

WILL YOU DIE TONIGHT?

LUKE 16:16-20 • TV242A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, MARCH 17TH 1985
by
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Transcribed, edited and published
JANUARY 9TH, 2011

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Luke 16:16-20

“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”

I have been preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and have pastored a church for many, many, years. In the good providence of God, many people, (I mean many people); have heard their last Gospel message from my lips.

I didn't know that it would be the last Gospel message that they would hear and they did not know that it was the last Gospel message that they would hear.

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Many people through these years have listened to this preacher and within 24 hours of what Christ said to them concerning death and judgment, heaven, hell, and things related to Christ, have become a reality.

I have a question for you today, my question is this; **“Will you die tonight?”** Is this the last sermon that you will ever hear? Is this your last day on earth? Is this the last warning that God will give you? Will you today or tomorrow, or before you hear another preacher, find yourself in the awesome presence of the Living God?

Let me answer that question for you; the answer is “no.” I believe that the average person would answer this question, “No; I do not believe that I shall die tonight. I do not believe that this is my last day on earth. I do not believe that this is the last sermon that I will hear. I have no thoughts of dying tonight; I’m still a very young person.”

Let me tell you this; David Brainerd was a very young person too but the great preacher of God’s Gospel died at the age of 29. Robert Murray M’Cheyne, one of the greatest Scottish preachers to ever proclaim the Word of God, died at the age of 29. Augustus Montague Toplady, who wrote a hymn that most all of you have sung and loved, died at the age of 38, wrote:

**“Rock of ages
Cleft for me
Let me hide myself in Thee.”**

My oldest son was only 21 years of age when he died. For you to say, “I have no thoughts of dying today or tonight,” are foolish statements, especially if you are basing it on the fact that you are a very young person. There are millions and millions of people who lie in the cemetery who are younger than you are.

Some might say, “I have no plans to die tonight; I am in good health.” This, my friend, is the land of sudden death. This is the land of heart attacks. This is the land of highway accidents.

As I came to the studio tonight to tape this program, an ambulance turned around the corner and came to a stop in front of a local restaurant. Evidently, someone had been there having supper. They had no plans to have a heart attack. This person had no plans to die tonight.

I will tell you this; my only brother was in excellent health; he was a Colonel in the U.S. Army. He was serving with NATO in Europe. He had a very responsible position, a very powerful position, and was in good health.

One night he died suddenly. He had a heart attack. He had no plans to die. He was a man in good health and was relatively young.

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Some say, "I have no plans to die tonight; I have an important work to do; a lot of people need me. There are a lot of people on my job looking to me and depending on me. I just can't die; I have too much to do."

Charles Spurgeon pastored one of the greatest churches in the world. He had an orphanage with hundreds and hundreds of boys and girls which depended upon this man for their bread and for a place to sleep.

He had a pastor's school where hundreds of pastors came and studied the Word of God. He had a church of over 8,000 members. They packed the church out at every service. Suddenly, at 58 years of age, the same age I am right now, Charles Spurgeon lay down and died.

"Boast thyself not of tomorrow," God said; *"Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."* All of these foolish reasons we give to the question, "Will you die tonight?"

You might think that you are young and in good health or that there is too much to do. Here is another statement that people say; "I have no thoughts of dying; my family needs me. I have young children at home or I have children in High School or in College. I believe that I have a few more years."

This is such foolish talk and idle chatter. The Word of God says, *"It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the Judgment."* The Word of God says, *"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit, (the translation being one year) to his life?"*

The Scripture says this; the instrument of death is already at work. It is already at work in my body. The instrument of death is already at work in your body. As soon as we are born we begin that journey to the grave.

You are nearer to the grave today than you were yesterday. You are nearer than you were last week because the instrument of death is already operating in your body. This is a dying body; this is a frail tabernacle and a frail tent which must be folded up and put away.

Our Lord spoke a parable of warning in **Luke 12:16 through 20**. If you care to follow along in your Bible I will give you a moment to find the Scripture. The Master said this; *"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. He thought within him saying; I'll pull down my barns."*

He was evidently lying on his bed one evening; he had retired early. He was thinking about his property and his prosperity. He was thinking about his fields and his harvest, his net-worth. He was lying there thinking this; "I'll pull down my barns; they are too small. I'm going to build greater barns."

"I will store all my goods; I'm going to have a good harvest this year; things look really good. I'm going to build bigger barns to hold all of my wheat, barley, and corn. Then, I am going to say

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to my soul; *‘Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take mine ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’*”

But, the Master continued and said to this young man; *“Thy fool; this night shall thy soul be required of thee and then who shall these things be that thou hast provided?”*

Doesn't this sound like some of us? It sounds like people that I have heard talking, people who say; *“Well, I have worked hard all my life and I have put some savings away. I have some property and I have a farm and a business.”*

They also say, *“I have an IRA, a retirement, an allowance, savings, and Social Security. The wife and I are going to buy a little place in Florida. I am going to take an early retirement at age 62, move to Florida, and we are going to enjoy ourselves.”*

We are going to say to our souls; *“We have much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, relax and enjoy yourself. Enjoy the fruit of your labors and have a good time.”* Is this not the way we talk? Is this not the way people talk today?

We are healthy; we are enjoying good health and we are comfortable. We take vitamins, we are prosperous and we have absolutely no thought of dying, none whatsoever; dying is for someone else.

Dying is for someone down the road or for someone in the next county or town and not for us. We have *“Much goods laid up for many years.”* We intend to use those goods and spend those years.

Let me dwell for a few moments on those five statements that our Lord made in this parable. These are five outstanding statements to which that He would call our attention.

First of all: This certain rich man said this; *“Soul, thou hast much goods.”* He was talking about material goods. You and I put too much emphasis on the material and too much stock in what we need to eat, drink, and wear.

We worry about where we must live and our comforts. Our Lord warned us. He warned us not to be anxious about these things. Our Lord said; *“Take no anxious thought what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink and what ye shall wear. Your Heavenly Father knows you have need of these things, but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. Set your affection on things above, not on the things of this earth.”*

Again, He tells us; *“Beware of covetousness. A man's life consisteth not in the things that he possesses. This life is more than meat, more than drink and more than raiment.”*

As I listen to this man say, *“Soul, thou hast much goods;”* I can just hear that ringing in my ears when I hear people in this day talk. They will say; *“I have this; I have that and I have the other.”* They think that they have many years to enjoy these things.

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The emphasis is so strong on the material and on the physical. James says; *“What is your life?”* I will tell you this; life is not in how long you live.

My father died when he was 83. You might think that is a ripe, old, age. My son died at 21 years of age and you might think that it is young. They are both dead whether they lived 83 years or 21 years; they are both dead and gone.

“What is your life?” It is certainly not in what you have. Belshazzar had a kingdom and the dying and repentant thief had a cross. Which of these is better?

“The rich man had plenty;” that is what the Scripture says. Lazarus had nothing; which was better? Which place would you have rather lived, as the rich man or the beggar Lazarus?

“What shall it prosper a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?” Life is certainly not in how long it lasts. Life is not in what we possess and it is not in how well you are known.

What a tragedy it is to be known by everyone in town and to stand some day in the judgment and hear God say; *“I never knew you.”*

“What is your life?” Your life does not consist in how much education you have. The Scripture says, *“We are ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth.”* There are a lot of truths that a man can learn about in this world and not know the truth. A man can know the way to London and not know the way to God.

“What is your life?” Your life is certainly not in how high you have climbed. God said, *“He that exalteth himself shall be abased. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”*

“What is your life?” Your life is not in how long you live on this earth; it is not in what you have. Your life is not in whom you know or who knows you. It doesn't matter how high you climb or how much education you have acquired.

When the old Titanic left the shores on that fatal voyage, hundreds of people were on board. They represented every walk of life. I'm sure there were doctors and lawyers, professional men and politicians.

I imagine that there were carpenters and plumbers. There were rich ladies and there were servants who waited upon them.

There was the crew of the ship. There were men who worked down in the holes, the lower part of the ship.

There were servants, 1st mates and 2nd mates. There were old people, young people, black people, and white people. There were all classes which were represented on that ill-fated-voyage.

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When the ship went down and the report was posted in New York, there were just two classes of people mentioned, "Saved and lost" and that was all. Christ said; *"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."*

It doesn't matter if he was 21 or 90 years of age, whether he was famous or no one knew him. It didn't matter whether he was educated or uneducated, whether he was a president of a company or a shoeblick, *"Though he were dead, yet shall he live."*

"Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." This is where it is, my friend; life is in Christ. *"When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory."* This is what counts and this is what matters.

You might say that I am an old man talking about these things and that I am nearer death than you are. Don't be too sure that I am nearer death than you are. I'm not just an old man talking about these things; I am a man who realizes what the values are, that which lasts forever and forever.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away but my Word shall never pass away," God said, *"until it is all fulfilled."*

The second statement that I noticed in the Master's story is this: The young man said; *"We have much goods laid up for many years."*

We are so quick to condemn this man, but aren't our thoughts very similar? I find myself thinking this. I am 58; the insurance companies say the average life-span is 72 or 73. Therefore, I have 13 or 14 more years; I may not have 13 or 14 more minutes or seconds.

We don't know how many years or days that we have left. Our times are in God's hands; the numbers of our months are with Him. He said in **Job 14:5**; *"Man's days are determined; the numbers of his months are with God. God has appointed his bounds. God has drawn the line and he cannot pass."*

"The Lord killeth and the Lord maketh alive. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Thou hast many years? I don't know about that; it is all right either way; *"It is the Lord; let Him do as He will."*

The third statement that I see is this: This young man said, *"I have much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."* Our Lord said, *"Thy fool."*

God called this man a foolish man. This is not the only man that God called a fool in the Bible. In **Psalms 14:1**, the Scripture says; *"The fool has said in his heart; there is no God for me."*

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In **Proverbs 10:18**, the wise man Solomon said; *“A man is a fool who slanders another person.”* **Proverbs 15:5** says; *“Fools despise instruction and rebuke.”* **Proverbs 14:9** says, *“Fools make a mock of sin.”*

Ecclesiastes 5:1 says, *“Fools are rash with their mouths in the presence of God.”* **Matthew 7:26** says; *“Fools build their houses on sand.”*

Galatians 3:1 says; *“O foolish Galatians.”* Fools try to mix grace and works. Grace and works cannot be mixed.

The greatest fool is the man who lives for today and forgets God. The greatest fool is the man that invests everything, his attention, his affection, his time and his concern, everything in this world and this earth, and forgets God.

The fourth statement is this: Our Lord said, *“Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.”*

I will tell you this; every time I say that to a congregation and point my finger out at a congregation, (pointing to myself also); every time I do it; it flashes through my mind the many illustrations and examples that I could give at this point.

I think of people to whom I have preached, not only in Ashland, Ky. but in other places also, and we have closed the services and they have gone home.

I have visited their funeral home and comforted their family and in the next two or three days preached their funeral before the week was out, so many, many, times. God said to him, *“Thy fool; this night shall thy soul be required of thee.”*

Now, the believer’s soul shall never be required of Him; did you know that? The believer’s soul shall never be required. Do you know why? He has already committed him; he has already committed it to God.

As the apostle Paul said; *“I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have already committed to Him against that day.”*

The believer knowing his sin and guilt, the impossibility of salvation in his own strength, merit, and works, has looked to Christ and Christ alone. He has believed on Him, received Him, and trusted Him as Lord and Redeemer.

He has consciously, willingly, intelligently and lovingly for eternity, committed his soul to Christ. Therefore, the believer’s soul will never be snatched from him and will never be required of him or demanded of him; God already has it; Christ is already King of his soul.

The unbeliever has kept his soul. He has lived for himself; he has lived for sin. Now, suddenly, in an awful hour, unprepared, God says; *“Give it up; I require your soul of thee.”*

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He has to give it up. He has to give up everything that he has. He has to give his soul up to be judged, to stand before God in that awful hour and to hear the Lord God say; *“Depart from me; I never knew you.”*

You see, our Master and Lord said, *“He that shall save his life will lose it but he that will give up his life, (he that will deny himself), shall save his life. Thy fool; this night your soul shall be required of thee (demanded of thee).”*

Whose things shall these be that you have laid up, all of these treasures? Your children are going to fight over them; your relatives are going to fight over them. Someone is going to have them or abuse them just like we have and then their souls are going to be required of them.

The fifth statement is this: *“He is a fool that laith up treasure for himself and he is not rich toward God.”* This is what our Master said. So; *“He is a fool that laith up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”* The key words here are *“rich toward God.”*

What is it to be *“rich toward God?”* Being rich toward God is not the thought of sending up my offerings and tithes to build me a mansion in Glory. That is the silliest thing that I have heard anyone try to pawn off on the thinking public, that we send treasures ahead.

It is silly to think that we send treasures ahead and according to how much we send is how big our mansion is going to be in the sky. This is foolishness, foolishness!

The Bible, when it talks about, *“In My Father’s house are many mansions,”* is not talking about mansions, palaces, and castles like we build out of wood and stones on this earth. When He speaks of mansions, He is speaking of dwelling places. *“In My House are many mansions (dwelling places),”* Christ said.

To be rich toward God first of all is to partake of the riches of His mercy in Christ Jesus. Paul said in **Ephesians 2:4**; *“But God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ.”*

That is, in Christ, we are partaking of the riches of His mercy. This is being rich toward God, rich in mercy, God’s mercy.

It is also to take of the riches of His grace. In **Ephesians 2:7**, Paul said; *“In the ages to come he is going to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His love toward us through Christ Jesus.”* God is going to show off the riches of His grace.

Where are and what are the riches of His grace? Believers that are redeemed by Christ are the *“riches of His grace.”* He will show off the riches of His grace *“toward us.”* We are the participants; we are the partakers of the riches of His grace. We are the objects of His grace.

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Thirdly: It is to partake of the riches of His glory. In **Ephesians 3:16** Paul said; *“I pray that God would grant unto you the riches of His glory that Christ may dwell in your hearts.”*

How does a man know God? He knows God through Christ. How does a man see the glory of God? He sees the glory of God in the face of Christ. How does a man partake of the riches of God’s Glory? He partakes of the riches of God’s Glory in Christ dwelling in his heart.

Last of all: It is to enjoy the riches of assurance; *“We know that we have passed from death unto life.”*