



# CELL GUIDE 2015

Theme	Connect with God Always
Topic	This Life & the Next – A study of Luke 16
Speaker	Ps Dr Chew Weng Chee
Date	25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> July 2015

## Message Summary

### Spiritual Objective: Living for This Life & the Next

In Luke 16:19-31, the story of Lazarus and the rich man presents us with a view of what hell is like, straight from the mouth of Jesus himself. The terrifying reality of hell as described by Jesus should be a constant reminder to us to spend our time in this life on the right things. In this sermon, we look at the urgency of understanding the temporality of this life and the eternity of the next, and how we, as sinners saved through Christ, should conduct ourselves on earth in light of our eternal destiny in heaven.

### Not for the farewell of this life, but for the welcome in the next

#### 1. The problem with stories

While Jesus usually spoke in parables, this story was notable in part because the actual name of a person, Lazarus, was used by Jesus. Instead of being a fictitious tale meant merely to teach us certain biblical truths, it was very likely, an actual story that also specially afforded us a glimpse into what hell was really like through the eyes of Jesus.

If we indeed take seriously Jesus' description of hell, then the terrifying reality of suffering should make us stop and think about the people around us who have not yet received the gift of salvation through Christ.

#### 2. The problem with riches

A superficial reading of this story might lead us to conclude that the rich man was in hell because he was rich while Lazarus was in heaven because he was poor. This is untrue – many biblical characters were rich. Abraham, King David, King Solomon, Zacchaeus, and Joseph of Arimethea were all acknowledged as rich men, but they were also called men of God. Clearly then, being rich was not a factor of one's eternal destiny.

Remember, Jesus was teaching his disciples. In verse 9, in the midst of this parable, Jesus told His disciples how they should use worldly wealth to gain friends for themselves who would welcome them into eternal dwellings. This is strikingly similar to the lesson of accountability and stewardship in Matthew 6 for us to store up treasures in heaven.

The first problem that afflicted the rich man then, was that he was not concerned with heaven, choosing instead to use his earthly treasures to dress himself in fine linen and to live in luxury.



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Not only that, but he also blatantly ignored the suffering of others just outside his gate (Luke 16:20). This is contrary to what we know about God's heart for the poor and how he wants us to be generous.

As disciples ourselves, we need to live this life in preparation and anticipation of the next – and consider our use and management of our God-given resources and how we view the poor and needy. Because it is not the farewell from this life that counts, but the welcome on the other side that truly matters.

### 3. The problem with living

The problem with living is that we often live as if this earthly, temporary life was the only life we will ever have, instead of placing it in the context of our eternal life in heaven. To the extent that, even though we clearly know of the eternal life that is to come, we reason that there is still time for us to enjoy this earthly life for just a little bit longer. We do not realise, or conveniently choose to ignore, that the 'chasm' between heaven and hell in Luke 16 reflects an irreversible, unchangeable consequence of decisions made in this life on earth.

### Conclusion

Heaven and hell are real – so let us live a life worthy of the calling God has given to each of us, being faithful stewards of our salvation and our earthly riches.

## Questions

What are some facts about the description of heaven and hell that you can gather from the sermon?

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The rich man did not go to hell because of wealth per se. But the similarities with worldliness are striking. In what ways have we been conducting ourselves like this rich man?



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The sermon reminds us that heaven and hell have real and lasting consequences. As believers in Jesus, we are already citizens of heaven. Given that eternity awaits every man, what is one thing you need to do from this day forward?

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