

gracepoint

A M E T H O D I S T C H U R C H

Homegroup material



I. Introductory Discussion Questions

1. What stood out for you most about the “God promises everlasting life” sermon?
2. How would you define eternal life?
3. Whatever you believe about life and death has eternal consequences. What is your understanding of what happens when we die?
4. What is your understanding of heaven?
5. What is your understanding of hell?
6. Read and discuss the following Scriptures that speak about eternity. What do they reveal to you about life after death?

- **Proverbs 23 vs 17-18:**

“Do not let your heart envy sinners; but be in the fear of the LORD all the day long. For surely there is a hereafter, and your hope shall not be cut off.”

- **Matthew 10 vs 24-33:**

“A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household! So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”

- **Matthew 25 vs 31-46:**

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry

and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

- **John 3 vs 16-17:**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

- **John 11 vs 25:**

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,"

- **Acts 24 vs 14-16:**

"However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man."

- **Romans 6 vs 23:**

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

ii. The lives of two men

1. Read Jesus' teaching about Lazarus and the rich man from Luke 16 vs 19-31 (see below). What stands out for you in this passage?

- **Luke 16 vs 19-31:**

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

2. Jesus clearly contrasts the life of the rich man with the life of Lazarus – and how their eternal destinies were very different from what others might have expected based on their earthly lives. Although the rich man's riches weren't sinful in themselves, it was his sin in not needing God or caring for others that led to his eternal suffering. In light of this and the passage from Matthew 25 above, how do you think we can ensure that we are caring for those around us and using what we have correctly?
3. How much do you really need God in your life right now? How do you think you can ensure that you are aware of your need for Him and that you live completely dependent on Him?

iii. The contrast in death

1. Some of us are still living as if life will never end. How do you think you can live more circumspectly in light of the life hereafter that is a certainty?
2. We will all stand in judgement before God one day, but for those who are in relationship with Christ, Scripture tells us that Jesus is our advocate who proclaims that we are guilt-free because He has taken all our sin upon Himself. Read the Scriptures below and discuss how you understand Christ's redemption of you and what it practically means in your life?

- **1 John 2 vs 1-3:**

"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence— Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands."

- **Romans 8 vs 31-39:**

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died— more than that, who was raised to life— is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- **1 Timothy 2 vs 5-6:**

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men— the testimony given in its proper time."

- **Hebrews 9 vs 24-28:**

“For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”

IV. The contrast in eternity

1. John 17 vs 3 (see below) that eternal life is not something that starts only when we die. It is not so much a place we go when we die, but a state of being in relationship with God that begins in the present. Does this change your understanding of what it means to have eternal life? How?

- **John 17 vs 3:**

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

2. In Deuteronomy we read about how God spoke to His people and said that he was giving them the choice to choose life or to choose death in the present. Read the Scripture below. How do you think you are choosing life right now – for eternity and in the present?
3. In what ways do you think you are perhaps choosing death?

- **Deuteronomy 30 vs 19-20:**

“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, 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 give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

4. Jesus was clear that He is the Way, Truth and Life and that He is the only way to the Father (John 14 vs 6). This exclusivity is not a popular concept with many people – especially not in postmodern thinking. How do you understand this concept and what does it mean for you?

IV. The contrast in identities

1. It is interesting to note that in the account in Luke 16, the name of the rich man remains unknown, while the poor man, Lazarus, – who probably was not well known in life – is named. This is because of the contrast in their identities in eternity. The poor man's name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life (see the Scriptures below), while the rich man's wasn't.
2. Death is inevitable and so, we need to be prepared for it. The provision God has made for our eternities is Jesus Christ. What are you currently doing with this provision?

V. Call to action

1. What will we do with what we have discovered in this session?
2. How will we hold each other accountable to this?