



**Money Matters-Part 6**  
**The Damning Lie of Monetary Success**  
**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

Well just so you know I drive a mid-sized SUV the kind of SUV you can throw all your junk in the back of.

Don't you like those? Just throw it in there out of sight out of mind. And occasionally I have to go on trips with this. I was north of L.A. on a little trip and I realized something about my vehicle where I knew it had the power lift gate I was so glad when I got the car that it had that little FOB you know pushed the button and it goes beep beep beep and then the lift gate comes up by itself.

And then you push it again and it goes beep beep beep and it goes down. Most of the time and I realized that when I was north of L.A. on this trip and I had gone and cleared it out before the trip thrown my suitcase my briefcase in the back and I clicked my little button to close the lift gate and I heard it go beep beep beep so I turned around went to the side of my driver's door there got in the car and sped out of my parking space only to hear my luggage and my briefcase. Bouncing in the parking lot tumbling with people around watching which was the worst part of it. I'm dressed you know fairly nice having to get out there and actually ruined one of my cases and so it was an expensive and embarrassing little just a little lesson to learn and that is when I hit that little button now on the key fob there. I'm always careful not only to hear the signal that it's coming down but stand there and make sure it comes down particularly when I have stuff in the back that I don't want flung through the parking lot of wherever I'm at I want to make sure that it's closed that's important before I jet off.

I thought of that when I was studying the passage that we've come to here in Luke Chapter 16 beginning in verse 19 because it's a passage that I read and I thought oh man this is going to be a tough one to preach but I realized it's a good one to preach because it's one of these passages that calls you to make sure that things in your life are buttoned up and that you are where you need to be with God because it underscores one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian life and that is that 100 years from now you and I are going to be in one of two places and only one of two places and it won't be here. You're going to either be in a place of eternal blessing and satisfaction and joy or as the Bible repeatedly says and this passage specifically says you'll be in a place of retribution and punishment because of your sin. And that's the reality and of course you think well I want to make sure that I've got my sins forgiven and I'm right with God and I dwell with God in eternity and I have all the things that he's promised in his word that are for my good I want all those things and I'm saying well you need to do more than just press the button and hear the beeps, you've got to make sure it's not just about walking an aisle praying a prayer or you know thinking you've been to church or whatever it might be that gives you an assurance there needs to be a look at scripture in terms of what it takes to make sure your life is buttoned up with God. Now of course I didn't write this.

I'm just here to teach it and it's a hard passage to look at because it deals with those eternal realities of Heaven and Hell and anytime we talk about eternal punishment it's a tough passage to swallow. And I realize that but if we can just leave today knowing this is an important text so that we can leave this building making positively sure that we're right with God because most people would assume that and most people haven't taken time though to look at what the Bible says as to how to be sure.

Now if you're looking at the cover of your bulletin you say well I thought we were in a series about money. Well you're right. And if it sounds like maybe I might be setting you up for some kind of teaching that says how you handle your money will in some ways secure your heaven and cancel hell



will then of course that would be heresy. That's not what I'm here to teach today but it is a passage about money from beginning to end this entire chapter deals with our relationship with money. And this passage doesn't say there's anything you can do in the handling of your money that will secure heaven for you. But it does tell us that how you handle money will be an indication it will be some kind of expression it'll be some kind of proof as to whether or not you're going to heaven. I mean that's the real bold thing that Jesus says to us in this text and there's so much here.

I've decided to break it in half and we're only going in a deal with verses 19 through 25 today and if you haven't already turned there I need you to turn there and look at this passage with me we'll deal with verses 26 through 31 next time Lord willing. But for today let's take the first half of this.

It's enough for us to process I assure you. As we look at what's going on here starting in verse 19 but even as you glance at verse 19 know that this is a phrase we've already started with in verse 1 it says

there was a rich man.

Go back up to verse 1. That's how this started with another story about a rich man. Now there was a rich man there. That's how it began. And then we had that story of the rich man and his unrighteous and very shrewd servant who went out and made friends with money and then were told to go as it says in verse number nine to make friends by unrighteous wealth. And then the real punchline in verse 13 when it came down to it and we got to this we saw this very emphatic statements an absolute statement.

You cannot serve both God and money. And we took up the mirror of God's word and we looked at that and now wait a minute am I serving money am I serving God. And of course if you serve money it's not about you serving money it's about serving an agency to get you to have the comfortable convenient luxurious life that you want and you may be so dedicated to that that you recognize really it's not about me serving God it's about me serving myself through serving money.

And I realized God says you can serve money you can serve God but you can't serve them both. So you've got to make a decision here. And then in verse 14 he introduced us afresh to the Pharisees who were standing around listening.

It started with him telling the story to his disciples.

But clearly the Pharisees who were lovers of money were listening on and he had some things to say about those people that loved money, those Pharisees. And then we saw how that little passage last time we were together that last verse that we dealt with verse 18 gives us some sense of how that test case of marriage has some kind of bearing on this topic of money and then we're back to another story and Jesus here tells a very lengthy parable a very lengthy story. This is a debated thing where it's a real story or not I'll log in on that in a second and chime in on my opinion on that but verses 19 through 31 didn't give us this picture of another rich man and the hero of this isn't the unrighteous steward. But it's up really if you want to find a hero I suppose it's a man that's named here in this story named Lazarus.

Look at this text I'll read it for you verses 19 through 25 follow along as I read it. When Jesus says there was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen that by the way in that day to have purple clothing you can look in any historical book or Bible Dictionary was very expensive to produce.



That's why it became associated with royalty because to manufacture this purple garment as we see in the book of Acts and elsewhere in the Bible this is a very unique kind of and specific kind of process that was only for the rich and fine linen of course he wanted clothes that are next to his body that are very comfortable and who feasted sumptuously every day. Now a lot of people feasted when there was a special occasion when you're marrying off your kids but to feast sumptuously every day I mean this is an extreme description of someone who's doing really really well and enjoying the luxury of his life. And yet verse 20 says at his gate so we know he's got a big estate by the way.

He's got a gate there an entrance to his property.

There was laid a poor man named Lazarus. And you know Lazarus perhaps as a historical figure the brother of Mary and Martha. But you also need to know. Most people would say in the Greco Roman world of the first century particularly with Jewish background this is probably the fourth or fifth most common name in the first century so you know this is not a connection or trying to get us to think of the Lazarus in the Gospel of John who was raised from the dead it's a name we might try to figure out as we go through this why it might be there and why he names this man. But for now all we know is he's got a name and he's not doing well financially and then it says in verse 20 is covered with sores so he's also sick. And his needs weren't met. Verse 21 even though he is at the gate of a very rich man who feasted every day he desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Doesn't say he did feed himself on what fell from the rich man's table but he desired to. Moreover even worse the dogs came and licked his sores and remember dogs as I often remind you when we find them in the Bible. It's not Fluffy or Rover. You know some golden retriever that you see as the fifth member of your family. That's not how they saw dogs.

Dogs were unclean animal animals or scavengers. I mean you ought to read this from an American perspective. It was like the rats came and nibble at his sores. This is the worst kind of picture of the most pathetic poor sick person you could ever imagine.

Everything changes in verse 22. We have two deaths here.

The poor man died and he was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. Now remember where we've been in previous chapters we've seen that there's going to be a great feast in the banquet that Jesus disciples were trying to call everybody to Abraham Isaac Jacob are going to feast there in a like a wedding banquet and the invitation goes out and we're calling people to come be right with Christ so that you can participate in this kingdom banquet.

Well apparently this poor man was qualified for that. Not by his poverty we'll learn but by something else and he gets to participate in that in the same verse we see that the rich man died. He died also and he was buried.

He didn't go to a banquet though it says in verse 23 he went to a place called Hades. This is a word that usually translates in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament the Old Testament word Sheol. And if you've looked around at that word in the Old Testament it's a kind of a general description of the place where people go when they die. When you talk about people that are right with God going there and people that are not right with God going there but when that word is used in the New Testament it's used exclusively of those in that place or realm of the dead who are suffering who are not in right relationship with God.

And so this word is given here we might say in shorthand this is like hell it's not the permanent home



of the lost after the Great White Throne Judgment but it is a place here where he is as it says in this passage verse 23 he's not feeling good.

He's in torment. And he lifted up his eyes and he saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. So they're feasting here's a guy he recognized from the gate that he passed every day and he sees them there in a place of enjoyment and bliss and happiness and satisfaction and he calls out and he says in verse 24.

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. We've got someone in comfort someone in anguish.

The story starts with a rich man who's in comfort and a poor man who's in anguish and all of a sudden now you've got them reversed. If there's one thing and just a quick reading of this passage that we have is a study in contrasts the luxurious comfortable man ends up in a place of torment and discomfort and anguish. And the person in anguish and in sickness and can't even get his stomach filled. He is now in a place of comfort.

So we have this great mix up here of rich suffering and the poor being comforted. There's one thing I think we should observe from just this entire passage as we look through it. It's that I know this when it comes to someone's material wealth it has nothing to say about their spiritual health.

Follow this now. When you look at the things that you have in this life there is really no concrete connection between what you have and enjoy as blessing in this life. It really says nothing concrete there's no direct correlation to how you're doing with God because clearly this man was not doing well with God even though he is living a very luxurious life and vice versa.

But let's start with that because most of us as we sit here today in the 21st century and a part of the world where things are going pretty well for most of us compared to most people around the world and most people back through time. You sit here with three square meals a day and probably a lot of snacking in between those meals and you've got a pantry full of food. You've got a closet there with a bunch of clothes in it you've got transportation to get to church. You are doing pretty well. And I think you would say if you really are honest on a good day you'll sit back it doesn't even have to be Thanksgiving but you'll say I'm blessed of God. And if your theology is right you'll realize that every good and perfect gift comes from God and you realize that right you are blessed. And what I want to do is make sure that we don't fall into the mistake that many people fall into. And that is thinking if I'm blessed materially. That must mean that God is happy with me. Number one on your outline let's just make this observation, you and I, we shouldn't be fooled by the good life and most of you here whether you can find someone richer you are more comfortable than you. Your living, trust me, the good life. Do any traveling, read any history.

You doing all right. You doing really well. You're experiencing the good life.

It may not be as good as someone else. It may not be the best life ever but you have what you need and that you recognize I hope is a gift from God.

And you think well if I'm being treated so much better than people around the world and people through history then God must be pretty happy with us. If I came to your birthday party when your



birthday? Birthday coming up? Invite me. I'm going to come to your party. I'm going to bring a gift. If I come and bring a gift,

But here's the weird thing, I don't say anything while I'm at your party I just give you the gift. And you probably find out what I thought about you by the gift that I gave you and let's just say I went out much something really really cool whatever you're thinking of that's really cool just double it it's something even better than that. I bring it to you all wrapped up bows and ribbons and I slide that across, hey, a briefcase and it's full of hundred dollar bills and I slide it over to you and I say just there you go I'm not going to say anything but there's your gift.

Now what would you say next Tuesday to your friends about what Pastor Mike thinks of you. You think. Pastor Mike likes me. Look at the amazing gifts he gave me. If I showed up and didn't say anything at your party and I brought you a box of toothpicks, a tennis ball, a lump of coal, I don't know. It's just something that you go. That's all I gave you didn't say anything you think Pastor Mike doesn't like me. He doesn't like me that much he came to the party but he doesn't like me. What have I done anything to offend him.

You would think that the gift is commensurate with my feelings toward you and all I'm telling you here is a man that had everything and what did God think of him. Well.

You're not right with me. You're going to go and pay for your sins in a place called Hades. So I know this.

We can't look at the gifts God gives us and think that those gifts are somehow commensurate or attached to our necessary correlating to the feelings God has toward me.

The acceptance that he gives me. Don't be fooled. By what God gives you. It may not be an accurate picture of how you're doing with God. Your spiritual health is not reflected necessarily in your material wealth. There's no necessary connection. That's important for us to catch because sometimes we don't look at the reality of our state before God because we think we're so blessed by God. Look up at verse 15 just to get out of our text for just a second and remember that people that love money so much.

He said this. You are those who justify yourselves before men but God knows your hearts. Now they were those that love money and they'd amassed quite a bit for themselves. But he says what is exalted among men. Verse 15 is an abomination in the sight of God. Now we had to clarify did we not. And we got to this passage if you weren't with us you need to know we clarified. The money itself was not the problem. It was something that it did to fog their perception of themselves. It was their god it was something they pursued. The problem wasn't rich people. As a matter fact it's not that God looks at your net worth and says Oh you have a lot. You're going in this line to Hades. Oh you don't have a lot. Great you're going in this line. You don't figure out where you going to Heaven or Hell by your net worth.

That's not how it works. There's a lot of rich people that were godly in the Bible. Right. Abraham. Noah. David. Hezekiah Priscila and Aquilla. They're all over the Bible they had a lot of money. But then there was a lot of un-Godly people that had a lot of money Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, the Pharisees.

But God says you're always exalting these things and you think if I have these things then I'm doing





all right and God says that is no necessary correlation. As a matter of fact sometimes you get so fogged up in your view of yourself. All you can see is your material wealth and you shouldn't think that way. Matter of fact in that passage where it says you justify yourself before man. How do you do that. Because you get everything together on the outside but God knows your heart. God is always trying to make that point to us and he makes it way back in the Old Testament. In First Samuel when Israel chose their king and they found the best looking most successful king they could find. I mean the king wannabe that they thought would be great to lead them was Saul who ended up being a real disaster. And God says you pick the first one let me pick the next one I'm going to find a man after my own heart. And so he sends his prophet Samuel out to find that man and he goes to the house of Jesse. And here is God's Spirit leading Samuel there saying great. Find your next king here. And so Jesse puts all of his people together his sons together rather. And they all get gel in their hair. They all dress up in their nicest stuff they're coming in for the interview. He's got his flask. Now Samuel does on his hip ready to anoint which was the external symbol in the Pentateuch.

Of those who were picked out by God for some special occasion and he's got his flask of oil and he's about to anoint the king and he sits there and sees these good looking young men who look like potential kings of Israel. And he says that one must be it surely the king the Lord's Anointed is before me and I said no no no no no.

And you know the story. He runs out of sons and he says this all the sons you have? Did I come to the right house? Well I got one more but I didn't even bother him with putting gel in his hair. I mean he just. I'm sure you don't want him. So here comes the smelly shepherd boy in from the field as he waits and Jesse goes to send someone to get him and he comes in and God says that's the one arise and anoint him the next king of Israel. There's a man after my own heart. And then that famous statement that I'm sure you've heard comes in that scene where God tells Samuel, the Lord does not see as man sees for man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart. Where is your heart right now before God? It doesn't matter how much money you have it doesn't matter how well you are doing doesn't matter what your job description is. It doesn't matter how well your business did. Doesn't matter if you're employed or unemployed whether your house is big or house is small your material wealth has nothing to do with your spiritual health. There's no necessary correlation there. It's a matter of fact it might confuse you as to how you think you're doing with God. If you're doing well financially.

And you say aren't the gifts of God? They are gifts of God. But note this passage carefully Romans Chapter 2 verse number 4. You need to understand this his kindness toward you. Here's how it's put. You should not presume upon it do not presume upon the riches of his kindness. Why?

Because you should know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance. In other words it may be that I bring all these great things to your birthday party not because I like you but because you need to recognize that you and I, we need a relationship and there's something standing between us and I'd like you to see by my generous gift that you need to come to the reality that there's an issue that you need to repent of so that you and I can have a relationship. That's not the way we think we think if I got a good gift from that person he likes me. God may have a real problem with your life right now and the riches that you have. The relative comfort you have in relation to the rest of the world and all throughout church history and frankly here as we sit in this particular building in South Orange County California better than most people in our country it may not be because you're doing well spiritually it may be because there's a problem.

In your life and those gifts are given to use that you can see the problem. His kindness may be meant



in your life specifically to lead you to repentance.

Sometimes, especially when you travel you may not have the normal routine going on in your home hopefully you get it to where in your home you don't fog up the window in your bathroom when you're traveling sometimes that happens and you sit there you try to look in the mirror and the mirror is there so that you can see what a mess you are. So before you go to a meeting you're preaching event. You can fix whatever's going wrong with your face. And if you see a big cloud of gray on the mirror it doesn't help you. So you get the towel and you wipe it off or you get the hairdryer don't we all do. Lazy people. Try and get that mirror to unfog itself.

So I can see the disaster. That lies in the reflection and then I can get to work.

Sometimes the blessings of God they are blessings from God but they may do nothing other for your life than to fog up your perception of yourself. Now there was a church like that in Laodicea. We don't have time to look at this postcard from Christ but I'd like you to jot it down. Revelation Chapter 3 verses 14 through 22. In Revelation Chapter 3 there's a church that's in the city of Laodicea. Now if I ask you what do you know about Jesus' little postcard to the church at Laodicea. I bet you would think of Sunday school grads would think of one basic word. What would that be. Lukewarm. You'd say they're lukewarm and you're right.

That's the thing that really seems to be memorable. The passage says you're not hot you're not cold now if you think about the fact that God wants a zealous passion that's the word he uses in the corrective in that text.

You need to be zealous for me. You need to repent and be zealous. They were people that had their feet in the church. They had their body in the church but their heart apparently was still out in the world.

That was the problem. Now which you know complicated the matter of them seeing their need was and this is what we don't often think of. It wasn't just that they were lukewarm. That was the diagnosis. The barrier to them seeing the problem was the fact that they were prosperous. It was a city that was known for its wealth. And he says you guys just a quote from the passage here. Verse 17 you say that you're rich that you've prospered. That you need nothing. You see it with the material wealth in that particular church that made them think God sure must like us. He says the problem is you don't see. You don't realize that you're wretched pitiful poor blind and naked. Oh they're not poor that's for sure.

Naked of course not they got a closet full of clothes in Laodicea. Gold you want gold I got a lot of gold I am rich and I have prospered. He says you need to buy for me and this is the next line. I counsel you to buy for me. Gold is refined by the fire.

I got gold. No no no I'm talking about something else here.

Taking about someone who is going to fix our relationship or relationship with me or your heart is zealous for me. Well you don't have your body in the church and your heart out in the world. I need you to be zealous. Buy the gold for me that you may be rich. Not the kind of riches they were looking at and their balance sheet. Now did you can have white garments so they may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen. Wait a minute if there was anyone who was well-dressed in the seven churches that were described in Revelation 2 and 3, it was the church at Laodicea. If you took a snapshot of them they probably had the best clothing of all the seven. Instead he says they were



naked.

The shame there and you know what you need to do?.

You need to see, you need salve in your eyes to clear up the fog that maybe even those material blessings have done to you because you can't see.

And it ends this way in verse 22. He who has ears let him hear. You don't hear it. You don't see it.

You can't look honestly in the mirror of conscience and creation and my word to recognize you've got a problem.

Sometimes our prosperity can get in the way. Riches aren't sinful. Obviously we've made that point in this series. I tried to make it again here. Godly people can be rich and godly people can be poor.

The line for hell is lined with rich and poor and the line for heaven is lined with rich and poor. There's no correlation there but in this particular passage we have a passage that highlights a person that has a lot of stuff but what we find out is he ends up in hell.

I wonder what kept him from seeing the need that he had before God.

Perhaps it was the gifts of God that is sometimes the bad side, the complicating side of riches in our lives. Does that mean we're supposed take a vow of poverty? I'm not saying that. I'm trying to teach what this passage is teaching us and clearly there's something deficient in this man's life. Let's look at that in a minute. But first let's look at the man who ends up being in heaven. Who has this banquet with Abraham. Look again at verse 20.

At the gate of this rich man was a poor man named Lazarus. Now I said this is a unique thing. If this is a parable and by that I mean it's a story that Jesus is just making up. There is no historic man named Lazarus.

We're not talking about Mary and Martha's brother if we're just talking about a man that you made up in an illustration it's interesting that you would give him a name it is the only parable if it is a parable where Jesus gives a proper name to one of the characters and if you know anything about this particular story maybe you've already read that somewhere or learned that or maybe in your own study you've seen it's unique that there's a name in someone in a parable and that may be true doesn't mean necessarily that this is a historic account as a matter of fact in the middle of this teaching it's a lot like the first parable that starts in the same syntactical way. So I tend to believe it's a story but then why would Jesus give this guy a name. Well I told you it was a common name the fourth or fifth most common name in the first century for Jewish background people with Greek names, Hellenized names.

Lazarus.

What is it Hellenized from. Well, from the Hebrew word the Hebrew version of the word Lazarus is the word Eleazar. Do you remember that word from the Old Testament? That's an important name Eleazar. Anytime by the way you see a transliterated Hebrew name in the Old Testament with E-L in it that standing for Elohim and Elohim is the Hebrew word for God. So Elohim means God. So whenever you see E-L we're talking about God so whatever I know in this compound of the word





Eleazar I know that God is in it. Elohim and L is the first part in the second part is "eazar" is the word to help. God is my help.

That's what his name means. And that's interesting because I look at this and I'm thinking God and seem to be helping you too much.

You don't have a job you apparently don't have a family you have no one helping you you're at the gate of a rich man who seems to pass by you every time he comes home and does nothing for you. You long to be fed by what falls from his table and you're sick. I'm sure you've asked for healing and you haven't gotten it. You've got dogs unclean animals licking your sores. You're a pathetic looking person. What do you mean. God is your help.

Now why would Jesus drop this name on this character if in fact that's what we have here.

If it's not he could have told any number of stories about the afterlife because certainly the incarnate Christ knows everyone's after life. He picked someone I'm quite sure or he gave the name to this character in the story so he could highlight the fact that here's a man who trusted in God's mercy and he did it in this life and even the name reflects that because the qualification for Heaven is not being poor. The qualification for heaven is seeing your need and calling out on the mercy of God. In other words here's someone who saw that he had a spiritual poverty. That's what's important. Jot this reference down. Remember this from the Sermon on the Mount Matthew chapter 5. Verse 3. Blessed are the poor not in economics but poor in spirit for theirs is exactly what we're having illustrator. The kingdom of heaven. So you get the kingdom of heaven if you're poor in spirit. Now wait a minute. Everyone is poor in spirit.

I realize that but in the Beatitudes we're talking about people that recognize these things.

Here is Eleazar, Lazarus who recognizes his need and sees at least in his name in this story. God is my help. Now why do you think the rich man didn't seek God to be his help.

Because much like the church at Laodicea he thought he had everything he needed.

I'm prosperous I'm rich I'm in need of nothing.

This poor man knew he is in need of a lot. But the thing that must have qualified him for heaven is we read elsewhere in the Bible is a faith in Christ to solve his problem. Now of course this is before Christ went to the cross and died. So let's be clear. In the Old Testament what did you do same thing you called on God in mercy.

You said God please be merciful to me a sinner and God then would provide it by way of credit.

if you will and looking forward to the cross. God then would take this future event of the cross and credit it to your account.

And here is Eleazar, here is Lazarus who apparently must be because that's the only qualification you have for Heaven had his trust in the right place. We can assume the rich man didn't have his trust in the right place. That's like a lot of people unfortunately that are rich. They start to trust in their riches. That's why Christians that are rich are constantly told don't trust in your riches. Don't trust the chariots don't trust in horses don't trust in your money. Trust in God. Make sure your trust is in the right place.



Number two. Let's make that observation here because clearly Lazarus had it and the rich man didn't. You need to know where your trust is if you sit here today whether you have a lot of money or a little bit of money. Do you have your trust in God and in nothing else particularly as it relates to what this passage is about. Heaven and Hell.

Think this through with me for a minute. Most people don't get it.

If you ask your neighbor for instance do you believe in God. Most people in America over 90 percent would say yes I believe in God. There is a God. If you ask them if you believe in heaven. Most of those over 90 percent of those who believe in God would say yes I believe there is a heaven. Then if you ask those, let's say now 100 percent of those who believe in heaven are you going there do you know that 99 percent of the people that think there is a heaven believe they're going there. And I think that the one percent only is really having a bad day when they're asked the question right. Most people think they're going to heaven. That includes your neighbor. The odds are your neighbor believes in God believes there is a heaven and believes that he or she is going there now I tell you this afternoon.

Go ask him why? And they will tell you the reason.

I think that the God that I believe exists will let me into his heaven is because I am basically a.

Good person. In other words I think I'm good enough. I think I've qualified I think God looks at me and he thinks I'm doing pretty well. God likes me. Why? Because I'm likable. He thinks I'm good because I'm good. Sometimes they add that word basically good. As I said sometimes it seems in these days they don't even add that qualifier. Why are you going to go to heaven? Because I'm a good person.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. You know what the poor in spirit think when they look into the mirror of conscience creation and the Scripture they look at themselves and say I am poor in spirit.

Pitiable poor blind naked. I need help I need God's help. See here's the good news of the Gospel.

If you look honestly at creation conscience in the scripture and you see it reflecting back what you lack. All of us falling short of the glory of God the good news is that God.

Has provided what we need. But you need to trust him. You can't answer the question. The reason I'm going to heaven is because I'm basically a good person. That means you're trusting in you. Where is your trust? Are you sure? Are you sure? Are you sure you're not the person that says I think I'm going to heaven because I'm basically a good person?

I'm a good person. I'm not like those bad people.

So the only way for us to know that we're going to avoid this place that's described, just look at it again verse 23, a place where there's torment.

Verse 25 anguish. Verse 24.

Anguish in this flame the only way to avoid that place is to make sure your trust is in Christ. Now I know this. Most people say well I don't like this idea of God punishing sinners. Don't like this idea.



Matter of fact I think God should be forgiving. Now that's a bit of a cultural perspective on all this I should say because most of us in our culture think God should do the right thing and the right thing is to forgive sinners not to punish sinners. Well I'd say in other places in the world and certainly throughout history most people if you ask them the question is it right to forgive a sinner or is it right to punish the sinner most people say it's right to punish the sinner. Of course we might think that too if it's someone sinning against us but I want God to forgive me.

See the real tragedy is we think about the angels watching God do what he does in the transaction of our salvation. In their perspective is how in the world could you forgive them? Why in the world would you pay a payment for them?

It seems so unjust for you to take their sin and appendant to your son.

I mean the real amazing thing is not why would God send anyone to a place where they get punished for their own sins. It's why would God extract anyone from that penalty and put that penalty on your own son. I

don't have time to justify Biblically or even logically or theologically the point of hell but I did provide some things on the back of the work sheet which I always do and instead of really focusing on the main lesson of this passage I focused on the topic of Hell because today is probably one of the most controversial doctrines in the Bible and most people are dismissing it. So several sermons about God being the judge about the reality of Hell several books free to look out afresh if you haven't studied this you need to understand. I hope soon in your Christian life that God is a just God who must punish sin and he gives you two options. You can trust me and let me punish my son in your place. Or you better. Get

ready for what this man experienced and that is paying for the sins that you committed yourself and I would hope today that you would make sure before you leave this planet you know where your trust is because that's the difference in Heaven and Hell putting your trust in Jesus Christ making sure that you say I am only qualified for heaven because Jesus lived the life I should have lived and he died the death I deserved to die.

Make sure your trust is in the right place. Make sure your trust doesn't shift even if you say I trust in Christ.

Even David said that at one time he stood in the shadow of Goliath saying I come against you not with swords and spears and javelins like you I come against you in the name Lord. He was the one who wrote the psalm of David. We don't trust in horses and chariots we trust in the Lord and yet at the end of his life what was he doing what was the sin that caused the plague in Jerusalem? Numbering the troops.

What's the problem? Here he was counting his money so to speak.

And God said why don't you trust me. You're the one writing songs of worship about trusting me. You were the one who stood there saying I come against you not with a really cool slingshot. You said I come against you in the name of the Lord. Now you have to count the troops to make sure you're going to make it to the end of life without getting invaded by the foreign armies. What are you doing?

Your trust has shifted and God punished him disciplined him severely for that.



I know this doctrine of hell is very difficult and while we won't expound on it a lot of these books do and this is part of the doctrine that Jesus taught and we can learn some things about it in this passage at least you can say in this particular text. The issue of trusting in Christ even is bound up in the word Lazarus or Eleazar helps us to remember that Jesus was very clear about what's at stake. And I know some people will fault others for not being clear about what's at stake. Remember that little boy a couple of years back that 2 year old got eaten by that alligator at the Disney resort. That was an awful story wasn't it. Did your heart go out for those parents. You read that story. They look for his body, it was just terrible. And yet you know posted all over that lagoon and I've seen it. I've been there it says do not swim do not enter the water.

But you know what happened when that little boy got eaten by that alligator and died. Parents everywhere were up in arms and they were mad at Disney why? Not because they didn't say don't swim in the lagoon. But why? Because you didn't tell us what was at stake. You didn't say we might get eaten by alligators in your stupid lagoon. So they were mad. The rule was there.

Some of us look at the Bible when we avoid passages like this we think well yeah I know the Bible says we need to put our trust in Christ but really what's at stake.

Well he's telling us what's at stake. Heaven and Hell are at stake.

I know people think Love Wins and by that they mean God is never going to let anybody get punished in a place called Hell.

That's a popular way to put it. But you know love warns as we often say around here and the warning is clear.

It just doesn't say don't swim in a lagoon it says you will be eaten by the alligators. Don't do it! Now, let me reverse this illustration a little bit. It's really not about us not entering into the lagoon. We're all born in the lagoon.

Right.

What God is calling us to do, which I think is even harder, is hey all of you that are very comfortable in the lagoon, get out of the lagoon.

Come out from her Second Corinthians 6. Right.

He says to them I mean here here's a passage in Acts Chapter two save yourselves from this crooked generation. At the end of the Book of Revelation come out from her this mystery Babylon this world system. Be different be separate you got to save yourself from this place. Now of course all the saving is Christ's work. But in your mind you're going have to say if I stay in this position if I don't put my trust in Christ if I sit around like everyone else in this world I think God must love me. I'm fine. I'm blessed. I'm good enough to go to heaven.

Bible says it's going to be horrible. Crying and anguish in this flame in Hades he was being in torment. That doesn't sound very loving you know most loving thing of all is Jesus sent His Son into the lagoon to get eaten by the alligators so that you wouldn't have to. That's the gospel is it not. Christ said I'll suffer and die. Like I was the person that you are, the sinner fallen short of the glory of God, the one



who's rebelled against his rules. Don't be fooled by the good life.

Look through the fog of the blessings of God's gift and see your need to repent. And when you do you'll see yourself as poor in spirit.

And then you got to put your trust in Christ. Lazarus went to heaven not because he was poor economically but because he saw himself as poor in spirit and that always drives people to trust in God's mercy. Specifically in the New Testament in the substitutionary work of the cross of Jesus Christ and His was the kingdom of God. And I hope the kingdom of God is yours as well. Which got to know your trust is. When your trust is there by the way. When your heart is there when your treasure is there. I mean your life's can reflect that in priorities. Now eternity starts in verse 22.

But if we can go back up and end with the beginning of this I just want to look at the three verses that deal with this life. I mean what's the lesson here? The warning is in verses 22 through 25. But what's the lesson in this life in verses 19 through 21?

I mean all I know is this side of death I see a rich man clothed in purple fine linen feasting sumptuously every day. And at his gate a poor man named Lazarus with sores wanted to be fed apparently wasn't fed.

Dogs were coming in licking his sores. This rich man could have done something about it. And here's what's implied.

He didn't. It's what he didn't do.

Now here's the thing. I know in our world a lot of people are saying, hey trust in Christ. Exercise your faith and God will give you material wealth. That's a heresy that goes back to the first century in first Timothy Chapter 6.

There are some people that believe that godliness is a means to great gain that you'll get some kind of gain financial gain out of it. And it didn't take long for me as I said just look at what the latest from these people that preach this kind of thing is the first website I went to I found a definition of faith and it said this one of these Web sites one of these preachers on the radio on the TV it says this: "faith is taking action to make wealth come to pass in our life." They always want you to exercise faith so that you can become wealthy and build silos and store up all this stuff so that you can take it easy be merry drink and it'll be great.

But God in this particular passage is inferring in this text that we need to understand that we ought to have the faith to help people not hoard stuff. Number three let's put it that way. That's how we'd like you to exercise faith. And Jesus is making this point all through this whole chapter exercise faith to help not to hoard. And why do I say that takes an exercise of faith. Well because that's what faith is, trusting that God if I.

Am not able to save myself in Christ is going to save me and money is basically the same way if I give it away then I can't use it and if I have a need what am I going to live on. And so if I give you anything there's a part of my income I can no longer count on for me so giving certainly is an exercise of faith.

With that in view I want you to turn to James Chapter 2 real quickly. James Chapter 2.





Here's a passage that I know many of you know. It's quoted often we talk about this because faith we understand has to be followed by works but I need you to catch a little bit of the example here that is often overlooked when we think about what it means to live out our faith. James Chapter 2 Verse 14. Two rhetorical questions asked in this passage: "what good is it my brothers if someone says he has faith but does not have works." Question mark. That's a rhetorical question and the answer is what? What good is that? It's no good. That's what's implied. One more that's even more telling and there's more gravity in it and it has eternal weight.

Can that faith save him? So if I have faith that doesn't have any outworking of works can that save him. Now again that's a rhetorical question. The answer should be no. And if you thinking we're guessing at it go down to verse 17 and you have the answer. So also faith by itself if it does not have works it's dead. So whatever active benefit we think we get from faith we have none if there's no works attached. Now like I said the handling of our money cannot secure heaven for us. We can't purchase it. We can't do anything with our money that's going to guarantee heaven in our lives.

But.

If we have faith in God if we have faith more specifically in the mechanism of our atonement that is Jesus Christ, well then I will be saved then I will have the kingdom. But now I got to exercise that faith between now and the day that I die. What's the outworking of that? What's the works that come with that? Well between verse 14 and 17 I've got some examples and I'm thinking it's going to include church attendance and Bible study and probably worship singing, singing songs.

No. What good is it my brothers verse 14 if someone says he has faith does not have works, can that faith saved him?

No you need works. What are the works well if a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food. And one of you says to him as a good Christian would hey bro I'll pray for you. Go in peace be warmed be filled. Without, now here's the key word, underline it, Giving.

Them the things needed for the body. Then what good is that? Punch line verse 17 so also faith by itself if it does not have works is dead.

The one example given in this passage for us to recognize that my faith is real in Christ is the outworking of my faith and the example given is you see a need you meet the need.

You see a need you meet the need.

For brother or sister is poorly clothed or lacking in daily food and one of you says, "Go in peace be warmed be filled" without giving them the things needed for the body then what good is that saying those words and not reacting means nothing.

Saying you trust in God but you can't trust God with less of your income than you have now because you are a generous Christian person.

It's no good. John the Baptist talked about repentance a repentant faith in the coming Son of God that takes away the sin of the world. And when they ask them what do we do to live out this repentant life. First thing he said is you have two tunics and someone has none. Give him one. No swindling, had to do with money.



No extortion, had to do with money. Be content with your wages has to do with money. But the first expression of John the Baptist to say how do we live a repentant life.

It's you see a need meet the need. But it's going to cost me. Exercise faith.

In Proverbs Chapter 3 when it says that I am supposed to trust in the Lord with all my heart. The first expression of that tangibly in that passage goes on to say honor the Lord with your wealth.

Now he doesn't need of your money but there are people around you that need your money.

Now sidebar for just a second, Here I just exhorted you with something that this passage has been saying from the beginning and in a sense heaven and hell hangs in the balance. Not because I can purchase heaven but because if I'm going to heaven it will work itself out by a generous Christian life.

And if you understand that principle you might have a lot of swindlers lining up to take your money.

Oh those Christians are supposed to be generous. And being a pastor of a church. I've seen this for years, decades.

But let me be very clear about what the Bible has to say. Two passages you should jot down as Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. First of all in First Thessalonians Chapter 5 verse 14 and Second Thessalonians Chapter 3 verse 10. First Thessalonians 5:14, Second Thessalonians 3:10. Actually you can add verse 11. Verse 14 says "we urge you brothers to admonish the idle" admonished the idle and then it says encourage the fainthearted and help the weak. So I help the weak but the idle among us I'm supposed to admonish. Now apparently it is a big problem and Thessalonica about this because he says it again and Second Thessalonians Chapter 3 verse 10. Even when we were with you we gave you this command if anyone is not willing to work let him not eat. Verse 11 for we hear that some among you walk in there's our word idleness. Not busy at work but busy bodies.

So here's the thing. Third person imperative the verb to eat right is an imperative that means a command.

It's a third person imperative which means don't let him eat. Certainly not through your complicity so I cannot if you come to me and say you're a Christian.

You're generous but I'm not willing to work and help myself, then, the Bible says, I'm not supposed to aid your laziness and your idleness. I'm not supposed to give to you.

Matter of fact there's a lot of commands like that in Scripture we overlook when people simplistically go and say you Christians ought to be generous. Now I got to ask you about the poor man that laid at the gate of the rich man was it that he was unwilling to work. No. Not that he was unwilling to work it was that he was incapable of work.

He was so sore and sick that he couldn't even shoo away the unclean animal that came to lick his sore body.

No. It's not a man who wouldn't work it's a man who couldn't work. You see the difference there? Here was a real genuine need.



So you need to be very thoughtful and discerning about your giving. Here's the problem we live in the 21st century in a place in the world where there's a lot going on particularly at April 15th. The take from your income so there will be plenty of social programs for people so they're not lying at your gate outside your house with dogs licking their sores. There are lots of things out there that seem to keep that from being the reality for our everyday lives. Now, if I'm preaching in a different part of the world. I mean that may not be the case. What I'm preaching here in California in America in the 21st century. So that's not a genuine thing we run into every day.

But that doesn't let us off the hook of being a generous Christian.

Matter of fact we need to be thinking in our realm that we see certainly by the way if you see someone lying at your gate who can't work and needs your help you'd better help them it's an expression of your faith that you trust in God.

It's what Christians do. But let's just start with the people who rub shoulders with every single day.

There are opportunities where you have resources where maybe they're not going to die for lack of a tunic but you happen to have two and they have none. And you know by your sacrifice even though you may need a backup in your mind that you're not trusting and stuff so I'm willing to let it go and trust God and help someone who has none.

A tunic. I'm not talking about you giving away your clothes. Most people in your office don't want your clothes.

But there are things that come up not just in your office but in your small group at church or you have something that's a cultural norm and a standard of a cultural norm where someone in your group does not have that and in a sense they're below what the cultural norm is and you have an opportunity to provide that for them. Think about the person who may be in our day maybe between jobs, have to take the bus, lost their car, no a way to get around, they're working to get their job, they're doing all that they can. And you have four cars stacked up in your garage.

I'd love to have a garage like that by the way a big garage. Lots of cars. I mean think about that to do something as generous and magnanimous is saying well let me give you a vehicle. That would be an expression of faith. Certainly would be a generous gift. Well, I don't have extra cars to give away Pastor Mike. Well I bet you've got other things that you have an opportunity to bless someone's life.

I'm not saying you have to wait for someone who's going to die or live under the underpass if you don't help them. But I am saying there's lots of things that you have and I prayed for it and it's going to happen I assure you there will be people that come into your pathway. I don't know if it's going to be at the gate of your house but it may be like it was over there in Luke 10 where there is someone on the road and God says love your neighbor and you say who is my neighbor. And basically says whoever is in your way who has a need meet the need not someone trying to take advantage of your supposed Christian generosity and playing on that as a swindler. No I'm talking about a genuine need that you can meet.

And I'm praying that you see some this week and I'm praying that you'll meet them.

By this we know what love is that he laid down his life for us. First John 3:16 says so we ought to lay



down our lives for our brothers. The first example in the passage. If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against them how does the love of God abide in him.

Little children. Let us not love with words or talk. Don't say be warmed and be filled. Let us love in deed and in truth. I told you from the beginning this series not about church budgets. It's really not.

I hope you sense that throughout the series here we are at the last couple of minutes of this message not about church budgets and yet you recognize that this organization is not underwritten by the government. You understand there's no kind of stream of income that comes from any one when it comes to meeting needs we can't pay the light bill without the generosity of God's people at this church. We can't buy a bucket of paint to put on the wall to paint the wall or a new light bulb that burns out. None of that happens without the gifts of the people of God saying I am willing to trust God by giving to make this organization work for the sake of the Gospel and certainly that needs to be included in our list. Do good to all men but especially to the household of faith.

So that's the truth. And don't forget that if you can't find someone in your gate or at your door. But beyond that I am praying God gives you very specific opportunities this week to put this truth into practice.

I was on a flight recently not this last flight that some you know I was on but a couple flights back. The pilot came on the speaker near the end of the flight as they often do and they usually say something like this. Thanks for flying with us today. Right? Now I'm sure in this case he did not say that I am positive he did not say that. I looked around and actually caught someone's eye who affirmed that he did not say that. He said this. Thanks for staying with us today.

I thought what were my options here. And when you close that door I'm staying with you. I passed by that thing with the handle pull here lift that I didn't once get tempted to not stay with you on this flight.

Thanks for staying with us. Where am I going to go.

Of course I'm going to stay with you. Jesus was preaching in John 6 and lots of people were fleeing. "Operation Crowd Reduction" they were leaving. These were hard things the people said and Jesus turns to the 12. And he says to the 12 disciples you plan on leaving too. And Peter responds and he says: "Lord to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life. We have no option here."

We believed in you and we've come to know you are the Holy One of God. You're teaching hard things here I mean that's clear but we're not bailing out.

Where else are we going to go. We have no options.

We encounter a passage that includes topics like torment in Hades not to mention that the overall thrust of the application is that you're going to part with some money when you see needs and you're going to meet some needs with what you have.

All I'm telling you is if you understand that there is a God who has revealed Himself in Scripture. We have nowhere else to go with this passage but to say you say Christians are going to be generous. OK there we go then. I can't go anywhere else.

There's nothing else I can do I can't redefine Christianity. You say that heaven and hell are at stake and



that even as I prove my faith it's proven by what I do and do not do in terms of my finances. And that's an outworking of saving.

Well then that's the definition and I guess Heaven and Hell are at stake. Lord to whom shall we go?

Luke 12 there is a man who stored up his riches for himself. He was a hoarder. Building silos so that he could relax eat drink and be merry and God said you fool. Why? Because much like we have on our passage and Luke Chapter 16 verse number 22. It says in Luke Chapter 12. Verse 20. This night your soul is required of you and the things that you prepared. Whose shall they be? And so is the one who lays up treasures for himself but is not rich toward.

God.

The calling of Luke 16 throughout has been for you to be rich toward God.

Which doesn't mean that you sacrifice so that other people can live it up. It's about you recognizing that what you have is an opportunity for you to prove that you trust in Christ. By meeting needs when you see them whether it's on the road to Jericho whether it's someone at the gate whether it's the household of faith you're using what you have to meet needs.

To the glory of God. And the honor of Christ. That's our calling as Christians. Let's be generous. Let's pray. God help us take your word and not be hearers only who deceive themselves but to be doers of the word. God I pray for those that might want to impugn motives certainly I pray that they would recognize that what we're purposing to do from this platform is to teach the word as it is there and apply it as best we can. Not about church budgets not trying to rally to get into people's pockets. It's about us being Christians who as it's often defined if we love God we're going to obey His commandments and clearly at the height of the commandments of God is to love our neighbor as ourself and if we have a need we meet it. If there's some problem that is problematic for us we're trying to we can to solve it and God as we look at our neighbors. We realize that you've provided the ultimate example for us. You've laid down your life for us and for the brothers and so God we're supposed to lay down our lives. And really that's lived out not just by saying I'll pray for you. But if we see someone who needs something and it's within our power to do good in that situation we want to do good. God what a difference that would make in the body of Christ if everyone was committed to that kind of generosity. It would be like that early church where no one had a need.

The needs were met and certainly even those in our community in our workplace in our neighborhoods that were willing to be generous. So God gave us wisdom and discernment even as we saw in First Thessalonians we got to be wise and judicious but is never an excuse not to be generous so make us generous Christians as we live out this passage in Jesus name. Amen