. That’s something I thought about too. Why does He have divorce in there? Right. One of the things we can see is that He seems to be dealing with the use of money and the love of money, maybe putting money in the wrong place, and also using it in a proper way: maybe to help those who are less fortunate; that could be there as well. There are several themes, but there seems to be a commonality.

Now the section that I’m going over is talked about sometimes as a parable, and some believe it’s not a parable. And some believe that it’s not a parable because it’s the only story of its kind where a name is used: the name Lazarus. That’s not common in Jesus’ parables; normally there is no name. There are several different opinions on that; it doesn’t really matter what side of the fence you fall on. Let’s try to get something out of it that isn’t changing the story.

So let’s start with the first verse. I’m going to try to make this interactive so you guys don’t start to glaze over. *(Laughter)* *“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, who feasted sumptuously every day.”* Why would He talk about him being clothed in purple and fine linen?

You know, they say that one of the neat things about God’s word is that all of us sometimes have a tendency to read God’s word and just go through it to pick out little parts we like. But there is very little in God’s word that is just there and it’s just a filler. The conjunctions and the connecting words oftentimes have a lot of meaning. Sometimes not, but oftentimes they do. So there’s a reason why it talks about him being clothed in purple and fine linen. Does anybody have any idea of why that is?

**Don Nemit:** It’s probably like a city council man or a mayor who was held in high esteem. Purple was a symbol of his position.

**Michael:** Purple was a symbol of his position. What did purple represent?

**Don:** Purple was almost like royalty; it was so expensive.

**Michael:** Yeah. So purple linen was from a dye that was very expensive. And only those who had money or had the resources to afford things that used this dye could get it. And so if he had that it was a symbol, as Don said, of your wealth. And of course, much like today, it could probably be a status symbol, like people who have Jaguars and stuff like that, or Porsches. Sorry, Dave. *(Laughter)* He’s looking down at the ground. Anyway, it’s like people who play football on Sundays.

**David Miller:** Actually it indicates that the man had pride because he wanted to show himself as really wealthy.

**Michael:** Right.

**David:** He was trying to get special attention.

**Michael:** Okay. So there’s a lot here that begins to get hashed out. So it says that *“he feasted sumptuously every day.”* And then it gives us a contrast to another figure in this passage that He talks about: Lazarus. And it says that at his gate was laid a poor man, Lazarus, covered with sores. *“And he desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table.”* So this is a passage about contrast; it has a lot of contrast: the rich man in in linen and purple who is feasting sumptuously. And right at his gate you have one who is laid there, who just wants something that falls off his table.

There are a couple things here. When you study what this gate is that they’re talking about, what it means in the translation, is not the little white picket fence that you might see on gates in your neighborhood. This is a big deal; do you know what I mean? This is a big edifice that would be on a palace, or something like that.

Secondly, it says that the man was laid at his gate. He wasn’t just standing there and shoveling; he wasn’t even sitting with a cup. But he was laid and he had sores. We tend to speak of the fact that he was sick. He was ill; he was in distress. And it emphasizes this and talks about the fact that he had these sores, and that even the dogs would lick his sores.

Now these aren’t dogs like Rin-Tin-Tin and Lassie. These were wild dogs. They didn’t have dogs for pets back in those days. They had guard dogs; they may have been this guy’s guard dogs. They could have been wild dogs. But whatever the case, the speculation here is that while this man who was rich paid no kind of attention to this beggar, at least the dogs in some weird way paid attention to him in some way, shape or form.

That’s one of these speculations. You know, I just wanted to share something really quick; I thought about it this morning. When I was preparing for this, you know that when you prepare you have all kinds of notes and stuff, and you try to figure it out. And you look at the time, and you know that time goes quickly, so you have all these notes.

And I was remembering that I had a friend. (This is kind of off topic, but I just thought I’d share it.) I had a friend years ago whose father passed away. And my friend had a kind of contentious relationship with his sister. I didn’t know his sister, but he told me about her. And so his dad died and his sister comes to town. And his sister was apparently a little nervous about speaking in front of people. But she had prepared something that she wanted him to read.

And he tells me about this. He said, “My sister has to write this thing for my dad and she wants me to read it.” And so I’m at the funeral service. Mike’s up there and he’s talking about his dad. He’s really emotional; huis eyes are beginning to water, and this and that.

He has his paper from his sister. And right in the middle of his talk he says, “My sister wrote this paper for me to read, but I’m not going to read it.” *(Laughter)* It was the funniest thing. And if I wasn’t at his dad’s home going service, I would have broken down in laughter. We had a lot of fun that night.

That’s kind of how it went this week. But you know what? I think there is so much in this passage that we can just go through one Scripture at a time and gain some things out of it that can be beneficial, with things that maybe we can think of as well. So we’ll move on.

**John:** Before you move on,--

**Michael:** Yes?

**John:** Jesus chooses to tell this story and names the person at the gate.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**John:** He doesn’t name the rich man.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**John:** So I guess he is put into another category of people. And then He does name Lazarus. What does the name Lazarus mean?

**Michael:** God is my help.

**John:** Yes. And maybe in that sense he’s also put into another category of people if you will in this comparison. This man seems to be expressing the Beatitudes.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**John:** Lazarus is in fact helped by God; he’s looking to God for his help. He describes someone who is poor in spirit. Poor, not rich in spirit, in the sense that he knows that it’s not coming from himself, in contrast to the rich man who is providing for himself.

**Michael:** Amen. I guess I’m around John too much; he’s kind of stealing my thunder here. But John brings up a good point, because you may have heard certain times that the rich man was named Dives. That’s not really his name; that’s just a word that means “rich man,” it’s translated as “rich man.” So it’s not really his name.

And isn’t it interesting that this man of means, this man of possible notoriety, as you said, now he’s referred to as “that rich guy.” And where is this beggar who had no means and no notoriety? He is given the name of Lazarus. You’ve seen this name throughout Scripture at certain points: Eleazar, which is “God is my help,” right? So this speaks to a principle of God, and it refers to each and every one of us, right? As John said, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”* And each of us who believe on the name of the Lord by His grace and by His Spirit have realized at some point that we need the help of the Lord, amen?

**Don Nemit:** Amen.

**Michael:** The challenge is to stay in that posture throughout our lives, because as the first line of Genesis 3 says: “The serpent was more cunning or crafty than the other creatures in the garden.” He is able to deceive us at times when we may have some position or more than two pennies to rub together, that we are okay and don’t quite need the help that we used to. And how many know that *“our help is in the name of the LORD?”* Amen?

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Michael:** So we move on.

**David:** One more follow-up.

**Michael:** Yes.

**David:** We in this country are on the wealthy side.

**Michael:** Yeah.

**David:** And we have to remember that we have an opportunity to share God’s blessings that He’s given to us with those who are less fortunate.

**Michael:** Absolutely. You know, there was a time in history where the understanding would have been that people like the rich man were blessed of God, and that people like Lazarus were cursed of God, right? And we might say, “How in the world could they come up with that?”

A lot of people are like that today. You can have theological knowledge that that’s not the case, right? But we all sometimes drift into that mindset, right? Wow, the Lord has really blessed him! But the fact is that he’s so far from God that he is under God’s curse. So let’s move on.

It says, *“He desired to be fed from what fell from the man’s table. Moreover even the dogs came and licked his sores.”* When we go to another part here it says that *“the poor man died.”* The beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom.

So what’s the significance of that? Let’s see. First of all he died, and he was escorted by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. So we kind of know where he’s at based on what we know about who Abraham was. And the significance of this picture Scripturally, when he talks about being at Abraham’s side at his bosom, was written down by the Spirit at that time. And that picture is just like John being next to Jesus at the Last Supper. It was the place of honor at the feast, right? So this is a picture at the beginning of the place where Lazarus ends up. Though in this life he had bad things, now he’s in the place of honor.

But the other guy, the rich man—Yes?

**David:** Remember the movies where we had super heroes?

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**David:** Well angels are better than super heroes.

**Michael:** Don’t let Ted hear you say that.

**David:** They are more glorious and wealthier.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**David:** If you look at the sign of true wealth, they are wealthier than Bill Gates or Elon Musk put together.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**David:** And so that was an honor.

**Michael:** Yeah.

**David:** Imagine somebody being honored like that.

**Michael:** Amen. Like they always say, you can’t take it with you, right? *“The rich man also died and was buried.”* Now remember what I talked about: God doesn’t just put things in for no reason. So He says that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. What probably happened to the beggar’s body? Does anybody have any idea?

**Don Bishop:** They probably took it out into the trash.

**Michael:** Yes. So during this time people in certain socioeconomic conditions were thrown into a place. And there are even stories about dumps where bodies were heaped and set on fire and burned. So that’s a possibility. I’ve heard it said that some people were put into really shallow graves. Whatever the case, his destiny was in heaven.

The rich man was buried. So based on his position, he probably was. There were people there; people said all kinds of nice things about him. People would say things about him, like “He’s in a better place now.” A lot of times that’s what we say; when we don’t know what to say we say that: he’s in a better place.

But according to Scripture he was not, because it says that he was buried. *“And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus at his side.”*

Now this is key. I remember this; it just hit me. I hurt my knee when I was on the porch. I don’t know; do they still use that many doors? Remember those doors?

**Brave Man:** Oh, yeah!

**Michael:** So it had handles on it. And it had one of those table handles. Well I was doing some kind of gymnastics and I banged my knee on this handle, and it swelled up. I had to keep getting it drained.

I was seventeen years old, and I often had my knee drained multiple times and it was swollen all the time, till it finally got so bad. And what happened was that I had shinned my knee cap. And so over the years puss had built up. Anyway, they had to operate on my patella and the bone; I had to have surgery.

And what I remember was that I never had surgery before, and I’d never went under anesthesia before. So it was really weird because my surgery was to take place at 7:00 a.m. I still remember that after twenty-eight years. I was twenty-eight years old; that was two years ago! *(Laughter)* But the surgery was at seven. And the doctor literally told me, “Whatever you’re gonna do, I’m going to put you under.”

“How long should it take?”

“Maybe till around 11:00.” And lo and behold, I was counting down and I was at about 97. And I looked at the clock and it was 11:00. How amazing is that. I was amazed. Because I had never been under anesthesia I couldn’t understand how it felt like they had just put something over my face. Do you understand?

So when I first got familiar with this passage, for many years I thought about that: isn’t that amazing? When we die you’re gonna open your eyes and you’re gonna be somewhere, all right? And in Christ you’re gonna be in a place of beauty and honor. We don’t know what that looks like; we can only speculate and we have clues.

But you don’t want to end up here (in Hades.) You know what I mean? You do not want to end up here, and it happens instantaneously. That always struck me. Certain Scriptures didn’t just strike me; that always struck me. From day to day, that’s how quick it happens.

*“He lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me!’”* Now why would he say, “Father Abraham?”

Well, he was a Jew. So everybody knows father Abraham, right? A Jew would understand who Abraham was.

He’s saying, *“Have mercy on me!”* There’s some really interesting stuff happening here. He says, *“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”*—or torment—*“in this flame.”*

So this is interesting. If you were the rich man in that position, what would your plea be? If you were in that position, have you ever thought about what your plea would be?

I come from an era where we had cartoons on Saturday mornings. And the kids today don’t know that we grew up on cartoons. There was this cartoon; I’ll never forget it. There was this guy, a turtle. And his name was Tooter the Turtle. Does anybody remember that? He had to be old; he had white hair. And Tooter the Turtle was a guy who had an adventurous mind.

And so there was a man named Mr. Wizard that he always talked to. And he basically said, “Sir, what’s on your mind?” *(Unclear)* And when Mr. Wizard was out there he would sometimes get into trouble. And he always said, “Hey, Mr. Wizard!” And then Mr. Wizard would go “Drizzle, drazzle, drizzle, drump!”, and cause this one to come home. And he’d bring him back.

Well I thought about that with this guy the rich man, because he says, “Father Abraham, if you can help me to get out of this rut.” He didn’t say that; he said a couple things that are interesting. First of all he said, “Send Lazarus over here to dip his finger into the water to cool my tongue.”

Now I don’t know what made him think of water. Did he see water on the other side? We don’t know that sort of thing. But I think it’s interesting.

But the other part of it is that he is in aguish in this flame. Now people speculate on whether it’s a real flame or a metaphorical flame. There have always been people who say that hell is not real. Jesus tends to say otherwise. I know that nobody here goes through these gymnastics trying to explain away hell. I heard some people recently who said that they were Christians. They say they are, but they were talking about somebody they heard. They were saying, “What you’re seeing in hell is not really real.” And I was sitting there saying, “No, no.” Turn that guy off, whoever he is; don’t listen to him!

I don’t know if you know this, but whether you’re talking about Jehovah’s Witnesses or Mormons, etc., apostates say this. They started off in the church. And the reason they left is because they had a problem with the doctrine of hell.

So the serpent said, “Surely you won’t die,” right? You always have to be leery of those kinds of things coming at you, even if something comes into your mind. Push against it because you know it’s not of God. The Bible talks about hell a lot more than it talks about heaven.

It says that *“Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things. But now he is comforted here and you are in anguish.”*

So another thing that happens occasionally in church with people that read Scripture—believers or unbelievers—use that particular contrast to say that this is basically saying that poor people go to heaven and rich people go to hell. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, right? There are people who believe that.

But as we know, that can’t be true. First of all Scripture doesn’t say that. Secondly, we would have to take out several leading members of the hall of faith who were very affluent, right? How do you explain that away?

**John:** That’s who we’re talking about here: Abraham.

**Michael:** Yes. This applies to each one of us, right? This is the mantra for that: the black and white reversal, that’s what this is. “Live well and go to hell. Suffer pain, enjoy great gain.” You don’t want that to be your doctrinal understanding.

So we have this situation where it says that the rich man had his good things and Lazarus his bad things. “But now Lazarus is with me and you’re in torment.” So we have to think about why that is.

And we know about God: how we go to heaven and how we don’t go to heaven. And we ought to think about those things because especially with somebody with Bible knowledge, with whatever spiritual laws and all that stuff, it speaks to the fact that Lazarus believed in God. And the rich man’s faith was in something else, right? We do know that based on this story; we know that.

All right. And it says: *“And beside this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed.”* Do you know anybody who pronounces that word “chasm” with a ch sound? Someone I knew said it that way: that there is a chasm fixed. And I said no; it’s a chasm (with the sound of a k.)

*“And beside this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed.”* Some translations say, *“A great gulf fixed.”* *“In order that those who have passed from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.”*

There’s a key thing here: it says, *“In order that.”* That’s an intentional word. So here’s the implication of that: Because there is a great gulf fixed, you can’t go from there and you can’t get to here. It says, “in order that.” In other words, that gulf is there for a purpose, right? It’s intentionally there.

We don’t want to miss that, because it speaks to the fact once again that God can’t make a mistake. What God does is intentional. He’s intentional in the small matters of our lives and the big matters of our lives. We might not always understand it, but He is always doing things for a purpose.

All right. Then he said, *“Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house.”* Here’s another thing. When I talked about if you were pleading, what would you be crying out for if you were in the plight of the rich man? This is interesting. He says, “I beg you. Send him”—send Lazarus—“to my father’s house.” He wants him to go there so he can tell his five brothers so that they won’t end up there, right? But isn’t it interesting that never—and it’s not recorded in any part of this—never did he ever question why he was there? He never questioned why he as there, which would lead me to believe that he knows exactly why he is there.

I remember R. C. Sproul saying at one time that he was asked a question about hell. He said that there are no more tears, no more sorrow or crying in heaven. If I get to heaven and my mother isn’t there, how does that work out? And so R. C. was basically saying first of all that the Bible doesn’t say. But here’s the possibility: When we get there, in that state of eternity, you are so in alignment with the heart of God that you know that He does what is good and just, and that whatever He does is honorable.

It’s possible in like but opposite terms that this rich man being in that state understood exactly why he was there; he didn’t question it. Now he’s just trying to save his brothers. He’s just trying to get the word out to those who he left behind.

**David:** Michael?

**Michael:** Yes sir.

**David:** I heard a testimony from a man who was an atheist. He died and he mentioned that he came back. But as he was looking into hell he knew that it was right.

**Michael:** Oh, interesting. How do some of you feel about those things, whenever you hear people say that they came back, and what they saw? There are books written about this.

I’ve heard some of those stories. And when I hear or read some of the literature. I would say that there is no way that is possible. Do you have any thoughts about that?

**John:** It certainly didn’t seem to bother Jesus. We don’t spend much time thinking about a world we can’t see.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm. Please elaborate.

**John:** Jesus talked all the time about the kingdom of God that you can’t see but that has come amongst you. We don’t see him talking about “Where do you think they are? Is it this guy, is it this guy? This is where they are.” They are in a place that doesn’t have GPS coordinates. But there is this understanding that there is another level, right? It’s a real one, and you pass from this one to the next one.

**Michael:** Yes.

**John:** And there is interaction of that world with this one. He’s standing in front of them telling the story. That would be the interaction of the unseen life coming to the seen life. “And I’ve come from the unseen realm to reveal the Father to you.”

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**John:** So you have the additional context, talking about what goes on with our spirits as we go on into the next dimension. The idea of Abraham’s bosom was this idea of a place of honor and reception by the Father Almighty into the next life who are in an eternal state in that sense. And they certainly had some idea of the evil of those that were not. They were thinking to themselves that as far as those who didn’t follow their God that God doesn’t deal kindly with them.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm.

**John:** So we forget that we’re only a few decades or centuries at most away from the world that is always thinking about the natural and the supernatural interacting *(unclear)* With the advent of experts telling you that you can’t have a near death experience or whatever, we put a lot of trust in that and we put a lot of trust in this. And we understand that there were a whole lot of people walking around to whom Jesus was talking to who didn’t think that anything He said was right.

**Michael:** Interesting; that’s a good point, John. This happens all the time. I hear some of our top teachers just totally throwing out certain things. We do understand that there is probably a lot of compromising with one another. But sometimes people are so tempted to throw out the whole baby with the bath water with people’s experiences like that. I read a lot about what John said when I first began to believe in Christ. In some of those books a lot of times I hear people smarter than myself saying that those things can’t be. And like John said, they are testifying to their destruction that all things with God are possible.

**John:** How do you rationalize that?

**Michael:** Yeah.

**Don Nemit:** Because we don’t have the mind of God, we human beings have a tendency to say, “Well, my level of understanding is that it can’t be.” And God says, “Are you Me?”

**Michael:** That’s right. And as John points out, over the centuries we’ve gotten a little more comfortable with ignoring the spiritual life.

**Don:** Yes.

**Michael:** That gets us into trouble a lot, which is why we get comfortable with the world and try to make the world meld with the things of the kingdom. There’s the kingdom and the spiritual realm, and there is a division between that and the realm of darkness. And you know, we’re involved in a spiritual battle, and so we get confused about all this. But it’s just a question I had.

*“So I beg you, send him to my father’s house. For I have five brothers, that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.” But Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.”*

*“And he said, ‘No, father Abraham!” But if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ And 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.’”*

So any comments on that? So one of the things I love most about that passage is that if they don’t believe Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe one who is raised from the dead. Yes, sir?

**Jim Hamilton:** Isn’t it true that some of the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, and some of them—

**Michael:** They were Sadducees.

**Jim:** Right. They were corrupted in their understanding.

**Michael:** Right.

**Jim:** Those people had Moses and the Prophets.

**Michael:** Yes.

**Jim:** And they didn’t believe Him. They refused to believe the witness and the writings of the apostles.

**Michael:** That’s right.

**David:** The Jewish priests and Pharisees and so forth—the leaders—knew that Jesus was recognized at His resurrection because they had heard the testimony of those who saw Him. And so they knew it, and knowing it they suppressed it.

**Michael:** Yes. “Thomas, *because you have seen, you have believed. Blessed is he who has not seen, and yet has believed,”* right? So today we have the Law and the Prophets, and we have this (the New Testament.)

How many in here believe that *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God?”* A lot of people don’t believe that. But you can do your study on that and what it means. But do you believe that the word of the Scripture and the Holy Spirit are enough to bring us on to faith in Christ? Do you believe that preaching is enough to bring people to faith in Christ? The Bible says that God has chosen the foolishness of preaching to save some.

There are a lot of people in Missouri; they are kind of show people. They are people who have these things called “sign and wonder events,” with signs and wonders and things like that. They talk about what being slain means, and things like that. It’s sensational to some people, and this and that. But I always think it’s interesting that the things that they say oftentimes don’t line up with the things that are in here (the Bible.) You can’t take bits and pieces of what’s in here and then go to some crazy place.

I think it’s important that we realize that God is all-powerful and that He is able to use His word; it’s the word of God. It’s His word that causes change: it cuts to the heart. And He has a way to do what He does according to the way that He wants to do it. Amen? And so we think when we use our own understanding just like this guy. If they see someone rise from the dead, they will believe. But either you’re going to believe or you’re not, according to this Word and what He said. I can hear and see trouble down here. Go ahead, John.

**John:** You probably have two in the front.

**Michael:** Yeah. You’ve made more trouble than that at one place.

**John:** Obviously Jesus is telling the story. But the answer in the story is coming from Abraham, right? This is the revered father of the nation.

**Michael:** That’s right.

**John:** What does he have to say here? What is he saying, and why does he say what he says? Of course we have Jesus’ commentary on it in the eighth chapter of John. They had not seen the Resurrection yet. But He said, *“They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.”* That last one is a directive, right? It’s not “believe in the resurrection,” because it’s not here yet.

**Michael:** Right.

**John:** But what do they have to believe in? They have to believe what Moses and the Prophets wrote about Him. Why did Abraham say such a thing in this story? In john 8 He’s starting to talk to this group of people again. Starting in verse 55 it says: *“You have not come to know Him, but I know Him. And if I say that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day. And he saw it, and was glad.”*

*“And the Jews said, ‘You are not even fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?’ Jesus*

*“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am!’”* And so in this story there is a clear understanding that Abraham knew the God whom he spoke to, as well as his son Isaac and his son Jacob and the children of Israel. And Moses went to Pharaoh, saying “Hey, this is our God and we are His people,” and they knew Him. And Jesus also says at the beginning of John 5, about these accusations, *“You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life. And it is these that bear witness of Me. And you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life. And you know how to receive glory from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.”*

But He is specifically speaking there, not talking about a generic God, but the God of Abraham; that’s who He’s talking to. *“You do not have the love of God in yourselves. But I have come in My Father’s name”*—the God of Abraham,--*“and you do not receive Me. But if someone comes in His own name you will receive him. How can you believe if you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?*

*“Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you had believed Moses you would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”* *(Unclear)* Abraham’s instruction was important not just to them, but also to us as it relates to us having to believe what Moses and the Prophets said. It was about Jesus; you cannot make Jesus in your own image. You have to take it all. And if you won’t take that, (the Old Testament), you’re not going to take this (the New Testament.) If you take that, (the New Testament), you’re going to take all of this (the Bible.) And you will understand Him in that way.

**Michael:** Amen. Thank you, John. It’s 7:30. I want to play this little clip here at the end that speaks to us a little; it’s a clip from Alistair Begg. I wanted to play it; it’s something you can meditate on.

**Alistair Begg:** Here it is. The confidence of heaven is in the Bible. If you do not believe the Bible, you will not believe in Christ. If you will not be changed by the Bible, you will remain unchanged.

Don’t forget the story. Who would you like to be? Be honest. “Well I want to be the guy with the nice clothes, where they drive me at the gate to parties. I don’t want to be that guy lying there on the street with dogs licking my back.” But what if it were possible to completely reverse the roles?

See, here’s the question. I’m finished now, just so you know. I can hear it in my head within myself; I might as well acknowledge it. But the challenge for the Parkside congregation out of Luke’s Gospel is surely this, because by any standards we are rich people. We are all rich. I don’t care what the scale is; we are stinking rich! We have the freedom to travel, we have the freedom of our passports. We have opportunities, gazillions of opportunities; there is so much that’s ours! And everything created in our skulls in all of that is somehow the notion that because we have gained access to all of these other things, we can have access to heaven as well.

But Jesus says no. You can’t serve God and money at the same time. The condemnation of the man was not that he was wealthy. The condemnation of the man wasn’t even how he became wealthy. The condemnation of the man was that he was just wealthy. That’s all he had. That was his treasure. “How will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?” Instead of using what he had as an expression of his gratitude to the Lord, as an expression of his kindness to others and as a means of enabling others, he used it as a basis of self-gratification. He was the kind of man everybody saw and said, “He’s a very nice man; he never does anybody wrong at all.”

And therefore if he is a nice man and he’s obviously done well, and he never does anybody any wrong at all, then he’s obviously going to heaven. Well, he’s not. And the reason he’s not going to heaven is not on account of the bad things he’s done, but the reason he’s not going to heaven is on account of the good things that he’s left undone! *“For to him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”* How can I see my brother in need and claim that I love God and do nothing about it, and actually claim to be a bona fide member of the family of God whose heart is for the poor and the downtrodden and the blind and the beaten and the broken? It doesn’t work!

That’s the danger, you see, in a sterilized, bourgeois, self-satisfied, evangelical American subculture! And if we’re around one another long enough, we can convince one another that we’re okay, because after all 1500 people are here and they can’t be wrong, can they?

Yes, they can. If you will not listen to the Bible, you won’t listen to anything. Therefore I suggest to you that if you have any inkling to think about how Jesus is and why He came, that you go home and read your Bibles. Frankly I’ve said enough this morning to make any sensible person go home and read his Bible or her Bible. If I’d be listening to me I’d be going home and reading my Bible, because I’d be sitting there saying, “You know what? I’m going to check this out. *(Unclear)* So I’m just going to go and figure this out.”

Go ahead. Go ahead, because if you won’t listen to the Bible you won’t listen to anything. And if you won’t be changed by the Bible, nothing will change you.

**Michael:** That passage and that last clip by Alistair should make all of us think about some things and meditate on some things. It’s beautiful to be in the household of God. And by His grace we’ve been saved through faith. The Scriptures also say, *“Let a man examine himself whether or not he is in the faith.”*

And I think that self-examination is a good thing. And I think that there’s a reason that throughout the New Testament many times that it says, *“Be not deceived”;* don’t be deceived. “Many will come to Me in the last day, saying, ‘Lord, Lord!’” And we know there’s a context to that. But I think it’s good not to get comfortable in our rich state. I think it’s good not to get comfortable in the re-appropriation of the word of God where it kind of becomes what we want it to be, and to make it into the things of this world. Many of us are guilty of that, and so we get further and further away from this, and we get further and further into the things of this world.

And that has been re-packaged in the church as the word of God. But if we got back to this, like the contrast in this passage, we would be able to contrast what the Bible says and what some of these other things are saying; they just don’t jibe. And many of us in the American church are being duped by the same evil that duped Adam and Eve, and he is good at what he does.

So I would that we would all think about those things. I know I am going to. I know it sounds like I’m being a Debbie Downer. No, I’m not a woman; a Don Downer. No, I don’t want to be a Don Downer. *(Laughter)* But it’s just good every now and then to be shaken out of our comfort zones a little bit and just to think about things. Are we about the same things that Jesus Christ is? Amen?

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Michael:** Thank you for your time, and we can pray. Dear heavenly Father, I thank You for this time today. Lord, I thank You for the brothers that are here today. Thank You for Your word, Lord. I pray that the words that we just went over in Your holy Scriptures, Lord, that they would be implanted in our hearts, and Lord, that they would be marinated on our minds, that we may understand them fully for what they are, Lord, and that we might go out into this world with a mindset to love the Lord our God with all our mind, heart, soul and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, Lord. We ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*