

FINDING GOD

by

D. L. Moody

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CHAPTER FIVE

FUTURE PUNISHMENT

“Son, remember” (Luke 16:25).

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU about Luke 16:25—just two words: **“Son, remember!”**

Some people come to me and say: “You do not really believe that there is such a thing as everlasting retribution and future punishment, do you?” Yes, I do. The same Christ who talked to us about that bright upper world has given us a picture of the world of the lost.

In this portion of Scripture it has been drawn very vividly by the Master Himself. We hear a voice coming up out of the lost world—of a man that was once upon the earth—and fared sumptuously every day, and yet was lost, not for time, but for eternity. Over and over again, Christ warned those who hung upon his words. Once, in speaking to His disciples, He spoke about the worm that dieth not; about one being cast into Hell, where the worm dieth not.

I believe the worm that dieth not is our memory. I believe that what will make that lost world so terrible to us is memory. We say that we forget, and we think we do; but the time is coming when we will remember, and we cannot forget. There are many things we will want to forget, especially our sins, that have been blotted out by God. If God has forgotten them, you would think we ought to forget them; every sin that has been so taken away and covered up, by the blood of His own Son, will come back to us in memory.

We talk about the recording angel keeping record of our lives; God makes us keep our own record. We will not need anyone to condemn us at the bar of God. We will condemn ourselves. It will be our own conscience that will come up as a witness against us. God won’t condemn us at the bar of God; we will condemn ourselves. Will He speak to us then, if we stand there, having neglected His offer of mercy, His offer of salvation here on earth? No; memory is God’s officer; and when God touches the secret springs of our memory, saying, **“Son, remember,”** we cannot help but remember. God shall touch these secret springs and say, “Son and daughter, remember”; and then tramp, tramp, tramp will come before us a long procession—all the sins we have ever committed.

I have been twice in the jaws of death. Once I was drowning, and the third time I went down I was rescued.

In the twinkling of an eye everything I had said, done, or thought of, flashed across my mind. I do not understand how everything in a man's life can be crowded into his recollection in an instant of time; but nevertheless it all flashed through my mind. Another time, when I thought I was dying, it all came back to me again. It is just so that all things we think we have forgotten will come back by and by. It is only a question of time. We hear the words, "**Son, remember,**" and it is a good deal better for us now to remember our sins, and confess them before it is too late. Christ said to His disciples, "**Remember Lot's wife.**"

Over and over again, when the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, God said to them, "**Remember where I found you, and how I delivered you.**" He wanted them to remember His goodness to them; and the time is coming when, if they forget His goodness and despise it, they will be without mercy. What Satan wants is to keep us from thinking; to drown our memory, and stifle our conscience.

A man came into the inquiry room one night and said he wanted to be a Christian; but he could not believe that there was any future punishment. I said: "What are you going to do with that man who has been selling liquor for twenty years? A widowed mother goes to him and says, 'I have a son who goes into your place every night; he is being ruined, and it is killing me.' She begs him not to sell any more liquor to her son; she begs and pleads with him. He orders her out of the store, and goes on and ruins that widow's only son, as he ruins thousands of others. Is he going to be ushered right into glory when he dies? What would you do with him? Would you take him right into Heaven?"

He said he did not know what he would do. But the Word of God teaches us plainly that there is future retribution. If it does not teach that, it does not teach anything. If the Word of God tells us about the glory of Heaven and the mansions that Christ is going to prepare, it tells us also about the torments of Hell; it tells us about the rich man lifting up his face out of torment, and crying for one drop of water.

This was not presented just to frighten people.

Some people say: "You are trying to frighten us; you say such things just to alarm us."

I would consider myself an unfaithful servant if I did not so warn you; the blood of your souls would be required at my hands, if I did not warn you. I do not want you to say I never said anything about the lost souls; I do not want you to think I have covered up this doctrine; and I say it to you because God says it. Christ says, "**How shall you escape the damnation of Hell?**"

No one spoke of the lost as Christ did; none knew it as Christ did. If man were not lost, what did Christ come into the world for; or what does the death of the Son of God mean? Is it not better for us just to bow to the Word of God, and take it as God spoke it? If I checked up a book and found there were a hundred statements in that book; and I had reason to believe, and in fact knew, that ninety-nine out of a hundred of these statements were correct; and I did not have the evidence at hand to prove that the other was, I would have good reason to believe it correct, would I not?

This picture in Luke 16, drawn of the lost world, was drawn by the Son of God Himself. He said this rich man was lifting up his face in torment, not because he was rich, but because the rich man had neglected salvation. If men seek salvation, rich or poor, they will be saved; if they do not, rich or poor, they will be lost. Do you suppose those antediluvians who perished in Noah's day—those men too vile and sinful for the world—do you think God swept those men right into Heaven and left Noah, the only righteous man, to struggle through the Deluge? Do you think, when the judgment came upon Sodom, that those wicked men were taken right into the presence of God, and the only righteous man was left behind to suffer?

There will be no tender, loving Jesus coming and offering you salvation. He will be far from you there. There will be no loving wife to weep over you there, young man. You may have a praying wife here; but remember in that lost world you will have no praying wife. Did you ever think how dark this world would become, if all the praying wives and mothers and ministers were out of it? Think of that lost world, where there are no praying wives or mothers!

Remember the time is coming when you will have no loved mother to pray for your soul and for you. Undoubtedly many in that lost world would give millions, if they had them, if they had their mothers now to pray them out of that place; but it is too late. They had been neglecting salvation until the time came when God said: ***“Cut them down; they encumber the ground; the day of mercy is closed.”***

You laugh at the Bible; but how many there are in the lost world today that would give countless treasures if they had the blessed Bible there! You may make sport of ministers; but bear in mind there will be no ministers of the Gospel there. There will be none there for you to laugh at. Remember God's messengers to you—His best gifts to you—these loving friends that look after your soul. You may have some friends praying for your salvation today. Remember, you will not have one in that lost world. There will be no one to come and put his hand on your shoulder and weep over you there, and pray for you to come to Christ.

Sunday morning you hear the chiming of the bells telling you it is God's day. You very often see the people going up to the house of God; but bear in mind that in that lost world no bell will summon you to God's holy tabernacle, no bell will warn you of the day of worship. There will be no Sunday there for you to make light of and sport of. It will be too late!

Some of you have Sunday school teachers who are burdened with your salvation at this present time. They are pleading day and night that you may be won to Christ. Bear in mind that in that lost world no kind teachers will plead for you or with you. There will be no special meetings there.

A great many are laughing and making light of my meetings. When you die, if you come with that purpose, I believe this Hippodrome will rise up in judgment against you. This building has been put up without money and without expense to you. God put it into the hearts of Christian men to hire this building at a great expense. No contributions are taken up; no calls are made upon you for money.

You cannot say that we want your money; we don't want your money. We want you, and are trying to win you to Christ; and if you go from this building to Hell, you will remember the meetings. You will remember how ministers looked, how some people around you closed their eyes and were lifting up their hearts in prayer, and how it has seemed sometimes as if we were in the very presence of God Himself; for we have witnessed certainly wonderful displays of the power of God in this place many times.

In that lost world, you won't hear that beautiful hymn, "*Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By*." He will have passed by. There will be no Jesus passing that way; there will be no sweet songs of Zion there. You hear sweet songs such as, "*Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly*"; "*There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins*"; "*Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee*." You will not hear those songs in that world. They will not be sung there.

It is now a day of grace and a day of mercy. God is calling the world to Himself. He says: **"I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?"**

If you neglect this salvation, how shall you escape? What hope is there? May your memories be wide awake now, and may you remember that Christ is offering salvation to every soul. You may never hear this text again until you hear it on the shores of eternity, and then you will remember. The sermon will all come back to you.

I was at the Paris exhibition in 1867, and I noticed there a little oil painting, only about a foot square; and the face was the most hideous I have ever seen. On the paper attached to the painting were the words, "Sowing the Tares." The face looked more like a demon's than a man's. As he sowed these tares, up came serpents and reptiles, and they were crawling upon his body; and all around were woods, with wolves and animals prowling in them. I have seen that picture many times since. The reaping time is coming. If you sow to the flesh, you must reap to the flesh. If you sow to the wind, you must reap the whirlwind. God wants you to come to Him, and receive salvation as a gift. You can decide your destiny now if you will. Heaven and Hell are set before us, and you are called upon to choose. Which will you have? If you will take Him He will receive you to His arms. If you reject Him, He will reject you.

Will Christ ever be more willing to save you than He is now? Will He ever have more power than He has now? Then why not be saved now? Why not make up your mind to be saved now, while mercy is offered to you?

I remember a few years ago, while the Spirit of God was working in our church, I closed the meeting one night by asking if there were any that would like to become Christians to rise; and to my great joy a man arose that had been anxious for some time. I went up to him and took him by the hand and shook it and said: "I am glad to see you get up. You are coming out for the Lord now, in earnest?" "Yes," said he, "I think so. That is, there is only one thing in my way." Said I, "What's that?" "Well," said he, "I lack moral courage. I confess to you that if such a man" (naming a friend of his—"had been here tonight, I should not have risen. He would laugh at me if he knew of this; and I don't believe I have the courage to tell him." "But," said I, "You have to come out boldly for the Lord, if you come out at all. That is what you have to do"; as I talked with him, he was trembling from head to foot.

I believe the Spirit of God was striving earnestly with him. I did not labor with that man as I have often wished since that I had. I wish that night I had prayed more earnestly with him. He came back the next night, and the next night, and the next night; and the Spirit of God strove with him for weeks. It seemed as if he came to the very threshold of Heaven, and was almost stepping over into the blessed world. I never could find out any reason for this hesitation, except that he feared his old companions would laugh at him. I notice that when men go to prison, no one laughs at them; but when they come out and declare their intention of leading good lives and standing up for Jesus, the men laugh at them and make sport of them.

Well, I thought surely this man would be brought into the fold; but at last the Spirit of God seemed to leave him; conviction was gone. And after that when he would see me on the street he used to shun me; and if I met him coming along the same side of the street, he would cross over to the other side and dodge me in every way he could. He finally got so he did not come to church. He always used to come before.

That is the fault some people find with evangelistic meetings. They say they harden people. Yes, they do harden some people. Any man that goes through a special meeting and rejects the Gospel of course becomes hardened, and his chances are much less for Heaven.

The things that formerly moved him do not move him so readily the next time. It hardens a great many; it hardened this man. Six months after that time, I got a message from him that he was sick and wanted to see me. I went to him in great haste. He was very sick and thought he was dying. He asked me if there was any hope. Yes, I told him. God had sent Christ to save him, and I prayed with him. Contrary to all expectations and to the belief of the physicians, he recovered and got up from his sick bed.

One day I went down to see him. It was a bright, beautiful day, and he was sitting out in front of his house convalescing rapidly; and I said: "You are coming out for God now, aren't you? You will be well enough soon to come back to our meetings again?"

Said he: "Mr. Moody, I have made up my mind to become a Christian. My mind is fully made up to that; but I won't be one just now. I am going to Michigan to buy a farm and settle down; and then I will become a Christian."

Said I, "But you don't know yet that you will get well."

"Oh," said he, "I will be perfectly well in a few days. I'll risk it. I have got a new lease on life."

"It seems to me," I said, "that you are tempting God"; and I pleaded with him, and tried every way to get him to take his stand. At last said he: "Mr. Moody, I can't be a Christian in Chicago. When I get away from Chicago and get to Michigan, away from my friends and acquaintances, who laugh at me, I will be ready to go to Christ."

Said I: "If God has not grace enough to save you in Chicago, He has not in Michigan"; and I preached Christ to him, and urged Christ upon him.

At last he got a little irritated, and said: “Mr. Moody, you can just attend to your business, and I will to mine; and if I lose my soul, no one will be to blame but myself—certainly not you, for you have done all you could.”

I went away from that house then with a heavy heart.

I well remember the day of the week, Thursday, about noon, just one week from that very day, when I was sent for by his wife to come in great haste. I hurried there at once. His poor wife met me at the door, and I asked her what was the matter.

“My husband,” she said, “has been taken down with the same disease; and I have just had a council of physicians here; and they have all given him up to die.”

Said I, “Does he want to see me?”

“No,” said she.

“Then why did you send for me?”

Said she, “I cannot bear to see him die in this terrible state of mind.”

“What does he say?” I asked.

Said she: “He says his damnation is sealed, and he will be in Hell in a little while.”

I went in, and he at once fixed his eye upon me. I called him by name, but he was speechless. I went around to the foot of the bed and looked into his face and said, “Won’t you speak to me?”

And at last he fixed that terrible, deathly look upon me and said: “Mr. Moody, you need not talk to me anymore. It is too late. You can talk to my wife and children; pray for them; but my heart is as hard as the iron in that stove there. My damnation is sealed, and I will be in Hell in a little while.”

I tried to tell him of Jesus’ love and of God’s forgiveness; but he said: “Mr. Moody, don’t you mock me. I tell you there is no hope for me.”

And as I fell on my knees he said: “You need not pray for me; you need not pray for a lost soul. My wife will soon be left a widow, and my children will be fatherless. They need your prayers; but you need not pray for me.”

I tried to pray; but it seemed as if my prayers didn’t go higher than my head, and as if the Heaven above me was like brass. As I took the cold, clammy hand the sweat of death was upon it; and it seemed like bidding farewell to a man I should never see in time or eternity. I left him with a broken heart. That was about noon.

The next day his wife told me he lingered until the sun went down behind those western prairies; and from noon until he died, all he was heard to say was, **“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.”**

After lingering an hour he would say again those words; and just as he was expiring his wife noticed his lips quiver, and that he was trying to say something; as she bent over him she heard him mutter: **“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!”**

And the angels bore him away to judgment. He lived a Christless life; he died a Christless death; we wrapped him in a Christless shroud, and bore him away to a Christless grave. Oh, how dark and sad!

Are you almost persuaded to be a Christian? Take my advice, and not let anything keep you away. Fly to the arms of Jesus, this day and hour. You can be saved, if you will. Son, remember!

I have warned you today. Daughter, remember! You cannot say that I did not lift up a warning voice, and exhort you with all my soul to escape the damnation of Hell.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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