

# Five Minutes After Death

Luke 16:19-31

## Introduction

A few years ago we were all gathering for Sunday evening worship. People were casually talking with one another, laughing and enjoying themselves. I was standing near the front doors with a few people, talking, waiting for time to start. I believe I had been in the auditorium for about five minutes when suddenly there was a loud crash and a scream. The sound came from the back hallway. The children were in the back. My first thought was that the glass cabinet had fallen on one of the children.

A few people quickly ran to the back. Brother Frank was there first; Dia was close behind him. In a few seconds I was there, only to find Christopher crying while Dia scooped him up holding a towel to his head. My fears were confirmed. He had somehow bashed his head into the glass cabinet and was cut badly just above the ear.

Quickly we were in the car, speeding into town. We ran to the emergency department, through the doors and directly into the back. Immediately we were in a room and the nurses went to work on Chris. They flushed out the wound. They stapled the wound closed. And we were back home before the worship service was over!

I am not exactly sure, but I don't think that more than five minutes passed from the time we heard the crash to the moment we walked into the emergency room. In five minutes I went from the pastor ready to preach on a Sunday evening to Dale Earnhardt, screaming down Collins Road! In five minutes Dia went from the pastor's wife fellowshipping with parishioners to Mama-On-A-Mission to get her baby some help. In five minutes little Chris went from TeamKid to the emergency room, having staples put into his head.

Five minutes doesn't seem like a long time, but a lot can change in five minutes! Think about it. In about five minutes you can be in Whigham at Huds. (Unless you are Brother Charles or Brother Tommy!) In 5 minutes you could be in heaven. In five minutes you could be in hell! A lot can happen in five minutes! Think with me this morning about five minutes after death.

Read Luke 16:19-31

## I) Contrast in Life (v. 19-21)

- a) The rich man and Lazarus were very different.
- b) Life is full of inequities.
  - i) Congenital inequities – some people are born with inequities that they can't help.
  - ii) Material inequities – some people just have more than others.
    - (1) Maybe they inherit it.
    - (2) Maybe they earn it.
    - (3) Our wonderful president wants to take it from those who earn it and give it to those who won't!
  - iii) Social inequities – by virtue of congenital and material some people experience social inequities.
    - (1) Acceptance
    - (2) Rejection

## II) Contrast in Death (v. 22)

- a) The Bible says that the rich man died and was buried.
  - i) That simple sentence probably doesn't adequately describe the elaborate funeral the rich man had.
  - ii) He probably went out with a bang!
- b) The Bible implies that Lazarus, the poor beggar, did not have a proper burial.
  - i) Often, the beggars of that day were discarded like the trash after they died.
  - ii) Illustration: I have led funeral services for people who had no money, few family and friends.
    - (1) Graveside or chapel
    - (2) I don't know them.
    - (3) Few people attend.
    - (4) Always flowers!
    - (5) Someone cares enough to do something in honor of the dead.

iii) However, Lazarus had nothing; no preacher; no family, no friends, no flowers!

c) The two men died as differently as they had lived.

### III) Contrast in Eternity (v. 22-23)

a) Lazarus died and was carried away by angels to heaven, where he experienced all the glories of heaven. (v. 22)

i) He had no funeral procession on earth, but he was escorted to heaven by a party of angels!

ii) Heaven is all that the all-beneficent, loving heart of God would DESIRE for you.

iii) Heaven is all that the omniscient mind of God could DESIGN for you.

iv) Heaven is all that the omnipotent hand of God could PREPARE for you.

b) The rich man, however, was in hell, where he experienced all the agonies of hell.

i) Jesus taught about hell – *“And if they right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into HELL. And if thy right hand offends thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.” (Matthew. 5:29-30)*

ii) The death of Jesus demonstrates the reality of hell – If hell is not real then why did Jesus have to die to keep us from going there!

iii) The justice of God demands that there be a hell – There must be punishment for the wicked!

iv) Hell will be sensual misery.

(1) The sensation of the flames – *“...I am tormented in this flame...”*

(2) The suffering of thirst – *“...send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.”*

(3) The satanic residents – *“...depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41)*

v) Hell will be emotional misery. (v. 25)

(1) The torment of wasted opportunities.

(2) The torment of no more chances.

vi) Hell will be eternal misery (v. 26 & Hebrews 9:27)

(1) Your address after death is permanent!

(2) *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* – The judgment of God is eternal!

vii) Hell will be spiritual misery. (v. 27-29)

(1) Helpless concern for the spiritual condition of others.

(2) Miserable because of the realization that you were wrong the whole time. (Life, rejected the gospel)

### Conclusion

❖ Five minutes after death, everything changed for the rich man. He went from riches of earthly treasure to the rags of spiritual torment.

❖ Five minutes after death everything changed for Lazarus. He went from earthly poverty to eternal plenty.

❖ Think about your life. Think about your choices. Think about your own spiritual condition. Where will you be five minutes after death?