



KICK OFF

People can accept the idea of a loving and forgiving God—but cannot accept a God who would knowingly send people to hell. Why?



KEY VERSE

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.'



BIG IDEA

An understanding of hell is crucial to understanding your own hearts, to living at peace in the world, and understanding the love of God.



INVESTIGATE

UNDERSTANDING HELL IS CRUCIAL TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR OWN HEART

Read Luke 16: 14—31

1. Who are the two characters contrasted in this parable? Why is one character named and the other nameless?
2. It might have surprised the Pharisees that their roles were reversed? Why?
3. The Pharisees' equation was: wealth=blessed of God=obedience to the commandments. Who is it who prospers under God in this parable?
4. In what did the rich man find his identity? Vs 14—15. Contemplate, where you are seeking to find your identity?
5. Soren Kierkegaard defined sin as building your identity on anything other than God. Is this a good definition of sin?
6. In the context of this parable, Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees. What is his message to them?



DIG DEEPER

Lloyd-Jones uses the following illustration:

Imagine a friend tells you that he has paid a bill for you. How should you respond? You have no idea until you know the size of the bill. Until you know how much he paid, you do not know whether to shake his hand or fall down and kiss his feet.

Unless you believe in hell, you will never know how much Jesus loves you and how much he values you. On the cross Jesus cried, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46). To love the love of a friend hurts but to lose the love of a spouse hurts more. The deeper the relationship, the more devastating and agonizing is the loss of it. On the cross, when Jesus lose the eternal love of the Father, he experienced an agony, a disintegration, an isolation greater than we would experience in an eternity in all. He took the isolation and disintegration that we deserve upon himself. (pto)

7. The Bible has many things to say about heaven and hell. So does the popular press. It is worth distinguishing between the two. Can you think of a Bible reference about heaven and one about hell?

8. Verse 31 is full of irony. According to Luke, it is not only on the subject of wealth and poverty that Jesus and not the Pharisees properly interprets Scripture. It was also, in Luke's view, true historically, the rejection of the risen Christ had its root in the misunderstanding of the true meaning of the law and the prophets.



9. When people get rid of the idea of judgement and hell to make God more loving, they end up making him less so. Do you think this is true or not? Discuss.

THINK &
APPLY

Unless you believe in hell and see what Jesus took for you, you will never know how much he loves you. Jesus Christ was the judge of the earth who came not to bring judgment but to bear judgment and go to hell for us. It is possible to honour a God that loves everybody. But if we want to be transformed, if we want to sense God's love around us, we have to believe in a God who loves everybody and yet also believe in a God who will judge everybody.

So, ironically, when people get rid of the idea of judgment and hell to make God more loving, they make him less loving.

PRAISE GOD that the reality of judgement shows that God is both loving and a God of judgement.

CONFESS our sin of loving anything more than the true God.

ASK GOD for a sense of the glory of heaven and the reality of hell.

PRAY ALSO that we would be merciful people and take opportunities to show mercy.



Praise God for the challenges raised Praying for others in your group: by God's Word through this study?

PRAYER



How does this passage apply to our daily life?

FAMILY
DISCUSSION



READ AHEAD

For next week— isn't the Bible historically unreliable and regressive? Luke 1: 1—4, 24: 13—32.