

Series: "AMAZING"

Text: Luke 16:19-31; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9

Title: "Eternal GRACE"

Introduction: Welcome to BMZ CHURCH! Glad you're here as we CONTINUE our WORSHIP SERIES called: "AMAZING"! Each Sunday we have looked at DIFFERENT KINDS of GRACE that God offers. So far, we've learned about Saving Grace, Sustaining Grace, and RESTORING GRACE. If you've missed any, check them out on our website.

We NEED to UNDERSTAND the DIFFERENT ASPECTS of GRACE to understand GOD. TO KNOW GOD is to KNOW GRACE. GRACE is the ESSENCE of GOD.

This week, "ETERNAL GRACE"! After Jesus died and Resurrected, he appeared to the Disciples and over 500 other people in the Resurrected Body. It was NOT just a BELIEF...

I think WE ALL BELIEVE there is something MORE than JUST THIS LIFE. I think we all BELIEVE there is NEXT LIFE. As Followers of Jesus, there are MANY QUESTIONS about WHAT we BELIEVE about the NEXT LIFE. IF we're going to be RESURRECTED ... THEN WHAT? IF there is LIFE AFTER DEATH, WHO GOES WHERE?

Great Questions! AND it's important we all KNOW ABOUT DEATH and DYING and HEAVEN and HELL. WHY? Because we ALL WILL! NONE of us gets OUT of DYING!

It is so important to UNDERSTAND AFTERLIFE and be able to talk about it ... TO A POINT ... MOST either AVOID the subject, or we GO WAY TOO FAR and get OUT of OUR LANE about HEAVEN and HELL. Let me explain...

MANY CHRISTIANS are afraid to DISCUSS HEAVEN and HELL because they can't ANSWER all the QUESTIONS. OTHERS talk about WHEN JESUS MIGHT COME ... setting DATES and TIMES, FORGETTING when the Disciples asked, JESUS SAID ACTS 1:7-8 = *7 He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*<sup>1</sup>

It's NOT our job to know WHEN! It's OUR JOB to KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE MEANTIME! In MY OPINION, spending millions of dollars and thousands of hours trying to figure out what JESUS DECLARED "NOT YOUR BUSINESS" ... is just a DISTRACTION from BEING WHO GOD wants us to be. **It is WAY EASIER to TALK about what MIGHT HAPPEN than to DO what we SHOULD be DOING!**

BUT it's COMING! EACH of US will stand BEFORE JESUS in ETERNITY. EITHER we will be ARROGANT / PRIDEFUL and NEVER BOW to JESUS as LORD in THIS LIFE and hear "*I never knew you,*" OR we'll CONFESS JESUS as LORD, HUMBLY ask FORGIVENESS and hear, "*Well done, good and faithful servant!*"

TODAY ... ETERNAL GRACE ... Listen, this is NOT the most FUN thing to PREACH about. It's NOT FUNNY. It's DIFFICULT and CHALLENGING. WE should STAND before THIS SUBJECT with some FEAR and TREMBLING. Why? BECAUSE IT'S REAL and REAL PEOPLE are going to spend ETERNITY in a REAL ... BAD ... PLACE! AND some of us SHOULD and WILL feel RESPONSIBILITY when it comes to our FRIENDS and FAMILY.

I know some people think HELL is NOT a REAL place, BUT...

## **HELL is Real, And So Is GRACE**

I SAY THAT BECAUSE JESUS said it. IF I COULD, I'd CUT OUT of the NT everything about HELL and Death and say ... *We're ALL going to HEAVEN!* NO NEED for HELL! BUT that would mean I'D NEED to CUT out ABOUT HALF of the New Testament.

SET UP for TODAY ... LUKE 16, Jesus SPEAKS with PHARISEES about GOD RICHES vs. WORLD POSSESSIONS. The Pharisees RESPOND ... LUKE 16:14-15 = <sup>14</sup> *The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, heard all this and scoffed at him. <sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, "You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God. <sup>2</sup>* JESUS HAMMERS the Pharisees for their WEALTH and FAKE RELIGION! THEN, **Jesus tells a STORY about a RICH MAN!**

Here's WHY I PREACH HEAVEN and HELL ... JESUS TALKS ABOUT IT (more than 20 references to HELL from Jesus). So, if we choose to ERASE or IGNORE it (Hell); we are choosing to IGNORE the WORD of JESUS! I CAN'T do that!

BAD NEWS ... HELL is REAL ... YET MOST PASTORS will NOT PREACH ON IT. WHY NOT? They said, *"We don't want to offend people with this ancient teaching. So, it's easier to just not talk about it."* HEAR ME: I would RATHER OFFEND YOU TODAY; then HAVE YOU be OFFENDED for ETERNITY that I did NOT TELL YOU!

HERE WE GO ... JESUS' STORY ... LUKE 16:19-21 = <sup>19</sup> *Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. <sup>20</sup> At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. <sup>21</sup> As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. <sup>3</sup>*

### **#1 = A Contrast In LIFE**

JESUS SAYS there are DIFFERENCES in HOW we LIVE, and IT MATTERS! HOW we LIVE in the TEMPORARY LIFE will CAUSE CONTRASTS in our ETERNITIES...

1<sup>st</sup> = MAN clothed in Purple is RICH. It's NOT SIN to be RICH; it IS SIN to be RICH and ignore the POOR. Most PHARISEES did. JESUS USES the RICH MAN in PURPLE to SYMBOLIZE the Pharisees who were RICH and CLAIMED TO KNOW GOD but DID NOT. They CLAIMED to LOVE GOD, but IGNORED ONES God loved, like the POOR!

2<sup>nd</sup> = The Rich Man is NAMELESS! JESUS does NOT give the rich man a NAME. The poor man has a NAME— LAZARUS! That's SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE in JEWISH RELIGIOUS tradition, you wanted EVERYONE to KNOW YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS and NAME. Pharisees = *"It's all about me!"* Now, HE goes into ETERNITY, NAMELESS!

3<sup>rd</sup> = The Rich Man IGNORES the POOR. Lazarus SITS at his GATE EVERY DAY. AND we know The RICH MAN is Religious because he calls on FATHER ABRAHAM! SO, WHAT is JESUS DOING? HE is WARNING RICH PHARISEES and other RICH that THIS will HAPPEN to YOU, UNLESS you HUMBLE yourselves and REPENT of your sin.

LUKE 16:22 = <sup>22</sup> *"Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham.\* The rich man also died and was buried,*

### **#2 = A Contrast In DEATH**

EVER THOUGHT ABOUT the FACT that DEATH is the GREAT EQUALIZER? WHEN we DIE, NOTHING in this TEMPORARY LIFE will MATTER except WHAT we BELIEVE about the NEXT LIFE. Because, what we BELIEVE DRIVES our BEHAVIOR.

<sup>2</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (Lk 16:14–15). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (Lk 16:19–21). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

**DESPITE HIS WEALTH, the RICH MAN DIED.** Probably had a decent FUNERAL... LAZARUS (poor) DIED FIRST and likely did NOT have a decent BURIAL.

SO WHAT? They BOTH DIED. SO will WE! THEN, Jesus REMINDS us DEATH is NOT the END. The DEATH of THIS BODY is NOT our DEATH. WE LIVE ON! Jesus is CLEAR! He is SO CLEAR about ETERNITY, that I can ASK TODAY: WHERE will YOU BE in 3023 ... in a THOUSAND YEARS ... WHERE will you BE? That question MATTERS!

JESUS TURNS the TABLES. He TEACHES that ONE can HAVE it ALL in THIS WORLD, but IF you FAIL to PREPARE for ETERNITY, EVERYTHING will be INVERTED ... LUKE 16:23-24 = <sup>23</sup> *and his soul went to the place of the dead.\* There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.* <sup>24</sup> *“The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’* <sup>4</sup> JESUS TALKS about HELL!

### **#3 = A Contrast In ETERNITY**

HEAR how “Abraham” RESPONDS to the RICH MAN? JESUS calls him, “SON.” The Greek translation is *‘technon,’* which is LOVING / COMPASSIONATE. Even in HELL, GOD CARES for us and LOVES us. GOD CAN’T CHOOSE FOR US, BUT He LOVES us anyway. LUKE 16:25-26 = <sup>25</sup> *“But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish.* <sup>26</sup> *And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.’* <sup>5</sup>

JESUS TEACHES how FINAL HELL IS. He gives the REASON the RICH MAN is there. **“You had it all in this life and didn’t share it! NOW, Lazarus gets it all!”**

HOW we LIVE this TEMPORARY LIFE - The BELIEFS that DRIVE our BEHAVIORS MATTER. In ETERNITY, our BEHAVIORS HERE DETERMINE our DESTINATION THERE. Our ETERNAL DESTINATIONS will CONTRAST (different). **Ever HEARD...**

### **#4 = Not a Chance In HELL**

Have you EVER HEARD people SAY THIS? I’m NOT SURE they USE it PROPERLY BUT there are CHANCES WE have IN THIS LIFE that DISAPPEAR in HELL.

Listen: LUKE 16:27-31 = <sup>27</sup> *“Then the rich man said, ‘Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father’s home.* <sup>28</sup> *For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don’t end up in this place of torment.’* <sup>29</sup> *“But Abraham said, ‘Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.’* <sup>30</sup> *“The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.’* <sup>31</sup> *“But Abraham said, ‘If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t listen even if someone rises from the dead.’”* <sup>6</sup>

Remember Jesus is talking to RELIGIOUS LEADERS / PHARISEES! Notice how Jesus just REFERRED to HIMSELF ... Raised from Dead ... they STILL WON’T BELIEVE! So, let’s talk about HELL... There are THINGS you have NO CHANCE in HELL...

**#1 = No Relief** – In HELL, there’s NO RELIEF. The Rich Man BEGS Abraham to send Lazarus ... just a DROP WILL bring RELIEF. Answer = NO! There is NO RELIEF from the TORMENT of FLAMES ... #1 about Hell = No Relief!

**#2 = No Escape** – You’ll NEVER get out! JESUS is CLEAR: NO CROSSING OVER. There’s a CHASM BETWEEN ... IF you’re in HELL, you CAN’T get OUT! ONCE in HELL,

<sup>4</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). Holy Bible : New Living Translation. (3rd ed.) (Lk 16:24). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). Holy Bible : New Living Translation. (3rd ed.) (Lk 16:25–26). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). Holy Bible : New Living Translation. (3rd ed.) (Lk 16:27–31). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

you STAY! AND Jesus shows us you WON'T WANT TO GET OUT ... The RICH MAN NEVER HUMBLING HIMSELF and ASKED FORGIVENESS or ASKED to get OUT.

**#3 = No Good ... No God** – In HELL, there is NO GOOD, because there is NO GOD! This is IMPOSSIBLE to IMAGINE because we have NEVER KNOWN life without God! Even if we REJECT GOD, the SUN SHINES and the RAIN comes on the land of BELIEVERS and UNBELIEVERS alike. We've NEVER known life WITHOUT GOD. We can't imagine how AWFUL life would be WITHOUT GOD. When God abandons a place, ALL that's LEFT is ABSOLUTE PAIN and ANGUISH!

Hell is described by two words: FLAMES and DARKNESS... FLAMES are likely REAL and SYMBOLIC. Flames have an INSATIABLE appetite for OXYGEN (Backdraft). UNQUENCHABLE! Fire burns all in its path until it has nowhere else to go. FIRE CAN NEVER BE SATISFIED! SAME will HOLD TRUE for PEOPLE in HELL... *I believe people are there because of their UNQUENCHABLE AMBITIONS for THEMSELVES HERE, and it will continue in HELL ... life has been here and will be there—ALL ABOUT THEM!*

If you're PROUD, ARROGANT and LIFE is ALL ABOUT YOU ... you're NOT HUMBLE or willing to REPENT of SIN and say you're SORRY in THIS LIFE, NOT GOING TO CHANGE THERE! The Rich Man NEVER SAID, *"I was wrong. I'm sorry."* WHY NOT? Because the WAY WE LIVE IN THIS LIFE is the WAY WE WILL LIVE ETERNALLY! The way you RESPOND to JESUS NOW is the way you will RESPOND to JESUS ETERNALLY! *"Who you are in this life will determine who you are in the next!"*

God DOESN'T SEND US there ... WE CHOOSE in THIS LIFE to WALK RIGHT IN!

Some say, *"If God was loving, then why doesn't He forgive people and provide a way for people to be saved? Why doesn't God create a place like heaven and give EVERYONE access to it?"* Answer = HE DID! He gave us His Son to DIE in OUR PLACE on a CROSS ... and the OFFER of HEAVEN is WIDE OPEN!

Hell is not a party ... you WON'T be hanging out with friends, drinking, having FUN!

**#4 = No Hope for Salvation** – For people who reject Jesus in THIS LIFE, I don't think they will want to be NEAR JESUS in the NEXT LIFE! The RICH MAN DIDN'T WANT TO. IOW, whatever your HEART is toward GOD in this life; it WILL BE the SAME in the NEXT!

*"So, why doesn't God just save everybody and let everybody go to heaven?"* Because SOME DON'T WANT to be SAVED! They have a CHOICE in THIS LIFE to BE SAVED and THEY'VE REFUSED! Let me ask, IF you spent this lifetime rejecting God and demanding to live your own way ... DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD BE HAPPY IN HEAVEN? Spending ETERNITY recognizing JESUS as King of Kings and the Lord of Lords? That would NOT be HEAVEN; that would be HELL FOR YOU!

Let's get to some GOOD NEWS! HEAVEN! The difference between Heaven and Hell: Hell = MY will be done. Heaven = YOUR will be done! And HERE is what GOD WANTS:

### **#5 = God Wants You In HEAVEN**

Let me ASK you a QUESTION that JESUS ASKED: MARK 8:36 = *And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?*<sup>7</sup>

HONESTLY, GOD sent HIS SON to DIE because HE WANTS you WITH HIM for ETERNITY. He wants US to REPENT of our SIN in THIS LIFE ... **2<sup>nd</sup> PETER 3:9 = <sup>9</sup>The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.**

I have an IDEA. It's NOT ORIGINAL. GOD actually CAME UP with IT

... Let's AVOID HELL for ALL ETERNITY (fire and brimstone). INSTEAD, LET'S ACCEPT the GIFT of ETERNAL GRACE ... ROMANS 6:23 = <sup>23</sup> *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.* <sup>8</sup>

ONE more TIME ... WHERE will you BE in 3023? You WILL be SOMEWHERE...

Let's Pray!

*Next Steps: I Will Memorize 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9*

*I will Read Luke 16*

*Please sign me up for Believer's Baptism on Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at AmericInn, Boscobel \_\_\_\_\_*

### Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us! In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information.

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

#### **IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today**

- We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.

It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is HIT "**SEND**" your COMPLETED Connection Card

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- I just want to remind you ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... ROMANS 6:23 = <sup>23</sup> *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.* <sup>9</sup>
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the first place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- NEXT WEEK: **My guess is that some of you here are PERFECTIONISTS ... it's HARD to be a PERFECTIONIST. Next week I want to OFFER FREEDOM from the PRISON that comes with those INCREDIBLY HIGH EXPECTATIONS ... AND I'm going to do my IMPRESSION of AARON RODGERS ... you've GOT to BE HERE for THAT!**

*"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."*

*Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Warren Wiersbe, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegrum for outlines and ideas for this worship series*

<sup>8</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ro 6:23). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>9</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ro 6:23). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

***SALVATION PRAYER ... Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name, Jesus. Amen.***