

# FIVE MINUTES AFTER WE DIE

## LUKE 16

Text:

Introduction:

### **Hebrews 9:27**

<sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

It is a fact that someday you and I and everyone who lives will die. Our hearts will stop beating and blood will stop coursing through our bodies. Our chests will no longer rise & fall with each breath. Our brain will stop sending millions of signals to various parts of our body. Millions of people will die this year in the U.S.A. alone. Some will be friends of ours, some will be our loved ones, some will be prominent public figures. By the end of the year, all of us will be touched by death.

Few subjects interest men more than life after death. Most people have considered the question of the ages found in Job 14:14, "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."

The question we must each ask of ourselves today is: What will happen to me five minutes after I die? The

only place we can find an accurate answer to our question is in the Word of God:

The answer is found in Luke 16:19-31.

Let's learn five realities of what happens after we die.

## **1. FIVE MINUTES AFTER WE DIE WE WILL STILL BE ALIVE.**

A. Both Lazarus and the Rich Man Experienced Life After Death.

Often this passage is referred to as a parable, but notice that nowhere does Jesus refer to it as a parable.

The "rich man" had a life of luxury. He was "clothed in purple and fine linen" which were great status symbols. He "fared sumptuously every day."

"Lazarus" on the other hand was "a beggar." He was probably crippled and/or diseased. He had to beg in order to live. His name means "God is our helper." God was his only hope. He was "full of sores," He had to be "laid" at "the gate" of the rich man. He ate the "crumbs which fell from the rich man's table" We also see that "dogs came and licked his sores."

Both died and received different types of burial.

Yet, both men were equalized in death. Both "died."  
Just as their lives were marked by contrast, so were  
their lives after death.

### B. All People Experience Death.

Death is the GREAT EQUALIZER. It is no respecter of  
persons. Whether you are rich or poor, young or old,  
black or white, American or European, male or  
female... death comes to all.

Death is PERSONAL. It will happen to you. It will  
happen to me.

Death is CERTAIN. You can put it off. You can maintain  
your health, but you can't avoid it. It will come!

Death is SURPRISING. Very few people plan to die. It  
just happens. Sometimes it happens when we least  
expect it.

### C. All People Experience Life After Death.

According to a survey in U.S. News & World Report,  
many Americans believe in an afterlife: 78% believe  
there is a heaven 60% believe there is a hell. Out of  
those who believe in an afterlife: 78% believe they  
have an excellent chance of going to heaven. 4%  
believe they have an excellent chance of going to hell.

For those who have be saved by Jesus Christ, 2 Cor.5:8 says:

**2 Corinthians 5:8**

<sup>8</sup>We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

The Apostle Paul said of his own life in Phil.1:21:

**Philippians 1:21**

<sup>21</sup>For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us of a "great cloud of witnesses" that surround us. These are faithful believers who have gone on to be with the Lord.

Yes, true believers live on after death in heaven. However, those who refuse Christ live on in judgment.

Notice in John 3:36.

(John 3:36) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

D. Death is not Extinction, but Separation.

Adam, in the day he ate the forbidden fruit died. Physically he didn't die until 900 years later. But the day he ate of the fruit he found he was separated from God.

Mankind has been separated from God by sin. People w/o Christ are dead while they live.

Eph.2:1 says:

**Ephesians 2:1**

<sup>1</sup> And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

People who are in Christ are alive even if they die.

**John 11:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: <sup>26</sup> And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

**2. FIVE MINUTES AFTER WE DIE WE SHALL BE CONSCIOUS.**

A. The Rich Man and Lazarus were Conscious.

In vv.24-26, the rich man was conscious of "being tormented in this flame."

Lazarus, on the other hand was comforted "in Abraham's bosom."

B. After Death, we are Conscious of our PAST.

Abraham reminded the rich man of the "good things" he received in his life. However all the "good things," the material wealth of this age will be worthless in eternity.

Job said (Job 1:21) "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

Jesus said Mat.16:26, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

That rich man would trade everything in his past to get out of hell! Every person in hell remembers every opportunity to be saved.

Someone who ignores this message today may remember it for eternity!

C. After Death, we are Conscious of our  
PRESENT.

The rich man begged for a drop of "water" to ease his torment. Lazarus enjoyed the peace, forgiveness and joy of heaven.

The roles are reversed. The rich man has become the beggar, craving for just a drop of water. Lazarus has

become the rich man enjoying the eternal blessings of one who has turned his life over to God.

### **3. FIVE MINUTES AFTER WE DIE THE SAVED SHALL BE WITH CHRIST.**

A. Lazarus was escorted into Heaven by Angels (v.22).

He closed his physical eyes on the suffering, pain and misery of this world and opened his spiritual eyes to see the Lord!

B. At Death, Believers will be escorted into the Presence of Jesus.

Jesus said to the repentant thief on the cross (Luke 23:43) "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Jesus said in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Let me ask you the most important question of life. If you were to die today, do you know FOR CERTAIN that you would go to heaven?

1 John 5:12-13 tells us how we can "know" that we have eternal life and will meet Jesus when we die. (1 John 5:12-13) "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. {13} These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

If you have this knowledge, at death you will pass to a world of no more tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain! Keep your eyes focused on that!

#### **4. FIVE MINUTES AFTER WE DIE OUR EARTHLY OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE GONE FOREVER.**

A. The Rich Man wanted to Send Someone Back to Speak to His Brothers.

He knew his destiny was sealed, so his concern was for his "five brothers." However, his opportunities for this life were gone.

B. Our Opportunity to WITNESS for Christ will be Gone.

Do you have a brother, sister, mother, father, relative, friend, neighbor, co-worker, fellow-student who is unsaved? Has God convicted you to share your faith.



Do it now. They need to hear "Moses and the prophets" - the Word of God. Someone has gone back "from the dead." His name is Jesus!

C. Our Opportunity to GROW in Christ will be Gone.

Some believers have been saved many years but are still spiritual babies.

D. Our Opportunity to SERVE Christ will be Gone.

John 9:4 "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

## **5. FIVE MINUTES AFTER WE DIE OUR DESTINIES WILL BE FIXED FOR ETERNITY.**

A. The Rich Man and Lazarus were Eternally Separated.

In v.26, Abraham reminds the rich man that there is "a great gulf [chasm, canyon] fixed" between them. No one could pass over.

When people die there are no second chances. This life decides where we spend eternity and once we step over there is no going back.

The rich man would have given everything he owned in order to be in heaven, and Lazarus would not have traded anything for his place there.

B. Our Eternal Destinies Hinge on our Choice about Jesus.

Jesus is the only way to heaven (John 14:6). You can't earn, buy or deserve a place there. We only enter heaven by repenting of our sins and trusting in Jesus.

If you have been saved by trusting in Jesus, relax. Your destiny is secured.

If you have never trusted Christ for salvation, your destiny is unsettled. Unless you receive Him, you will spend an eternity in torment beyond imagination.

We only have this life to make that choice.

Close:

Five minutes after we die, we shall be alive; we will be conscious; believers shall be with Christ; our earthly opportunities will be gone forever. Our destinies will be fixed for eternity.

Are You Ready?