

# The Rich Man and Lazarus (Part 2)

Luke: All Things New



## Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



## Sermon Text

Luke 16:19-31



## Big Idea

Hell is a tough topic and one that we often skirt around. But Jesus speaks unashamedly of it. He knows it is actually part of the good news. It stands for the fact that all evil will be done away with in the end. And it fills out our understanding of what Jesus took for us on the cross.

“There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, specially, of our Lord’s own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and it has the support of reason” (The Problem of Pain, pp. 119-120).

### (1) The Reality of It

**Observation #1: It Is Dreadfully Painful**—There is something torturous about it.

**Observation #2: It Is Eternally Fixed**—There is a sort of inescapable finality to it.

**Observation #3: It Is Divinely Superintended**

### (2) The Understanding of It

It seems to me that the doctrine of hell as it here stands often sits so wrongly with us because we have such a deficient view both of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.

**(1) The Holiness of God**—We imagine Him a sort being kind of like us. We don’t understand what it means for Him to be thoroughly set apart—perfectly pure, unswervingly righteous, inescapably just. We assume He could bend the rules a bit here or there if He really wanted to and the fact that so many end up in hell is due more to His being cantankerous and crabby than to His being holy—like the grumpy parent who could and probably should bring the child out from timeout but just simply doesn’t want to.

**(2) The Sinfulness of Man**—At the core of fallen man is something altogether monstrous.

The idea is that, since the fall in Gen 3, at the core of natural man’s being now, there is a fundamental antithesis, a deep-seated resentment of and rebellion against God and an unrelenting devotion to self. God’s common grace is currently restraining this sinful nature from fully expressing itself but in the end that grace will be removed and man shall be seen in all his depravity.

### (3) The Good News of It

Heaven would no longer be heaven if such evil were permitted to roam free. So God, if He is God at all—indeed, if He is good at all—must judge. Hell must be real, or heaven isn’t either. Do you see? If the rich man were permitted to march into paradise and ball and chain Lazarus into his service, it would no longer be paradise. Such self-worshipping evil must be done away with or all is lost.

At the cross we witness wide-eyed that God would put Himself in the place of hell to make a way for us back to Him in heaven. Though Jesus was holy and righteous, He was treated in our place as the monster. The wrath of the Father is poured out on the Son for the sake of sinners like you and I. So that our hearts could be changed, our nature changed, and our eternal destinations changed.

## Reflection Questions



- Describe your feelings about hell? Do you believe in it? Are you troubled by it? Are you embarrassed by it? What texts in the Bible have shaped your understanding of it?
- The rich man asks that a miracle-sign be sent to his brothers to help them repent and believe. Abraham refuses. What reason does he give? Is it wrong to ask for signs do you think? Read vv. 27-31 again. What point do you think Jesus is making with this? How might this apply to your own life?
- Do agree with the idea that, since the fall, man is not inherently good, but rather inherently evil? How have you seen this at work in your own story? How have you seen it at work in the world at large?
- In what ways is the doctrine of hell actually a part of the good news? How does it fill out our understanding of the cross? What is different about the Christian’s nature now because of Jesus?