


Five Seconds After You Die

Mike Connell,
Shane Willard

 Sermon Audio Transcripts

Smashwords Edition

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Five Seconds After You Die (7 sermons)

[Five Seconds After You Die](#) We read in the paper of accidents, car accidents and young people dying, and there are questions, many questions people have in their hearts, about the reality of what happens after death, and what happens to a person when they die, what will happen in those first five seconds after you die. These are questions people often don't speak out but they wonder about them. There's a tremendous amount of nonsense in the movies to try and explain some of these things. If we want to find out about what happens in eternity, if we want to find out about life after death or what happens at death, the best place we can go is to the one who made it known.

[Live with Purpose \(Men's Breakfast\)](#) Ghenna was the town rubbish dump (a present reality), and Hades is an afterlife (a future reality), in English its Hell. When we think of Hell, we tend to think about: them (in the future); but in the vast majority of Jesus' teachings, Hell was: us (in the present). Heaven & Hell are both true, and both occupied, in the here/now. They are also both true of another place in the future, which is also occupied, by real people. Jesus' emphasis was far, far, far more on one, instead of the other. When you take care of the poor and the afflicted, that is what it means to know God. Your intentions are just the starting point. Pure motives, and consistent obedience, mixed with focussed intentions, will lead you to a life that cannot be shaken. What are you rationalising today, that you'll regret tomorrow? One yes requires a thousand NO's. You can never beat sin by fighting sin. Instead you beat sin by empowering something else. The power that you give something else overcomes the sin. Have you ever lost your ability to enjoy what God's given you, because you've compared it to somebody else? Can you clearly define what you want?

[Are You Worthy \(1 of 2\)](#) There are four verses in the Bible that say homosexuality's wrong. There are 2000 verses in the Bible that tell us to love each other, so maybe we've got our emphasis wrong? Who is worthy to break the seals, and open the scrolls? But no one in heaven - so there's people already in heaven, who aren't worthy - no one in heaven, or earth, or under the earth, could open the scroll, or even look inside of it. Jesus' invitation was not to be a

certain way, in order to go somewhere. Jesus' invitation was to allow what is somewhere else to be established in you right now. The "Flames of Heaven" is God's relentless pursuit, to make you the best you can be in His kingdom, without taking your free will away. Hell will let you stay greedy, heaven won't; Hell will let you stay racist, heaven won't - lots of fire in heaven. Jesus' message for His followers is this: get in line with God's kingdom today, as fast as you can, urgently. I urge you to do this. The whole world's at stake. Come on people, come on - we need to establish the kingdom of God on this earth! A disciple is someone actively participating with God, to establish His kingdom on the earth

[Are You Worthy \(2 of 2\)](#) Grace, by definition, isn't fair. Heaven consumes in flames any ideas of rank. To avoid the flames of heaven, we have to die to the idea that God must be fair. If heaven invaded your life today, who would you have to accept, that you now see as unacceptable? Jesus described heaven as tormenting to those who don't forgive. Jesus is at the centre, and everybody's equidistant around Him, because no one was worthy to begin with. There's always someone that's done less than me, but Heaven includes us all in a circle. Heaven is not created by the exclusion of imperfect people, but by the inclusion of imperfect people - by grace cleaning them up, purifying them with the flames of heaven. If heaven invaded our life today, we would be overwhelmed with how much it's not about us, and not care where we ranked; we would simply be overwhelmed with God's presence. Why not let that part of heaven be established in you right now?

[Be the Salt and Light](#) There are 6 mentions of fire in hell, but 229 mentions of fire in heaven! If you walked into heaven tomorrow, what parts of you would be burned up? 15 of 18 of Jesus mentions of hell, was about us, here, now. It's about: what are you bringing to the earth? How's your lust problem? How's your anger problem? Do you call people fools? How is fear of man instead of fear of God? What are you bringing to the earth?

[Resurrection of the Dead \(6 of 7\)](#) Jesus was the first-fruits, the first-born to be resurrected from the dead, and appear to many in a resurrection body - immortal, incorruptible, able to vanish in and out, no longer constrained by the physical world. He was a pattern for all that is to follow. This teaching covers the first resurrection, 1000 year reign of Christ on earth, and the second resurrection. Which one will you be in?

[Eternal Judgment \(7 of 7\)](#) Sometimes we focus a lot on the grace of God, the goodness of God, the mercy of God we forget or overlook that there is another side, that God is also holy and He's just. His justice requires that He deal with how we've governed our life and what we've done in our life. All of you have an appointment to keep with this. There is no exception. Matt 16:27 I come and my reward is with me, to give to every man according to his work.

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Five Seconds After You Die (Mike Connell)

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We read in the paper of accidents, car accidents, motor vehicle accidents, young people dying and there are questions, many questions people have in their hearts about the reality of what happens after death and what happens to a person when they die, what happens in the first five seconds after you die. These are questions people

often don't speak out but they wonder about them. There's a tremendous amount of nonsense in the movies to try and explain some of these things. If we want to find out about what happens in eternity, if we want to find out about life after death or what happens at death, the best place we can go is to the one who made it known.

This week I had a very sad task, to take a funeral of a young girl, a 20 year old girl. Very sad when you go into a funeral service, and there's someone who's only 20 years. We would expect most people to live these days beyond 70, and so to have 50 years or more of her life cut off is just nothing short of tragedy; very, very painful for the parents, very, very difficult. I know we had a number of young people there, and every one of those young people was deeply affected by the loss of a friend.

I think this kind of situation happens over and over and over. We read in the paper of accidents, car accidents, motor vehicle accidents, young people dying; and there are questions, many questions people have in their hearts, about the reality of what happens after death; and what happens to a person when they die, what happens in the first five seconds after you die.

These are questions people often don't speak about, but they wonder about them. There's a tremendous amount of nonsense in the movies to try and explain some of these things. If we want to find out about what happens in eternity, if we want to find out about life after death, or what happens at death; the best place we can go, is to the one who made it known.

The Bible says of Jesus Christ: He came from eternity. He came into the earth; and then knowing where He'd come from, and where He was going to, that He was going back to His Father, He served people, laid His life down as a sacrifice for people; then went into eternity again. So before He did, he appeared to many people; so if you want to know about eternity, then it's quite good to find directly from the person who's been there, lived there, experienced it, and has gone to be there now.

If we look through the gospels, the stories of Jesus, He taught many things, and many times He taught parables. A parable is just a story. It's not a true story, not a real story. It's just a story to get interest, but in it there's a spiritual principle.

What I'm going to read to you is not a story, and we know it's not a story for two reasons: one is, He doesn't tell us it's a story. Everywhere else, if it's a parable, they say it's a parable; so it doesn't say this is a parable, and Jesus is talking directly to His followers. He wants them to understand something.

The second thing is, there are two people who are mentioned in this story. They're mentioned by name. There's a third one who's not mentioned by name, and probably very well that we don't mention his name, but these are real people, who once lived on the same planet we do. They lived in another time, but these people are very real.

I want to just go through and read what Jesus had to say about these people. At times, Jesus, it's almost like He rolled back eternity, and gave people glimpses into it. There are a number of ways that He did that, sometimes with miracles; miracles are manifestation of the eternal power of the kingdom of heaven, coming into the earth. Sometimes He did it through miracles. Sometimes He did it through confrontation of demons, and suddenly for the first time, people become aware of an invisible spirit world.

So when you look at Jesus' ministry, He made the spiritual tangible and real. Not only that, He talked about it. He taught things about the eternal kingdom. He talked about things that would come. He made it very clear, that He would not return until the gospel of the kingdom had been preached through every nation of the earth, and we still have a lot to do.

Then He spoke one story, which gives you a window into eternity. It's not a very pleasant window. It's not a very happy window, but Jesus had seen this. Jesus knew this, and Jesus could teach it like no one else could teach it; so we're going to look in Luke, Chapter 16.

What I want to do, is for you to just open your heart to look for a moment, not just at something in the Bible, but to look, just glimpse into eternity, to discover something you may not have been aware of before. We want to ask the question: what happens in the first five seconds after a person dies? One, two, three, four, five. There's some things happen in those five seconds when a person dies.

I've been with people who've died. I've been with a number of people who died, and it's an unusual experience. I remember being with an older woman, it was John Steele's mother. She was part of our church. She had cancer, and people used to go to her because she was dying of cancer, and they would feel sorry for her; so they would go to the house feeling sorry for her, to visit her, and they'd come away changed, because in her heart was an absolutely

confidence of a reality of eternity. She was totally at peace. When you'd go to her, she would talk, and fill you with joy, and fill you with peace. She was extremely positive about what was about to happen to her.

I remember I was called up to the hospital another time, and there was a particular family there, and I didn't know who they were. They weren't part of our church. They just asked - I don't know how they even got my number. They rang me, come up, so I go up there, and I go in. There's a family around, and this must have been a younger person, around about 30-ish I suppose.

The moment I looked at her in the bed, I knew immediately she was going to die. She was in a coma, but what stunned me was the contortions she was making. You could tell this was a person with no peace in their heart. You could tell this was a person who was tormented inside, who was troubled. It was all over the person's face, even though they were out to it, it was all over her face, it was all over her body. I looked at her, and I said to the family: I believe this is her last night on earth. You need to prepare to let go.

It was an incredible time; and then I was with another lady, and she was an older lady dying of cancer. She was in that particular room, which I don't like, and she was there. I went and sat with her, and talked with her, and she asked me this question: what is it like, when you die?

I shared with her a few things. I said: well, if you're a believer (and you are a believer), the Bible says: precious in the eyes of the Lord, is the death of a saint. So in other words, it's an incredibly precious moment of time, when someone who trusts Christ dies, because then they can see Him face to face. The veil is moved. Suddenly the one they've worshipped, and loved, and walked with, all the years of their life; suddenly the veil is removed, and they see Him.

So I talked with her about that, and suddenly - now you've got to realise, she was very weak. She was dying of cancer, and there was very little life left in her. Suddenly she sat up straight, bolt upright. I was quite astonished that she did this, because she looked so very, very weak and feeble. She stood up, and she looked, and I could tell she was seeing something I couldn't see.

I was quite interested of course. I said: what are you seeing? She said: that man over there, can you see that man over there? I said: no, I wish I could, but I can't see Him. I said: tell me about Him, what is he like? I asked first of all because I didn't know whether it's a devil, or what it is, you know; but I just asked - I said: is He smiling? She said: He's smiling! Then she began to talk about His countenance, and what He looked like. She described - now she was almost like she was transfixed, looking at something; and as she looked, she could see this person. I knew she could see the person. She could describe exactly where in the room He was standing.

She described Him, and I said: it has to be the Lord Jesus, has to be Jesus Christ, and He's welcoming you. He's giving you a glimpse into what is about to come for you. Sure enough, that very evening she died, and she died in tremendous peace; the Saviour she'd served, and walked with all her life, now she saw a glimpse of Him, before she went into eternity to meet Him.

So there are just some stories of people - but this is something different. This is actually something Jesus taught, and so this is also a very real story. These are real people, and two of them have names.

The other one doesn't have a name - so we found it in Luke 16:19 - and Jesus is talking to His disciples. He's in the presence of the Pharisees. So the Pharisees, very rich, they coveted money, they lusted after all kinds of things. They were people who were religious, but there was no heart change. There was no love for people.

So let's have a look at see what it is; and as we go through it, you will see for a moment a glimpse into eternity, and we'll be able to answer the question, exactly how it is, five seconds after a person dies. So here it is.

There was a certain rich man who died, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and he fared or ate sumptuously every day. Now this is the man they don't tell you who he is. There's just a rich man, a man who was extremely wealthy, and there are three things that characterised him; one, he was very, very rich, very, very wealthy person. Second thing that characterised him was, he bought the best of clothes; so he was out shopping, fine linen, so very, very expensive to buy fine linen. He went out and shopped for all the best of clothes. He had a great life, because he had a lot of money. Not only that, he ate well. In other words, he had a great feast every day, drank wine and ate well; and had food laid out on the table, like you'd never seen before. He was very wealthy. Whatever he wanted, he could have; so that's the rich man.

Doesn't tell us who he is, but this is a real person, and we can tell not only from this story about this man living. We can actually tell you, in just a few moments, exactly what he's experiencing right now, 2000 years after Jesus spoke this. We can see it, and Jesus made it very clear...

but there was also a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores who was laid at his gate. So now Lazarus is described. Lazarus is a real person. He was as alive in his day, as you are alive today. He was a person who walked the earth. He had a name, he had a family background, he had a family.

He came from a family, but he was a very sick man. The Bible doesn't tell us anything much about his sickness, but what it does tell us, it tells us two things about this man, and that was: one, he had lots of sores on his body, so he was riddled with some kind of disease. Second thing is that he was laid at the rich man's house. If he was laid there, that means he couldn't walk, so this man was riddled with a disease, and the disease affected him so seriously he couldn't walk. He actually had to go and be carried to the rich man's house. He was carried to the rich man's house, because his only way of sustaining his life was by begging.

So here they are, two men, a very, very rich man, a very wealthy man, very rich, clothed well, eating well, has everything that money can buy; and another man who's a poor man. This man is sick with disease, and when people are very sick with disease, with sores, it's very easy for others to despise them - so he was very needy. So they laid him at the rich man's gate, so that hopefully the rich man would have some compassion.

Throughout the Bible, the Bible tells us, God is a God of compassion. That means He's moved by the plight of people. We see so much on television, we're not moved by much at all. Very little moves us, until we actually meet real people, with real problems.

So here are two people: one is Lazarus; and one is the rich man. Notice this: Lazarus desired to be fed with crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and the dogs came over and licked his sores. So this guy is in a terrible state. His sores are obviously flowing, they're open sores. He's in a very, very terrible state. He's hoping to be fed, even just little crumbs from the rich man's table. He's hoping that someone will have mercy on him, and help him. This man who had so much, he's looking to him, and hoping that he will help him on the journey, that he'll provide him a little bit of food, a little bit of comfort, a little bit of help, something just a little to support him. He'd have even eaten the crumbs under the table, like one of the dogs would, but the man wouldn't give him anything.

So that's the story; two men, and the issue is not the wealth they had. The issue is not about being rich and about being poor. The issue is about the state of the people's heart, the condition of their inner life. It's never about what we look like outside.

God looks on the heart, and sees what we're really like; and it says the beggar died, and later on we'll find the rich man died. So he probably died of his disease, died of what was afflicting him. He died. Now notice this; he was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. Just notice that for a moment. There are many other references to this, but it says: the rich man also died, and was buried. Now you notice, it tells us the beggar - doesn't say anything about his burial. He was so poor, I guess a few people who knew him picked him up, and gathered him, and made some poor grave and put him in there, just did the best they could. But there was no big fuss, no big funeral, no big celebration of his life, or anything like that.

But the rich man died and was buried; so he also died, probably prematurely. He thought he would live a long time. That's one of the things that happen to us. We all think we're going to live a long time, and we don't really know. You have no idea how long you'll live. You have no idea how long you're on this earth. You only have the life you're living and breathing today, and today is the day you make decisions.

Today you live the life you have. You don't know what tomorrow holds. You don't know what the future holds. We all have our dreams, our hopes, our aspirations, but the reality is that many people, at a very young age, are cut off in their life by various kinds of tragedies. This is a reality. We see it in the paper all the time.

So this rich man assumed he would have a long life. He assumed his life would go on, and suddenly he was struck dead; so they had a big funeral for him, because he's a very important man. But notice the difference immediately after death.

It says for Lazarus - it names him - Lazarus had a relationship with God. We know he had a relationship with God, and a faith in God, because he ends up in the presence of God. You can't end up in the presence of God, if you haven't come to know Him while you're alive on earth.

Everyone is born separated from God; so Jesus is describing a real man, and where he is now, and He said that straight after he died, something happened. So what happened for him, in the five seconds after he died? One, two, three, four, five.

In those five seconds, this is what happened to him. He closed his eyes and fell asleep, and immediately he became aware he's in the realm of the spirit.

You are a spirit being. You live in a body, and when you die, the Bible says when a person dies, their spirit leaves their body; and so he left his body, had a final out-of-body experience.

Notice it tells us, it said: angels gathered him, or took him; so immediately in the five seconds after he died, he suddenly was aware of his body being dead on the ground, and he is alive. Angels, real angels, have come to gather him into an eternal realm, where he's in the presence of God.

So in the five seconds after he died, he suddenly wakes, and is aware his body's on the ground, he is moving into eternity, and angels have come to gather him. In other words, he's a friend of God, and so God has brought angels, to bring him into His presence.

There are many scriptures in the Bible, which tell us when people of God die, they are 'gathered' into the presence of God. Gathered means someone meets and walks, or takes them on the journey into the presence of God; so you're a believer, in the moment, the first five seconds after you die, the person who trusts Christ, you'll suddenly become aware that your life, as you knew it, is over.

You may become aware of your body, and you're outside your body. But what you will become aware of is that there are angels waiting to greet you, and to take you and usher you into eternity, into the presence of an Almighty God who loves you. There you will face your creator. There you'll face Jesus Christ, and you will give account of your life, and your eternal destiny will be made very plain for you.

Now what about the rich man? So the rich man, it doesn't say anything about angels there. There's no mention of angels when the rich man died, so we can only conclude if Jesus did not mention angels for him, there were no angels met him. So what happened for him, in the five seconds after he died?

It says: and being in torments in Hell. There are a number of scriptures. There's an interesting one in Job 27:19-22, and it talks about the rich man coming before the king of terrors.

You've got to understand this. He assumed he was going to live a long life. It was a shock to him to die early. It's always a shock for people to die early, so this man died; and the moment he died, he suddenly became aware that he's now no longer in his body, but there are no angels waiting to meet him.

In fact actually the opposite; he is ushered immediately into an eternity separated by God. He doesn't tell us who took him there, but it says in other places in the Bible, he shall stand before the "king of terrors". It's not a very nice sounding name is it, the king of terrors?

So it says - notice about this man - it says: he, being in torments in Hades, lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. He cried, and he said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus - that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.

Abraham said: son, remember in your lifetime, you received good things; and likewise Lazarus, evil things; now he is comforted, and you are tormented; and beside this, between us there is a great gulf, fixed so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot; nor can those from there, pass to us.

So let's have a look what the Bible tells us. Now Jesus is giving you a glimpse into what it's like. Now the reality is - that man is still there now. That man is still there now. The reality is, is that Lazarus is still in the presence of God.

Notice what it says of Lazarus, first of all. It says: he was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. Now Abraham is the father of people of faith, so people who were descendants of Abraham, or people who follow Abraham, or people who believe in Jesus Christ, are children of Abraham by faith.

Now to be in the person's bosom, they understood what that meant. In the Eastern times, they would lie down to eat their meal; and so to have a particularly close intimate relationship with someone, you put their head against your bosom, against your chest. John the Apostle leant his head on Jesus' bosom. He had a close relationship.

So what it's saying, is that this man Lazarus was deeply loved by Abraham, recognised by Abraham, has a very close relationship with Abraham, the father of faith, and is wonderfully happy in eternity. That was what happened to him.

But what about the other man? Now there are two things that you can tell, and these are the interesting things. There'll be a lot of people who are your friends, they've got no idea. I've been to some funerals, and I've heard the weirdest things, weirdest songs, the weirdest kind of statements about how they've just become a star, and they're looking down on us now. This is total nonsense - or they're just floating around, and they're watching over us. Again, this is not true. It comes out of the mind and imagination of people, who don't know the reality. Here is the reality.

Now this is a reality for any person you know who doesn't know Christ. Jesus said: you must be born again if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven, you must be born from above. It requires an encounter with God to change you on the inside.

Now young people, I want you to think about this. You live and walk every day in the presence of people who are spiritually dead - and this is their eternity, should they have an accident next weekend; should they go drinking to get rid of the pain that they feel in their heart, and a car goes out of control. Before you know it, there's two or three young people killed. This, which you're going to read now, is the reality for them. It's not just some sort of story.

You know the movies try to make these things, and portray them, and make them look in certain ways, but Jesus describes reality. So I want to show you two things about this.

Number one, I want to describe for you the person himself, because in case you wonder what it'll be like for me - all that happens is you lose your body, but you are still very alive.

Death does not mean you don't exist anymore. Death is just you're separated from your body, separated from the people, separated from this earth, separated from loved ones, so the ones who are grieving are the loved ones.

If you're a Christian, for you to go into eternity is great joy, and great release. In fact many people who have had experiences of going into eternity, and encountering Jesus, never wanted to come back; but they came back because Jesus assigned them to come back.

So what about this man here? Now it says, notice, these things. We're just going to look at it very carefully: He was in torments. He had eyes, he could see, he could recognise Abraham and Lazarus - he recognised him. Notice he cries out, he's got a voice. He's crying for mercy. He talks about Lazarus dipping the tip of his finger in water, and cooling his tongue for I'm tormented in this flame.

So here's the thing that you notice about the man himself. The man himself has eyes, he has a tongue, he has fingers, he has feelings, he has emotions, and he has memories. So in hell, this man is totally conscious.

He can recognise Abraham, who he's never met; so in the realm of eternity, you're able to recognise people you've never met - you just know them immediately. You notice he's got memories - he recognises immediately who Lazarus is; which tells us that in his lifetime, he knew exactly who Lazarus is, and what his condition was - but he ignored it completely. No heart, no compassion, no mercy, quite self-indulgent.

So what else does it tell us? It very clearly - there are fingers, there's tongue, and notice what it says: he was in torments, terrible, terrible, terrible torments. It was his tongue that was tormented, and it described that it was food, and lust for food, was his issue. So he says: I'm tormented in this flame, so notice now he's got these tremendous issues.

Here he is, he exists; so when you die, you won't just cease to exist. You'll just walk out of your body, and someone who could see you, will know exactly who you were, a person from eternity.

You'll walk immediately into eternity. You'll have fingers, and you'll have eyes, and you'll have a nose, and you'll have all the features that a human being would have; except not a physical body, just a spirit body, and your memories. Everything you remember, every experience you had, you'll take it with you.

Now notice also about the place. The people struggle with this thing of a real hell, but there is a real heaven, and there is a real hell. You could probably search out the internet, and you'd find stories, testimonies of people who went to heaven; also people who went to hell. Those who went to hell, it's extremely frightening, terrifying experience for them.

We had some CDs a little while ago, Mary K Baxter I think it was, and she had these visions where she was taken into hell, and she was almost in trauma for days afterwards. It took her a long time to come out of it, and then she's become a most powerful witness, and she described the scenes of the people she saw, who she saw, what she saw. It's a most gripping thing. I tell you it's one of the most motivating things, when you see it.

But let's have a look at this place called Hell. Firstly you notice he was in hell. He was in a real place - it is a real place. There is a spiritual place, a place in the spirit realm, that is called Hell. Notice it's a real place, and it's a place of torment, a place of tremendous pain. Notice it says: talking about the flame; so there's obviously flames of fire in that place. Notice in that place in hell, there's memory. You can remember your life on the earth. Notice also that you know a number of things; you notice that he's able to recognise.

There's an unquenchable fire, Jesus said in Mark 9. He said: in that place, there is a fire that burns, and it can never be put out. There's a corruption takes place, can never, never, never be stopped. In other words, it's a place of immense pain, and torment of all kinds. Part of the torment is flame. Part of the torment is some kinds of things that consume you, but you're never fully consumed. But part of the torment is you remember your life on earth, and you remember the opportunities you had.

You remember people on earth who've known Christ, and you're aware of them in eternity. You're also aware that there's no possibility that you can ever escape this place. This is the most horrendous thing. Most of us in a place of pain, or a place of difficulty, the thing that comforts us is it won't be too much longer. You go to the dentist, well it's very painful, but it's going to be over in an hour - but not so in this place. This man is still there. He's going to be there for all eternity.

So notice some other things. Abraham said: son, remember in your lifetime - so he's got memory. He remembered in his lifetime all the good things, and he said: now here's comfort, and you're tormented, and there's a justice in this.

When we go to heaven, we're comforted. We experience the comfort, the love of God. If a person goes to hell, they experience torment. They've left God out of their life, and now there's torment that goes on forever.

Notice he said: there's a great gulf, fixed between those who want to pass from here to you, that cannot; and those from here pass to us. So notice he's saying that it's impossible, once you're in that place, to shift from one to the other. He said: even if someone here saw a loved one, and wanted to go, they could not. Even if you wanted to come and change your realm, you cannot. He said: it's fixed. It's fixed by God, so one of the torments for people in hell is, they're aware of those who went ahead, who have actually died in faith. It's a horrendous thing.

Notice this, as we go down, he says: now I beg you. I beg you father, that you would send Lazarus to my father's house; for I have five brothers, and he may testify to them, lest they come to this place of torment.

So you notice now he calls it a place of torment, he actually describes it. This is Jesus telling us about a real person. This is not some story. This is actually a reality, an eternal reality. Well, tell me something motivational. Tell me something to get me excited. Tell me something to get me wound up. No, no, no, no. We're telling you about eternal reality.

There are two eternal realities; one is a reality in heaven, and the other is a reality in hell, and tormented; and that's why Jesus came. He never told us what the name of the man was, and I'm glad he never did. It's impossible for us to know who goes into that place. Only God can decide, because only God is the judge.

That's why it doesn't tell us at all who that person was, but we know he came from a big family, a family of six and they were probably a wealthy family, because he has great concern for his brothers. So isn't it interesting, in hell he remembers his family, and his only thing is: boy, they're in trouble if they come here.

He wants something to be done, and you notice what Abraham said to him: We'll have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. He said: no. If one goes to them from the dead, then they will repent.

Now notice this; he is aware that the reason he is in that place, is because of his self-centred life, and failure to repent. Jesus came and preached: if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven, there must be a change in how you think, and how you run your life. There's a need to abandon a life without God, and embrace a life of relationship and faith in him; so this man knew the reason - he was there was lack of repentance.

There was no opportunity for him to repent, and his concern is this: he remembers his friends. He remembers his family. He remembers his brothers, and his memory of his brothers - I don't want them to come here. Can you tell them?

And Abraham says: well they've got the Bible. Oh no, no, no, no, send someone from the dead. He said: no, even if we send someone from the dead, they won't listen to the Bible, and the prophets of God. They won't listen to someone who came from the dead!

So what Jesus is saying, very, very clearly is this: is that the word of God is what we need to change our values, our thinking, and our heart attitudes. If we won't believe the word of God, and put our trust in what God says, then even if we saw a miracle, it won't change us.

When Jesus' friend Lazarus - it's a different guy Lazarus - when he raised him from the dead - the religious leaders, instead of celebrating and having faith, wanted to kill him, because he was inconvenient.

Jesus rose from the dead, and in spite of Him rising from the dead, there's still great contention worldwide; even though a man rose from the dead. People do get raised from the dead. In Pakistan, Dave was telling me just recently, one of his last meetings he took there, another girl was raised from the dead, so people do get raised from the dead, but what counts is: what we will do with Jesus Christ, and our response to the word of God.

So what happens in the five seconds after a person dies? Death can come very quickly. Death can come slowly, but there is just a moment when the person dies. When a person dies, their spirit leaves their body, so here's what happens.

They become aware, as they leave their body, they're leaving this realm. If a person has faith in Christ, they become immediately fixed upon the presence of angels, in white dazzling garments, with a great smile on their face, coming to greet them and welcome them as a person of faith, and bring them to where they belong, an eternity in the kingdom of heaven, forever and ever and ever. They're ushered into the presence of Jesus Christ. They're ushered into a realm of joy, of peace, of tremendous beauty, of beauty that you can't even possibly imagine, of colours and of life that is just beyond what we could know here.

That's why when people experience it, they're reluctant to come back; because it's so beautiful, so intense, and so fulfilling, they never want to leave it to come back to a war zone. So that's what a person experiences, the moment they die.

I have no doubt that David's daughter Jessie, in the moment alone at her bed, when she had an epileptic fit and then suddenly died, there was a moment suddenly she was aware she's stepping out of her body, and she's encountering angels, and coming into the presence of the Lord. In that presence, she'd have no desire to return, so intense, so wonderful, something that's hard to describe.

But for a person who doesn't know Christ, it's quite a different story. Maybe you know someone who doesn't know Christ. This is why they need to be saved, because of what will happen to them. That person that doesn't know Christ, we don't know how long they'll live. You don't know what can happen to that person's life. You don't know whether they'll have some kind of accident. We just do not know. Neither shall we be so confident that it's not going to happen. We just need to actually carry the heart Jesus had for them.

Now notice what it says: Straight away he opened his eyes, and found himself in hell. There were no angels to greet him. It's most likely demons dragged him into hell. He turned up in a place of torment, his life terrified, in absolute agony and pain, aware of his fingers, aware of his tongue, aware of his memories of earth, in a place of great torment, aware of other people in a different place - and there is no, no, no release forever. This is a 'window into eternity' story, and it's a story about real people.

Jesus told the story so we would have no doubt whatsoever. He knew that there would come a day when people would question whether there's an eternity, question whether there's life after death, and so He came to make it very, very plain. So people today have two eternal destinations: one in the presence of Almighty God; one in the presence of torment forever.

Only God can make the decision who is who, but what He has done is this. The Bible says in Matthew, Chapter 9, it says: Jesus looked on the harvest field. He looked on multitudes of people, and He felt deeply moved with compassion. Why? Because He saw into eternity, and He saw their condition, and His heart was moved.

Remember the problem with the rich man? The problem with the rich man was not his wealth. The problem with the rich man was his heart. He actually had no heart of compassion for people. His heart was not moved with love for people, concern for people, desire to reach out. He was actually self preoccupied. This was his problem.

Jesus looked out on the multitude, and He said: they're like sheep without a shepherd. He was moved with compassion. He said: the harvest is great, but what's lacking are labourers - people with a passion for souls, people with a passion for the harvest. Eleven young men put their hands up, and said: I'll go. Eleven young men gave their lives for the gospel. This gospel of Jesus Christ is good news, that there's an eternity that begins now, with a

relationship with God. There's an eternity that is true now, and just gets worse forever; and you and I have the words of life, to help people come into it.

We live in an hour when God is calling the church to understand the realities of heaven and hell, to experience and encounter heaven, and to get in our heart a deep compassion for people that are lost; not to go and harangue them with words, but to understand the gospel is the power of God to salvation, to every person who believes.

I've had great joy to speak the gospel, and watch people weep as God touched their life, and they came to Christ, to feel and see the joy and the peace come into their life.

Young people, God has a mission for you. It's a mission to carry His life to this generation, to carry the life of God, the word of God, the power of God, and to find ways, creative ways of communicating these spiritual realities to people.

You're living among young people who - many are in pain, and they're trying to dull the pain through alcohol and drugs and relationships. They're actually lost, and don't understand. This is why a person needs to be saved. They're lost. They can't find the way. It's the nature of sheep. If a sheep is lost, it cannot find its way home. It needs someone to go and say: this is the way.

Jesus said: people are like sheep. If you've ever had anything to do with sheep - go and ask Barry. Barry knows about sheep - they just, once they're lost, they're lost. They can't find their way anywhere. They're just lost. They need someone to go - and you are the person to go. You are the person to carry the love of God. You're the person to bring a message of hope.

I remember when someone first reached out to me, and it wasn't what they said, because I was pretty resistant, but it was what I saw in their eyes, as they spoke their concern for me, and I knew, I knew I was in trouble. It wasn't the words they said. I can't even remember what they said, but the look in this person's eyes, of concern and compassion for me, made me aware something was deeply wrong inside me, and I needed help. I could see in the person's eyes, a compassion and love of Jesus Christ; and it deeply disturbed me, because I knew I had something wrong inside, and I think the very next time I went to a church meeting, I looked around. For the first time I saw, they had something that I was lacking, and I needed to be saved.

Just close our eyes right now. I really just feel tonight that God is wanting to awaken in our heart just a desire for the lost, a desire to reach to people. If you've got a Bible, go back into Luke 16, and just meditate on it. If you've got a computer, go look on the internet, you'll probably find some things in YouTube, a little bit about it. Get testimonies of people who were there, who've been to this place, have seen it's reality, and ask God to fill your heart with a deep love for people who are lost.

When you see the young people in your classroom, or the people around you in your neighbourhood, begin to look at them quite differently. As you look at them, this is what you look for. As you look at people - I did this for a little while when I first came to this city, just began to walk down the streets, and praying quietly in tongues, and looking into the eyes of people, looking in to an eternal being, and my heart was moved for the city, as I saw how lost people were. It shows in the eyes, the deadness and dullness. You see the vacancy. There's no joy, no vibrancy, no life. They need a saviour.

What were you saved from? You were saved from the power of sin, with all its torments, the separation it brings, an eternity without Christ, an eternity in that place of torment, that the rich man is in right now.

He would wish that someone could come from the dead, and appear in front of you right now; but Abraham said: no, even that won't change things. They have the word of God - if they won't believe that, then even someone turning up and appearing to them won't make the difference.

So tonight you have had the word of God. You have heard the very words of Jesus. We put them on the screen and read them out. There is no mistaking there are two possible destinations, and one decision to make. What will I do with Jesus Christ? That is the decision. It's not about church; it's not about some big experience. It's actually: what will you do with Jesus Christ? What year are we living in? It's that many years since Jesus Christ came. What will you do with this person?

I just sense, God wants to put into people's hearts a fresh passion for souls, a fresh concern for the lost; and if that's you tonight, why don't you just come, just lift your hands to the Lord, or kneel down in front. Say: God, put a deep burden in my heart.

It's not something I can work up. It's nothing emotional I can do, but I just want you to start to awaken in me the compassion and love that you have for people around me. I walk around them and pass them, and I just overlook that they're in such desperate need. I've lost the passion to see them saved. Lord, tonight I'm asking you to reignite it.

Would you do that? Would you come tonight, that's your prayer, say: God, ignite that fire again in my heart. Why don't you just make your way out of your seat tonight and say: God, ignite a fresh passion, a fresh desire for lost people, ignite it in my heart.

Lord help me to see, and become aware of, the very fires of hell, of the very fires of torment. Help me become aware of it. Lord, I want the reality of these things to quicken inside me; so there's urgency, a desperation, there's a concern that can be seen and felt in my words, and my countenance. Lord, I'm asking you to awaken this in my life. Come on, don't be afraid to come if that's you. If you have no heart for the lost, and no concern for them, it'd be good to just say: God, I don't know why I feel no concern. Awaken in me concern, awaken it Lord.

We'll just lift our hands to the Lord right now, just begin to worship Him. Holy Spirit, I can't make this happen, but I'm asking for you to come. I'm asking Lord, that through vision, through revelation, you would awaken the hearts of people tonight, to the eternal realities of heaven and hell, whether it be by vision, whether it be by dream, whether it be by an encounter in this next few days or week or whenever.

I'm asking Lord, that the reality of eternity would come alive, for every person that's standing here today; Father, that they begin to see into the spirit, the reality of those flames, the reality of people in torment, the reality of the lost that's there, people trapped in dungeons, people who once walked the face of this earth, absolutely lost for eternity.

Oh God, write in our heart a deep passion, a deep concern, that Lord, tears would come, we'd begin to weep for the lost, weep for our own generation, weep for our family members, weep for those in the church, who think they're safe and really their condition is desperate.

Lord, we weep for the city that we live in, for its lost state. Lord, we pray tonight that you begin to pour your spirit upon people, that we begin to have a fresh fire, a fire for souls awakened in us.

Lord, open our eyes to see into eternity, to see that rich man, the horror in his eyes, in his countenance, lost forever, remembering his brothers, but now they're there with him. It's possible for the spirit of God to open your eyes, to see and begin to feel the pain. Begin to see and feel that place; but as you see it, feel the heart of Jesus.

Hell was never made for people, it was made for the devil and his angels. God never made that place of torment for people. It was made for the devil and his angels.

Tonight as you look into that place, begin to be aware of Jesus, His great compassion. It's not His heart that any should go to that place. Peter writes this: God's heart is that none should perish, but all should be saved. What is the will of God? None perish, all saved. None of your friends perish, all saved. None of your family perish, but all saved.

So who will pray? Who will stand in the gap of indecision, to break the yoke of sin, to break the yoke of Satan over people, so their eyes are no longer blinded? Who will rise in prayer, and begin to passionately intercede the souls? Who will arise and begin to equip, and get to know how to share the gospel, and begin to look for ways to reach out to their friends; with kindness, with love, and to share unashamedly the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Paul says: I'm not ashamed of the gospel. I'm not ashamed of the gospel message. I'm not ashamed of Jesus Christ. I'm not ashamed of what He said. I'm not ashamed of who He is. I'm not ashamed of what He did. I am not ashamed of the good news of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God, of salvation to all who will believe.

Father, awaken in us. Awaken in us as a church; awaken in us as individuals, your compassion for lost people. Let it begin to mobilise and drive us and empower us to reach our friends with passion, with purpose, with zeal and Lord, with a sense of urgency.

One of the challenges we find is, we live in a culture where people are passive, and there's nothing really urgent, except that I can answer my phone right now and see who's calling me. But we need to get the urgency of the gospel going out.

Lord Jesus, I thank you for people tonight who are standing. Awaken in each of us a passion and desire for the lost, a deep awareness of what we are saved from, and who saved us, and how much we love You.

We thank you tonight, Jesus Christ, that you came into this earth. We thank you that you left heaven, and came into this earth; we thank you Lord, that you demonstrated the kingdom, demonstrated the love of the Father, demonstrated for us the realities of the kingdom, taught on the realities of the kingdom; and then boldly gave up Your life, knowing that You would never stay in that place of death, but knowing that You would rise again from the dead.

Oh my God, fill us also with such confidence, with such absolute confidence in the gospel, that we're willing to pour out our lives to see lost people saved. Lord, we give You the honour and we give You the glory, in Jesus' mighty name.

Now Lord, just as we finish this service tonight write in the hearts of every person here pictures, faces, names of people you want us to pray for, and show kindness to, and reach out to, build bridges to, and share the gospel with. Lord, let the Holy Ghost come on us, to do this work in Jesus' mighty name.

Live with Purpose (Shane Willard)

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Ghenna was the town rubbish dump (a present reality); and Hades is an afterlife (a future reality); but in English we only have one word, Hell. When we think of Hell, we tend to think about: them (in the future); but in the vast majority of Jesus' teachings: Hell was us (here, now). Heaven/Hell are both true, and occupied, in the here/now; they are also true of another place in the future, which is also occupied. Jesus' emphasis was far, far, far more on one, instead of the other. When you take care of the poor and the afflicted, that is what it means to know God. Your intentions are just the starting point. Pure motives, and consistent obedience, mixed with focussed intentions, will lead you to a life that cannot be shaken. What are you rationalising today, that you'll regret tomorrow? One yes requires a thousand NO's. You can never beat sin by fighting sin; you beat sin by empowering something else; and the power you give something else, actually overcomes the sin. Have you ever lost your ability to enjoy what God's given you, because you've compared it to somebody else? Can you clearly define what you want?

If you want to know the things Jesus said would 'ruin your life', all you've got to do is do a simple study on Hell.

Because there's only one English word Hell, we tend to get confused that, when Jesus talked about hell, He was talking about two realities: one was called Gehenna, which is essentially hell now; and one was called Hades, which is essentially hell then (post-death).

Both are true, and ones not necessarily more important than the other, but Jesus' emphasis was far, far, far more on one, instead of the other. But when we tend to think about Hell, we tend to think about them/then; but the vast majority of Jesus' teachings on hell were us/now.

Heaven is true that way too. Heaven is true here, and it's occupied; heaven is true there, and it's occupied. Hell is true here, and it's occupied; hell is true there, and it's occupied.

The word for hell here was Gehenna, and essentially Gehenna was the town rubbish dump. It was a place where hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years before Jesus, they used to burn children to the god Molech there, and so the land was essentially useless, so they used it as a town rubbish dump, because you couldn't use it for anything else.

The problem they found with that, when the wind shifted from that direction, the smell of that place went into the city, so they had to come up with a solution. Their solution was a sulphuric mixture of fire.

It's the same principle as a match; if you have a bowel motion, and it's particularly horrible, you can simply strike a match, let it light up for a second, and then you put the match out, let the smoke go through the room, and it will actually deodorise. If you didn't know that try it okay, I might have just saved your marriage.

So they kept this fire going all the time there. It was also a burial ground for poor people, so if you couldn't afford a tomb, they would throw your body on Gehenna. It was also where all the stray animals would scavenge for food and stuff. So in the First Century, if you went to Gehenna, you would smell sort of the fire and brimstone sort of mixture.

You would also see poor people's families having funerals for them, and you would also hear the sounds of barking and biting and animals scavenging for food.

So Gehenna became known as the place where the fire doesn't die, and there's weeping and gnashing of teeth - and so that was hell HERE. Hell THERE was a place called Hades.

Jesus said the word hell 18 times; of the 18 times, 15 of the 18 was hell here; three of the 18 was hell there; so roughly 87.7 per cent of the time when Jesus talks about hell, He's not talking about a future reality. He's talking about a reality that's right here.

He said that six things will send your life to hell, six things, and these things are this: 1) Not controlling your lust issues. So He says: you don't get those things under control, it endangers your life (of the garbage dump). 2) Anger, holding anger in your heart. If you tend to not be able to let things go, and you hold bitterness in your heart because people have done you wrong - if you don't get that kind of thing under control, you run the risk of putting your life (on the garbage dump).

3) Calling people idiots. He says: if your pattern in life is calling someone a fool, you're endangering your life (of the garbage dump). Obviously that one's talking about hell here, otherwise we're serving a God who tortures people forever for calling someone an idiot, and we're all screwed okay, so you don't want to do that. Essentially He's saying: listen, you know, you don't want to make a pattern of doing that. So He says: your lust issues, your anger issues, and your tendency to think you're smarter than everybody else - those are the things you have to handle.

4) Fearing man instead of fearing God. He said: that'll hurt you. That will eventually endanger your life of the garbage dump. 5) Unforgiveness in your heart will eventually endanger your life of the garbage dump... 6) ...as well as greed.

So greed, unforgiveness, fear of man instead of fear of God, calling people fools, lust and anger; those six things are the things that destroy a man's life, to the point of putting you in the garbage dump.

When you think about it in those terms, what you think about is, you start looking at yourself; or if you're a narcissist, you start thinking about somebody else who needs to hear this.

So you go: well okay, I could see where this lust issue in my life has hurt me. I could see where my tendency to power over people has hurt me. So if I was going to talk to you about how to be an over-comer, what I would simply do is go through those six issues.

I want to even step back further from that, and give you a principle that actually is ubiquitous to the entire lot of it. If we don't master this, then we can't deal with anger, and fear, and lust, and calling people idiots. We can't deal with those things if we don't deal with this - and I think Jesus deals with it brilliantly in the end of the Sermon on the Mount. This is what it says, in Matthew 7:13.

Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the road, that leads to destruction, and many wander through it. But small is the gate, and narrow is the road, that leads to life, and only a few will find it.

Just to be clear, that has nothing to do with heaven and hell. That has everything to do with the fact that, in life, most people don't have what it takes to make a decision to make their life better. Most people just do what everybody else is doing, and find themselves completely unravelling.

When you see euphemisms in scripture like death, darkness, decrease, destruction, it's not necessarily talking about being literally dead, or literally dark. It has to do with a realm of life that is destroying you; light/life/increases, a realm of life that's leading you to life.

He says: watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you'll recognise them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

In other words, if what they're doing is working, they're likely a good piece of tree. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut off and thrown in the fire. Thus, by their fruits, you will recognise them.

Not everyone who says to Me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who's in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day: Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out devils, and perform miracles? Then I will tell them plainly: I never knew you.

So this is very challenging to us, because to Jesus, calling Him Lord isn't enough. If I ask someone: why are you saved; if their only answer is: I believe in Jesus; believing in Jesus, really, is that it? Honestly, believing in Jesus only qualifies you to be a demon with skin on. Demons believe in Jesus. What does that have to do with anything?

Wait a minute. Jesus says: people who've called Me Lord, and cast out devils, and prophesied, and performed miracles - it doesn't necessarily mean that they know me - and that is very scary, because then the question is: what does it mean to know God? I thought that's what it meant to know God. What does it mean to know God?

The only scripture in the whole Bible, that defines what it means to know God, is Jeremiah 22:16. It says: when you take care of the poor and the afflicted, that is what it means to know God.

In other words, when you do something for someone, who can't possibly do anything in return for you - that is when you get to know God, because that is exactly what God did for you. It's that sort of principle; and He keeps going. It says: it's all about how you treat others. This is where He keeps going:

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and puts them into practice (hearing/doing), is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house, yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine, and does not put them into practice, is like a foolish man who builds his house on the sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, the winds blew and beat against the house, and it fell with a great crash. When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at His teachings, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as the other teachers of the law.

Now let me read one more scripture to you. This is Deuteronomy 30:19, that has the same sort of principle that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. This would have been the Bible in Jesus' day, maybe this was His key text, before He preached this.

It says: I call heaven and earth as a witness against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, that you and your children may live; and that you may love the Lord your God and listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him; for the Lord is your life, and He will give you many years in the land He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This thing that you keep seeing through scripture is, you have two choices: life, death; blessings, curses; darkness, light. Choose life, that you might live. Choose to be in the light, as He is in the light. Jesus is simply using the same principle, with a different example.

He says: there are many times in life where you're going to come to a fork in the road. If you ever in life are faced with a decision, where most people are going one way - chances are, you should be going the other. Some of this is just common-sense.

What percentage of people do their finances actually work? Very few! Statistically most of you are broke; and I don't know you, but statistically most of you are broke.

According to US News and World Report, 63 per cent of every single person over 60 does not have \$1,000 in the bank. How is that even possible? That is totally trying to live on accident, with no plan at all, and waking up one day at 68 and going: oh no! The truth is that most people live like that, according to US News and World Report. I find that statistic hard to believe, but they printed it, so may as well use it.

What percentage of people are living pay-cheque to pay-cheque? Most. What percentage of guys in this room - and don't answer me, I'm being rhetorical here - how many of you actually have financial peace - where you sit in your chair at night, and you're not wondering how you're going to pay your bills? My guess is: not very many. My guess is: most people don't experience that at all.

What percentage of marriages actually work? Somewhere around one in five! If you have a great marriage, hold onto it, because it's really, really rare - about one in five, one in five. Fifty per cent of marriages divorce, another 25 per cent of people are just holding. One in five are like: she's my best friend, he's my best friend, we're going through - this is awesome! Very few!

Jesus is saying something that's very obvious. He says: when you look at life, and you look at people winning, and you look at people losing, most people are losing; but the reason most people are losing, is because they don't have what it takes, to make the choice to stay on the high road. They don't have what it takes to stay over here.

So one principle about this that is very, very important - there are three images Jesus gives, and they all have a different message to speak to us.

The first image He gives is gates. He says: broad is the road, and narrow is the way, that leads to life. So there's a broad gate, and a narrow gate.

Now in Jewish literature, this is a metaphor for the city. This is a metaphor for the city. What they did in all of Jewish literature is, they used Jerusalem as the example of attaining your goal. So instead of saying: hey, have you met that goal; they might say: hey, have you made it into the city with that? It was a euphemism, it was a metaphor for doing that; and the problem with that is, is that as you got closer to the city, the road got narrower; so you had to, with full intention, try to make your way into the city.

You couldn't just accidentally make it to the city. You had to with full intention. That's why, even in the Bible, when it talks about Jesus going to Jerusalem, it always adds adjectives that don't seem necessary, like: and Jesus resolutely set out to Jerusalem. Why would you add that? Why not say: well, Jesus intended to go to Jerusalem? No, no, no. He resolutely set out to go to Jerusalem. Why?

Their idea, in all of their literature, was that if you're going to make it to where you want to go, you can't try to get there accidentally. You have to live with full intention!

In other words, if you don't know the road that you're on, and where it's taking you, it more than likely is leading you to destruction. If you're trying to live accidentally, it just doesn't work.

I'm not going to do this to you, but if I did, you should be prepared. If I just pointed you out, and said: quickly sir, tell me where you want to be, financially, in six months? If you can't do that, then you're losing financially.

People who are winning financially, understand that they have to have a goal, and a plan, and a strategy; and the only thing that gives them the power to say no to frivolous spending, is that they're saying yes to financial abundance.

If you can't tell me your goal in six months, for where you want to be financially, I can tell you you're losing; and so what I'd do is: go home today, and sit down at a table, and take 30 minutes, and write out a six-month goal. Write out a year goal. Write out a plan to make that goal.

I just hired a director of charity for my ministry, because the product sales were going so good, that we were giving so much to these orphanages, that my lawyer said: it's actually irresponsible for you not to have someone looking after this. So I went to the Board of Directors, they agreed, so we ended up hiring this girl.

Now the problem was, we knew who we wanted to hire from the get-go. The problem was when she was 19 years old, she made some really, really, really, really, really, really bad financial decisions, and so she was sitting there with a mound of debt.

So what happened to her, is when she was 24 years old, she'd had enough, and she said: I will end this now! She made a plan, and her plan was that by December of 2012 that she would be completely debt-free; and the power of that goal, the power of keeping that vision in front of her, the power of every day waking up saying: today I'm going to be more debt-free than I was yesterday, tomorrow I'll be more debt free than I am today.

Every single day was an effort to get the debt taken care of. You know what happened? The power of yes, gave her the power to say no to frivolous spending, to doing things that didn't meet that goal; and what happened was, by October 2012, she was completely debt free!

By December 2012, she had \$6,000 in the bank, and now she's fully prepared to be a missionary in the world, without the financial pressure of paying debts off, to pay for drinks she bought six years ago on a credit card.

Now she's standing tall, and she's got a fully-funded emergency fund in case something happens; and that is the power of strategy, and intention, and fully intending to make a goal, and go for something.

Jesus, in one sense, is teaching us that - that most people fail, not because they're bad. Most people fail because they fail to plan, they fail to make a strategy, they fail to make a goal. They don't live with intention.

They wouldn't even know, if they got what they wanted, if they had it - because they're not even sure about what they want. Most people live willy-nilly, sort of like a fire. If a fire is broad, it can sort of burn down a lot of bush; but if you

harness the same fire into an acetylene torch, it can cut through steel. That is the power of desire, and intention, and living with full goals, and full intention; instead of trying to live accidentally.

That's gates. Gates is a challenge to keep in mind our role in the world: to be light and darkness, and choose the higher road; but the only thing that gives you the power to choose the higher road, is to live with full intention to do it.

Nobody wakes up in the morning, and accidentally chooses the higher road. Nobody wakes up in the morning, and just accidentally forgives. No one wakes up in the morning, and just accidentally chooses to feed the poor. No one wakes up in the morning, and chooses to live for the betterment of others. No one does that.

That requires full-fledged intention. There are a lot of good people who are living selfishly, a lot of good people. Let me prove it too you. In the last 30 days, whose life is fundamentally better, because you're in it?

How many orphans have you fed in the last 30 days? How many blind kids in the Third World, are not blind now, because you went to Fred Hollows Foundation.com, and gave them \$30 to take the cataracts off their eyes? What's the last thing you spent \$30 on? Was it more important than a four year old girl seeing? How many of you would believe, with all your heart, that we should be engaging in things like that? Right - oh everybody? Wow, good! How many of you have actually done it? Oh good, half, good. So what's wrong with the other half of you? Are you bad? No, you're not bad.

It's just what happens is, that if we don't live with the full intention of doing something, the urgent things right in front of us take precedent, and we lose sight of bigger-picture things. It's not that you're bad.

You want to beat fear in your life; you got to make some intentions. You want to beat guilt in your life; you've got to make some intentions. You want to beat anger in your life; you've got to live with full intention to do it. You want to beat that tendency to call people idiots in your life? You've got to make full intention to do it. You want to quit fearing man, instead of fearing God, you've got to make full intention to do it. You want to beat that unforgiveness thing in you, you've got to make full intention to do it. None of these things handle themselves accidentally. It's a broad road, and a narrow way. It's a broad road and a narrow way, so the first image is gate.

The second image is fruit, which is a challenge to us, to be honest about the way we're living, and is it working? I love the Bob Newhart counselling thing on YouTube, where the person says their problem, and he says: is it working? No. Stop it! It amazes me the number of people who keep doing the same exact thing, and it hasn't worked yesterday, and it's not working today, and it for sure won't work tomorrow, but they just keep doing it.

Essentially Jesus is saying: it ain't working? Dump it! Change something! Change a plan. Shake things up. Do something with your life! Do something - at least be honest enough to say: is the way I'm thinking, actually producing what I want it to produce. At least be honest enough to do that.

I've always been taught that a marriage works this way: Okay, but is it working? If it's not working, you might want to change something. Is it just possible, that what you were taught your whole life, is wrong? Is that even possible? That maybe grand-pappy was wrong? Maybe your mother, as good hearted as she was, she was wrong. Jesus says: sometimes you've got to just step back, and be honest enough to evaluate these things.

So the first image is gates, which has to do with our intentions. The second imagery is fruit, which has to do with an honest introspection to see things for what they are.

As a counsellor, you do this all the time - that before you can help anybody, you have to step back and go: okay, listen, I need you to own the fact, that what you've been doing, is not working. You see Jillian Michaels do this all the time.

You ever watched The Biggest Loser? Does that come on over here, The Biggest Loser? It's a show dedicated to people losing weight, and she's just beaten the dog-stew out of somebody, and they're crying, and they're like: this isn't working; and she's like: this isn't working! Look at you! What YOU'VE been doing isn't working; and then she's just nailing them, and then they cry more. Then they get their second wind, and at the end of the show they hug. It's that.

The third image He gives us is foundations; so the first image is gates, second image is fruit, third image is foundation. The foundation was a challenge to us, to stay sensitive to God's voice, and be willing to submit.

Essentially what Jesus is saying is this: if you can hear God saying something, and you have the ability to walk away and do nothing about it, you're in real strife.

If you ever get to the point in your life, where you know, you just know, this is what God is saying; but you have the ability, even knowing this is what God's saying, to walk away and do absolutely nothing about it, then your life is getting shakier, and shakier, and shakier.

Essentially what He's saying, without any myth or illusion of being perfect, that the person who stays sensitive to the voice of God - and is willing to not just hear it, but to do it as well - those people's life get more and more solid.

I could sit here and talk about specifics all day long, but if you don't deal with that tendency in all of us, to be able to hear the word of God, and then walk away and still live the same, nothing I say will ever work.

Essentially He says your choice in life is this: do you want your life to be solidified on a rock; or do you want it to be shaky on sand. And by the way, in this sermon, it has nothing to do with what you believe.

People say: well my life's on the rock. How do you know that? Because I believe in Jesus. Really? Once again, believing in Jesus only qualifies you to be a demon with flesh on. Are you kidding me, you believe in Jesus? Oooh.

When Jesus talks about your life being on the rock, instead of the sand, it has nothing to do with what you believe, and everything to do with how you behave.

It has everything to do with your ability to keep adjusting, keep responding. I hear God saying this, and I'm going to respond.

He doesn't even end the sermon with an altar call. He's got thousands of people in front of Him, and He doesn't say: now who wants to go to heaven? Who'd like to pray a prayer, to ensure that you have a ticket punched to go to heaven when you die? He doesn't do that. He's got thousands of people in front of Him, He doesn't do that. That's very telling.

His invitation, at the end of the biggest sermon He ever preached on recorded record was: I'm asking you to do an internal stock take. When you hear the word of God, are you willing to respond with action; or are you just going to keep living how you've always lived? Because if you respond with action, it will solidify your life. If you do not, it will make your life very shaky.

So He has gates, which has to do with intentions; fruit, which has to do with being honest enough to ask ourselves: is the way we're living working; and three, foundations. If it's not working, and you hear a better way to live, are you willing to be courageous enough to change it?

I did not choose where I was born, and I could still be choosing to live that way, to this day. It would have been not that hard of a choice to choose that; but I realised that that was not me - I was challenged by God's word.

I know this is going to sound funny, but the day I realised Jesus wasn't white, was unbelievable to me. I thought to myself: flip! He's not white! I mean, we all pray to the Jesus we picture, so for me it was: dear blonde haired, blue eyed, cleanly shaven or lightly bearded Jesus, who smells of sweet lavender and dove soap. Like, it was that.

When I realised Jesus wasn't white, it was like: flip! I had a choice. I could either keep going my way, or I could make a choice to do something else. I was 14 years old when I realised, that God had called me to love all people, and to treat all people with the dignity afforded to them, because they're all made in the image of God; and all, every living soul, belongs to God.

I remember having to make that choice, but if I had the ability to hear that, and then walk away and still live a different way, it makes your life shaky. You think about it.

We could go around the room, if I said: what's your story? What's your story of when God rocked your world, and you were given a moment, a critical moment, to make a decision to change things? When is that story? Every one of you, who were winning in life in any direction, you have a story that you could tell. You have a story. You have something. You say: oh look, I was this, and now I was this.

I remember the day, I remember where I was sitting, the day I decided that I would live debt-free my whole life. It didn't matter if I drove a piece-of-crap car, I will live - I choose to drive a cheap car over having debt in car payments. I just choose to do it. I remember where I was sitting that day.

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