

CNL Season 2009

3.1 Influencing the Invisible part 1

Transcription

Father in Jesus name, we thank you that you are such an awesome God and you have done so many miraculous things in our lives, giving us eternal life, giving us hope, and giving us joy, giving us peace, giving us literally in your Word your power through your spirit, that we can conquer all things through Christ who strengthens us. And so today Father God, touch our lives, touch our hearts and let us be those who are focused, Father God, let us be focused today on you and upon your power and upon what you are going to do today. And we pray these things in Jesus name and God's people said Amen and Amen.

Once again, influencing the Invisible, if you will look at these points. We're going to go ahead and we're going to start to reading. If you could correct, there's actually a couple of typos, it is actually Luke 16 not chapter 17, but Luke Chapter 16. And, let's go ahead, we're going to be talking about a rich man and a poor man here. This is not a thing dealing with economics as much as it deals with the heart. Let's just read this passage and understand about this certain man and another man named Lazarus. And we'll understand better what we're going to show you on the screen. Let's read this out loud: "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus who was laid at his gate full of sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried and in hell or hades he lifted up his eyes being in torment and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the

tip of his finger in water and cool for my tongue. For I am tormented in this place.

Abraham said, son, remember that you and your lifetime received your good things and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted and you are in torment. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.

What I'm showing you is, the Bible literally teaches that there is an abode of the dead and in this abode of the dead where people go when they die, they are fully conscious and aware. There are some cults, which teach "soul sleep". That means when you die you just go to sleep and then one day at the resurrection is when you wake up. Actually when you die you are fully aware of what's happening. But there are two choices that you have in life as to what you are going to end up or where you are going to end up. Now what we did is a graphic and about 30 second graphic to try to help you understand that there are these two locations that Jesus was talking about. They are literal locations, Jesus speaks about them as literal locations and we have this graphic and guys by the way at the end of this graphic, when it comes back around and shows both sides, if you would just hit "pause" and freeze it there for a second, it will help me identify it. But go ahead and run that tape which we have here, thank you. Ok, we're going to have to let it go around here twice because its cued a little too far. Let's say that there's a one side in this place that Jesus talks about, a heavenly realm. Now this heavenly realm which is called Abraham's bosom in this passage is paradise. Now think of paradise. It's heaven, Abraham's bosom, all different names for the same glorious wonderful place. Then what you have is that there is a gulf, which is in between this, there's this huge gulf, and huge chasm on the other side is hell. That is the abode of the unrighteous. And that is where

there are literally chains where they are held in. And this is a place of misery and this is a place of suffering. And if you keep going.... Freeze. What we just tried to show you is an example of the right side you see this abode of the dead where there is misery and suffering and there's this huge gulf. In fact, I love this thing (laughs). There's this huge gulf....uhh... when it works (laughs). There's this huge gulf which is right here and what Jesus was saying is, there's Lazarus, he's over here, he's in this wonderful, beautiful paradise. And over here on this side, is the part of the hell which is absolutely miserable where the disobedient and the unjust have gone. And the rich man is over here in this misery and he says, "Please, please, just let me have a drop of water on my tongue." And Jesus says no. There is this great gulf between the two of you and we know that Lazarus has died and that he's fully alert and we know that the rich man has died and that he's fully alert. And he says there's no way that you can go back and forth, there's no way you can get from here over to here. Now that means that once you have died, you're going to end up either here or here. So either you believe the words of Jesus or you don't believe the words of Jesus. And one of the things I'd like you to do.... thank you so much guys. I'd like if you would to go ahead and look at the sketch which we've put down there. And on the left side, in that little space would you write the word "paradise". There's no blank, just space, it's on that side of the gulf, and if you would write the word "paradise" and "Abraham's Bosom", it will help you remember as you study the Bible, le paradaiso is the Greek word for Abraham's bosom or paradise. So you know it's the heavenly side you can say. And then in the middle if you'll where it has a little gap there between the two if you'll write the word "gulf", kind of like the Gulf of Mexico except for this gulf is kind of like the Grand Canyon. And there on the right and you can use the

word , or put the word “hell” dash for the disobedient. For the unjust. Those who have not been justified by faith. Now there’s a fascinating study as to what happened at the crucifixion, what happened in the three days that Christ was in the tomb, in the grave. The Bible talks about how prisoners were set free. The book of Ephesians chapter 4 talks about how those prisoners were taken up on high so its really neat, you remember even on the cross Jesus said to the thief, when he says remember me when you come into your kingdom and Jesus says to him what? Today thou shalt be with me where? Paradise. Paradaiso, that Greek word in paradise. Today you will be with me in paradise. Jesus taught clearly on the cross as well when you and I pass away. We go somewhere and we are fully conscious, amen? And we need to stop listening to the world that says, oh, there’s just simply an end, “nihilism”. There’s an end to life and that’s it. I believe that if we look at our lives we see that God has created us, created us with a purpose and because he’s created us with a purpose He has made us unique and he has given us souls and those souls are eternal. So the question is, what are we doing with the life we have here as well as are we ready for that eternal moment? So if you will fill in number 1, there is something that we want to talk about this morning and that is life on earth and both realms of death have levels. Would you put the word “levels”. It’s a simple way to remember what we’re about to talk about. “Have levels”. In other words, let me put it this way, I know that we’re going to talk about when I invest in someone’s life or I minister to them or I care for them, I’m adding to their bank account, is the phrase we use. Gary Smalley, years ago had used this word, it’s a good way to say it. I’m investing in that person’s bank account. When I encourage them, when I minister to them, I’m filling their bank account. Amen? We should be constantly filling one another’s bank

accounts. But as I do that work on earth something is happening in heaven as well. Did you know that you are actually laying up treasures in heaven as you live for Christ and you live like Christ on this earth? Every day that you do that, you're actually laying up treasure in heaven as well. You're increasing your bank account, so to speak, in heaven. And God will reward those who diligently seek him. Not just on this earth, but also in heaven. The Bible uses a word called "crowns". Now the crown of life and the crown of righteousness is what is laid up for us. Now that comes from a very simple way that I want to clarify this morning. I want to make sure that I talk to someone to this week and they kind of have a question mark, I'm sure it was something that I said last week, so let me clarify. First of all, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you shall be saved. Bottom line, by faith you are saved, not by any works. It is by faith you are saved and it is the work of Christ. And when you were born again you have transferred, remember when talked about across, how you literally go across and you cross over, that phrase "crossing over" which is in the Bible. What you do is literally; you cross over from death where you bound to go into life. But let me clarify, you can't pray to anybody who has already died and ended up in one of those places, you can't pray them across now. It is governed for man to die once and then the judgment, so there is no praying people out of this miserable place. The Bible clearly teaches that there is no praying them out. But what we were talking about last week in class, when you go and witness to somebody and they are born again, literally at that moment, the place, that destiny they were bound for because they were living in sin, that destiny is no longer where they are going to be bound but, now there destiny is heaven. Do you follow? We're not talking present active

tense, that you are going to pray people out of that. We're talking about that the fact that your testimony and your prayer for your grand child and you know

And the people you witnessed to him and whatever. These prayers literally, when that person meets Christ, alters their destiny and praise God that He supernaturally alters our destiny. So if I can remind you all on the left hand is paradise, Abraham's bosom and on the right hand, and these are two separate places that we're going to go. Now, some of you sitting here are bound for paradise because you have confessed Christ as your Lord and Savior. Others of you sitting here are not bound for paradise. But bound for the other side that Jesus talked about. But by confessing Christ as Lord and Savior you can change your destination. Just think of it as you are going to a train station and you can actually alter the name on the ticket as to where you are headed based upon your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now a lot that I'm talking about is really honest and blunt, it's really, it's factual, and it's dealing with issues, sometimes we just don't want to think about it. You know have you ever had an incident where you know you really ought to write out your will? Doesn't that give you kind of a weird feeling like, ooooough, you know if I write it up, then I'm going to die (laugh). You know, it's kind of admitting that inevitably the time that we will die right or the Lord will take us up. And this is one of those things, and you know what's exciting for me is when I deal with eternity it doesn't sadden me at all because it means I'm going to die. When I deal with eternity, it excites me because it means that there is more than just this. There's more than just this. And that's what's exciting to me about this study. Bill Gates was very blunt, talking about being very blunt and very honest. I don't think he knows Christ, but there were some profound words that came out of his mouth. And these are the words he was talking to

some high school kids, in Mt. Whitney High School which is in California. And he was talking about how the “feel good” “politically correct” teachings of today are literally creating a generation of kids that have no concept of reality and how this concept is going to set them up for failure in the real world. And he feels that is dishonest not to be straightforward and honest in our education. But at first he gave them a few points. I’m going to read some of the rules but rule #1. This is what he said to the students. 1. Life is not fair, get used to it. Rule number 3 was you will not make \$40,000.00 a year right out of high school. No, you won’t be the vice president with a car phone until you’ve earned both. The next rule is, if you think you’re teacher is tough, wait until you get a boss. (laugh) This next rule was flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity, your grand parents had a different word for burger flipping, they called it opportunity. His rule number 6 is if you mess up it’s not always your parent’s fault so don’t whine. Number 7, was before you were born your parents weren’t as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you are. So before you save the rainforest from the parasites of your parent’s generation, try cleaning up the closet in your own room. And he said you know your school may have done away with winners and losers but life has not. Some schools have abolished failing grades and they’ll give you as many times as you want to get the right answer. Let me share with you, this doesn’t bear the slightest resemblance to anything in life. Now let me just tell you there are winners and losers but we in Christ Jesus there are no losers. Amen? We are winners because of who Christ Jesus our Lord is and who He is in us. And he has given us a victory. But there is winning and losing, there is a battle going on, there is spiritual warfare going on, ladies and gentlemen. And at the cross,

Satan thought, “I won!” Jesus has lost, but three days later, he screamed “I lost!” and Jesus said,

“I won.” Amen? So there is still winning, there is still winning and there is still losing. . There is a battle and do not be drawn in by modern psychology and modern teachings which is there is no winning and there is no losing. Everything is just kind of a blur, no it is not. There is a battle for lives going on in this culture, there is a battle for our faith. We need to be willing to stand up and be realistic and honest in the same way that this man was blunt with these high school students. We need to be honest about our faith and the bottom line is what we do with we’ve got has everything to do with what happens here on this planet and in eternity. Billy Graham years ago somewhere said, what I do with what I’ve got has everything to do with people’s souls and he submitted to God’s calling and began to stand before people and share Christ crucified and risen. And because of that tens upon thousands upon hundreds of thousands of people will be on that side and not that side, are you with me? What you and I do dynamically affects not only this world but the eternal, the eternal world. So today what I wanted to do was to peak behind heaven’s gate a little and talk about the reserves and talk about this effect. First Peter 1:4, which if you do not have you might want to scribble it down. If you will just scribble this address 1Peter1:4. It says, “into an inheritance that will never perish, spoil or fade is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power unto the coming of salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.” In other words we have an inheritance folks in heaven. We have an inheritance, so first of all it is a guarantee that we’re going to go to heaven. Now to tell you the truth, the fact that we’re going to enter those gates and not those other gates is to me a blessing. Amen? But this is talking

about inheritance that you and I are receiving. And if we daily live our lives God gives us rewards and blessings. Let me just spend a couple of minutes sharing with you a very crucial word. In Greek, it's "stephanos". Now Stephanos, you recognize the word "Stephen". It's the Greek word for crowns. Our first martyr of the faith that we know about in Scripture, his name was Stephen and he was a martyr for the faith. And he was also the one whose name meant crown. Now crown deals with authority, power and glory. Authority, power, glory. His reward and it's also something that tells the world who you are. And in the olden days when a king went out to battle, he would wear a crown that sometimes would have one band on it, sometimes two bands. Sometimes three bands. Other kings as you remember, I don't know if you've seen pictures of kings, but whenever they draw a crown they have these pointy things on it. Do you know what that actually symbolizes? In each one of those points, symbolizes a country or a nation that they have defeated. So when they have 10 crowns, it shows that they have defeated 10 nations, if they have two, it shows that they rule over two nations. Now in the New Testament we see Satan, we see he has horns and the concept of horns and crowns is parallel. It deals with power and authority. We don't have the time to go over the Hebrew in these concepts but let me just share, it has to do with power; it has to do with authority. In the New Testament it talks about Christ who will have the 7 horns, the seven crowns because the number 7 to the Jew meant complete, which means one day, there's no doubt at all and he has now complete power and authority. Are you all with me? So we're finding in the Bible that you and I have crowns of righteousness laid up in store for us. And let me just try to create this framework as we get into this study. In Heaven, there are crowns of righteousness, I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and

Savior the day that I'm born again. I receive the crown of righteousness and that means I'm seen as righteous in God's eyes. But as time goes on as I serve the Lord in obedience, every moment of obedience I have, every second of obedience, every day of obedience, the glory of my crown which is laid up before the throne increases. It increases. My treasures increase in heaven, my rewards increase. Not only do I by being obedient to God have joy and peace and rewards here on earth and not only does he bless me back when I'm obedient to Him in my time, my tithing, my care for others and everything else. But He has actually laid up rewards in heaven. In other words, every time you do something on earth, not only do you see reciprocation here on earth in the spirit realm but in heaven. In your "locker" so to speak, under your name. There are also treasures which are growing. And it is also, if we say the crown is authority that means that your authority, your glory in heaven is growing. I am convinced and it is very clear and simple to show in scripture that when we pass away, there will be levels in heaven and we're going to see a dozen verses, there are over 100 verses that deal with it, but there will be those who have more rewards and more authority to rule than others. Do you all remember the story, which tells about the king who gives talents? He gives a talent to these people and one goes out and makes ten talents and the king says "very good, you made ten talents out of one talent, you get 10 cities." Another servant said, I had a talent and I made 5 talents and the king says, "you made 5 talents out of 1, you invested your life wisely, I'm going to give you 5 cities." The third says, "I didn't invest it at all, I buried it under a tree. And at that moment in time, folks, the master is furious. He takes the talent back and he calls in the archers to shoot to kill those who have not accepted who he is as king. Now this is talking about the judgment. It's talking about

rewards. And it means ladies and gentleman you and our lives, what we do with what we have has to do with how much reward we receive not only blessing here but in eternity. And I'm convinced that in heaven, we're not just going to stand there singing all day. Now I think we will sing, and we will praise God, unending, forever and forever. But I also believe that God is going to place His Saints in positions of authority whether it's ruling the universe or whatever God has planned for the future. We are going to be a part of his plan. Amen? Now that's an exciting thing. So we're investing now in both long term and short term as we're going to see in just a second. John 14:2 Jesus said, I'm going to prepare a place for you. Philippians 3:20 He talks about our citizenship, which is in heaven. Look at these wonderful verses here, in Matthew 11:11 and before we go to point number 2. Let's read it out loud, "I tell you the truth among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." Would you circle the word "least" and circle the word "greater" and draw a line connecting the two. In other words, it is saying that in the Kingdom of Heaven, there are some who are less and some who are more. Now we're all saved who are in the Kingdom of Heaven, Amen? How many of you today can claim that you are a child of the living God, Amen? That is a work of God, by grace. Now in the heavenlies, we know that just like on earth, if you invest wisely the comeback is better. If you invest foolishly the comeback is terrible. What it's saying here is when you invest your life properly on earth, the rewards are great. And some will have less rewards, will be less in position of authority and some will be greater that's why it says the least and the greatest. We can show you piles of verses on this, Hebrews Chapter 2 verse 7, I'll just show you how there are other levels that God has put in heaven. And

there are also several levels in hell, but hopefully we all know the Lord this morning and we'll focus on the heaven part.

Hebrews Chapter 2, verse 7, Let's read it, "What is man that you are mindful of him, you made him a little lower than the angels, you did set him over the works of your hands."

Did you all know right now that you were created a little lower than the angels? How many of you can actually walk through walls and disappear, ok, none of you. Ok so they have a little more ability than you do, and we're created a little lower at this point. But the Bible shows one day we will rule over them. Now are you all following this? The Bible talks about principalities, powers and rulers in high places, all those things that you see in the book of Ephesians. Now I'm going to tell you, that what's going on is, the Bible is teaching that there are going to be positions of authority ruler ship, glory, reward, treasures in heaven. And what we do with our short term here on earth has everything to do with what happens forever there! Now think this through. You know we've come to the place, you know there was a time when my mom used to say, you know, "don't be so heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good." In other words, don't be so self-righteous and pious that you don't get anything done. The person who's preaching about "oh oh, you know the Bible and everything else, but he won't help his wife mow the lawn or help by working and bring in an income. Well he can be heavenly minded but he's obviously no earthly good. Let me tell you don't be so earthly minded that you are no heavenly good either. We need to remember that there is eternity, and the eternity, what happens in eternity, not just hell and heaven, not just the two sides, but our position as we rule with Christ across in the heavenlies. Our position is in Christ Jesus but loosely that the joy, the power, the positions of authority, crowns and glory in heaven is going to be

based on what we do with our lives right here. Did you take your one talent and make ten? You get 10 cities. Did you take your 1 and make 5? You get 5 cities. Did you do nothing with your talent? That means Gospel that was given to you, did you ignore it? When on Sunday, you heard a preacher like me say, hey you can pray this prayer and go before the throne of God, give your life to Christ, you can be born again. Did you take that talent and throw it under the tree? There's a pay off someday for having that attitude. But there's a payoff also for investing wisely with the life that you have for the glory of God. The payoffs are great. And it comes to positions of authority and glory and everything else. It's a wonderful passage by the way, that's Luke Chapter 19 And I think we put it somewhere else here. That's Luke Chapter 19, if you'd like to have that passage. People talk about prayer, talk about our lives in Christ. There's a story years ago that I heard about a logger. Now this guy, this young man comes to work for a logging firm. This is back in the day when they used you know, great big axes. So he comes in and he says, "Hey, I want to work for you." And the guy says, "ok, we can pay you per tree and everything else." So he sends the young man out. At first this kid is just whacking down every tree, chopping down every tree. The trees were falling like crazy. And he gets paid a good amount of money. Week by week-by-week by week, it seems to be diminishing. Until it comes to the point he is barely getting one tree a week. Finally he decides to cut the kid. The kid comes in, he's all sweaty, he's exhausted from working all day long and he's all tired and the boss says listen, I'm going to have to fire you. And he says, Why, Why? Because, you know, you're just not producing. But I'm working just as hard, I get up at 4:00am, I get up an hour early than I used to and I'm going to bed late. And I'm working just as hard. And he says, "yeah, but nothing is coming out,

you're not producing." And then the owner of the logging company look around and there he noticed the axe. He says, "You know maybe it's the axe. Maybe that's where you're slowing up. The kid picks up the axe and it's almost round on the end, it's not sharp, razor sharp like when he first came in. He says, "What's the deal?" He says, "you know what, I just got to tell you the truth. I've been too BUSY to sharpen my axe. I've been too busy working to sharpen my axe. Now you know what? If he had taken even 10 seconds to sharpen the axe, the 12 hours of work would have been productive. Because he took 12 hours and 10 seconds to keep busy with his work and never sharpen his axe, his productivity dropped and dropped. And I'm going to share something with you today. If you don't spend your time with God, I'm going to emphasize this. The day that I get all old and withered up here and I just got to fall down and turn to dust in front of you. I'm going to tell you, if you're not spending a few seconds, a few minutes a day sharpening your axe, your work will be futile. You can work yourself to death and accomplish nothing because the power of the sharp edge of the sword of God is not involved in your life. You need to be studying God's word, you need to be praying, you need to be fasting, you need to be going before the Lord and seeking His will. You need to be constantly communing with him and getting into His word because that's the sharpening of the axe. But I'm going to tell you when the axe is sharp you'll be amazed at not only how many trees you'll fell which is blessings in your life. But it's going to affect the overall impact of everyone else's as well. There are long term and short effects of all of this that we are talking about. Wonderful verse in number 2, if you'll go ahead and fill in. When this comes down frankly to us as believers and it comes down to remembering the power of the moment. In other words today I want you not just to

think, well what I might do with my life, I want you to think, what am I going to do with today? Not just what am I going to do with my life, but what am I going to do with today? The power of the moment, we let time fly by, days fly by, we don't even use them. And I have to tell you for us to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, to be literally to have crowns of glory around us that glorify God and bless Him. It's going to take some attitude changes. Would you read Matthew 18:4 with me, "whoever shall humble themselves as a little child, the same as the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Would you circle the word "greatest". Here we go again on the kingdom of heaven there is some who are great and some who are not so great. But we're all saved by God's glory, we all have the crown of righteousness. But the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is the one who is humble like a little child. Now let me share something with you. You know what happens when you are humble? You're less bitter, you're less angry, you're more complimentary and you're less derogatory. You know why? Because you realize that you are there by God's grace. And a proud person thinks that everybody else is lucky to be there by their grace. Oh you're lucky to be there with me, awe you're lucky to be around me. OH, if you could just be as good as me. Oh yeah, (laughs) You know what I am saying? That's pride. And that's going to be the least in the kingdom of heaven. Doesn't mean that that person can't go to heaven. If they have confessed Jesus Christ as Savior, they're still going to go to heaven. But the bottom line is this; their pride will keep them from having great reward. Because they are so focused on themselves and not focused on Christ, they don't further the kingdom of God. They further the kingdom of themselves and that kingdom ain't going nowhere. When you die, it's over. So we have to come to the place where we're focused outwardly on the kingdom of God that takes

humility and then we're going to see these crowns. We're going to see these rewards in eternity grown, grow dramatically. And what it all comes down to thinking about it as bank accounts.