

**Sermon: What You See Isn't What You Get****Text: 1 Peter 1:6-9****Discussion Questions:**

How many of you enjoy watching the Olympics? I know I do. I was thrilled a number of years ago when they switched the rotation of the winter and summer Olympics. When I was a kid—they both occurred in the same year...every four years. But in 1994, they split them, so that every two years one of the two Olympics would be hosted.

One of the “fun” things about the Olympics is that we get to watch a lot of various sporting events that—if it weren't for the Olympics—we would NEVER EVER take the time to watch.

Like curling. Do you know what curling is? People slide these forty pound discs made of granite (they call them “stones”) down a sheet of ice, trying to get them to stop as close as possible to a big dot on the ice. It all has the feel of shuffleboard on ice. And here's the weird thing—I actually ENJOY watching this whenever the Olympics roll around.

- What are some other sports that you watch during the Olympics—that you would NEVER watch at any other time?

The reason I want you to think about this is because I want you to also think about what goes on during the four years BETWEEN the Olympics.

- What does it require to become an Olympic champion?
- How many hours do you think athletes put into their training?
- Is it worth it? Do you think that putting untold thousands of hours into training is worth the remote possibility that you'll get to compete on the Olympic stage?
- Talk about working in obscurity (completely unknown and out of the public eye). How difficult is this?
- What are you willing to do—with all your heart and to absolute best of your ability—knowing that you will more than likely NEVER be noticed or recognized?

**Examination:**

- Read **Luke 16:19-31**
  - How good did the rich man have it? What do you think he thought of himself?
  - How bad did Lazarus have it? Why do you think Jesus included the detail that Lazarus was covered in sores—and the dogs came and licked them?
  - Jesus told this parable while on His final trip to Jerusalem—when He would ultimately be crucified. Taking into account what we learn from John's Gospel, we know that within weeks (perhaps days) of Jesus telling this parable, He would be in a town called Bethany—and actually raising His good friend NAMED LAZARUS from the dead (John 11). Do you think it was mere coincidence that Jesus gave the poor man in His parable a name—and that it was the very same name of man who within days would die and realize his destiny beyond the grave? Why do you think Jesus did this?
  - Where did these two men go when they died? Do you think these are real places?

- What are conditions like in Hades? How long do you have to stay there?
- What do you make of this “great chasm” that Jesus refers to (v. 26)? What does this teach us?
- Is what the rich man saw during his life what he got in eternity? Is what Lazarus saw in his life what he got in eternity?
- How important of a message is this for people to understand—that what we have in life ISN’T in any way indicative of how things will be forever? Should this truth impact the way we live?
- Why do you think the rich man asked if Lazarus would go and proclaim to his family the reality of how things are after we die? How “ironic” is it that in just a few short days—Jesus would actually raise a man named Lazarus from the dead after having been in the grave for four days??? What if Lazarus ACTUALLY DID go to the rich man’s five brothers and tell them of the reality of heaven and hell. Do you think they would have listened to them? Why or why not?
- Read **1 Peter 1:6-9**
  - Peter begins verse 6 by saying, “In all this you greatly rejoice.” Go back and read verses 3-5. What is the “all this” that Peter is referring to?
  - What is it about our living hope—our lasting inheritance—and our coming salvation that should cause us to greatly rejoice?
  - Take some time to discuss the second half of verse 6: “*Though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.*”
    - What do you think “a little while” means? How long is a little while?
    - Peter isn’t just talking about suffering—he’s talking about **suffering grief**. What’s the difference between experiencing suffering—and the kind of suffering that accompanies grief? What is usually the cause of grief?
    - What are the “kinds” of trials Peter might have been referring to?
  - When Peter says, “*These have come that...*”—does this mean that there is actually a **purpose** behind the trials? Does this mean that God causes the trials? What is that purpose?
  - We think that gold holds great value. What is Peter saying holds even greater value? Why?
  - Talk about the faith, love and joy that Peter mentions in verse 8. What role does love play? What kind of joy is he describing? How is this joy even possible?
  - What is the end result of our faith (v. 9)? What gets saved? How valuable is this salvation?
  - After one minute in Hades (or less!)—this truth became **the most important** thing that the rich man would ever conceive of. And yet—one minute before he died, he could have cared less and never would have listened if someone like Lazarus described what was coming. Why do you think that is?
  - Talk about the phrase, “What you see isn’t what you get.” Do you really believe this? Do the people in your life really believe this? What are you doing to tell them? No...seriously...what are you doing to tell them this? If you really believed it—and truly cared for them—do you think you’re doing enough to say it?

### Application:

Memorize 1 Peter 1:6-9. Believe it to the core of your being. Tell someone about it this week.