

**THE BIG IDEA: Eternity starts here and now, not there and then.**The Take-Off

This morning we'll be in **Luke 16:19-31** and we'll hit the halfway mark of our 6 week miniseries called "Wait, What" Quick recap: Week 1, Jesus talked about money, but really about the heart. We give to what we love. Week 2, Jesus talked about divorce, but really the heart. We don't look for loopholes out of the life of the Spirit. This morning, Jesus is going to tell a story that sounds very "hell, fire, and brimstone"-ish, but I think you'll be surprised by how much more He is saying that just screaming about a bad place. He's actually challenging His followers to develop an eternal perspective. Let's read it and then I'm going to give you 3 ways that an eternal perspective can help us as we live on earth.

**1. Having an eternal perspective can keep us from being shortsighted**

- a. The first thing we notice about this rich man is that he is blind to anything or anyone around him that doesn't add to his experience in this life
- b. When I read the first few verses, I always think about how much more differently Jesus interacted with the crowds. This man ignored them. Jesus saw them. / Matt. 5:1; 9:36; 14:14; Mark 6:34
- c. Jesus saw the hurting and this man didn't.
- d. This man was shortsighted.
- e. The poor man was at HIS gate longing for HIS food and he chose to look away in favor of his own comfort
- f. It's good to be in the moment, but it's awful to ONLY be in the moment
- g. Jesus knew that having an eternal perspective can keep us from being shortsighted
- h. Who are you missing because you aren't living with an eternal perspective?
- i. What opportunities are at YOUR gate?
- j. What eternal good could you do right now with what you already have?
- k. Live with eternity in mind and you'll see people in an eternal light

**2. Having an eternal perspective can keep us from eternal punishment**

- a. Life would be so much simpler if this story ended with verse 22, wouldn't it?
- b. Live how you want! Eat, drink, be merry! Get what you can while you can! This is all we've got so make it the best you can!
- c. Sounds so much like the marketing in ads, doesn't it?
- d. Everything is geared toward making this life count, but this isn't the whole story!
- e. This life is simply the forward to the real story - and this rich man gained an eternal perspective too late.
- f. **Eccl. 3:11** / God has set eternity in our hearts
- g. God's plan from the beginning is that we would live this life with the next life in mind, because He knew that having an eternal perspective can keep us from eternal punishment.
- h. Jesus didn't share verses 23-31 to scare us or even to teach us about what hell may be like literally, but even the description found here isn't somewhere I want to be for a moment, let alone forever.
- i. Jesus talked about heaven and hell because they're real.
- j. Trying to scare us with imaginary stories about imaginary places works well for Stephen King, but you'll watch those movies and tell yourself the whole time that it isn't real.
- k. Jesus doesn't give us that option. He wants us to remember how real eternity is because He knows that might be enough to help us make the decision now to trust His salvation.
- l. Have you? Are you? Or, like this rich man, will your eyes be opened when you can no longer choose Jesus?

**3. Having an eternal perspective can help us do now what we can't do then**

- a. Living with eternity in mind helps us not be shortsighted and it helps us avoid eternal punishment, but look what happened to the rich man next and you'll see something very powerful
- b. He wanted Lazarus to go back as a sign to his family
- c. The man he overlooked was going to be a sign - that's irony!
- d. But notice what he wanted - not more time for his loved ones or for them to have a better life on earth.
- e. He wanted them to gain an eternal perspective before it was too late!
- f. He wanted them to realize today's Big Idea: **eternity starts here and now, not there and then.**

- g. Can we all agree that the very thing that most of us are afraid to do here is the only thing that we'll wish we'd done there - tell people that eternity is real, is coming and that what we do now with Jesus determines where we'll be then.
- h. In fact, one of the most impacting books I've ever read is called "The one thing we can't do in heaven"
- i. What is that? Tell people about Jesus. We have this life for that, and the rich man realized it when it was too late.
- j. But we don't have to - we can realize it now, and having an eternal perspective can help us do now what we can't do then

### The Landing

I looked at so many videos trying to pick one to really help us see how important this eternal perspective is and why Jesus drove it home in this parable.

There's some great ones out there - the end of Schindler's List as a selfish business man regrets not doing more with his wealth to save more Jews, a video from John Bevere on being obedient to our eternal calling now, but I kept coming back to this simple video that we saw 2 years ago.

Some of you have seen it, but it's always worth another look.

[VIDEO / Francis Chan / Rope]

What we do NOW impacts where we'll be THEN.

That kind of eternal perspective will impact every single decision we make in this life, and when we really get that, we'll embrace eternity here and now instead of thinking it's only something there and later.

My prayer for all of us is that eternity would impact the type of employees we are, the way we treat and tip the servers at lunch today, the way we raise our children.

Nothing in this life matters as such as what awaits us in the next, and knowing that will change how we live.

Let's pray.