

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

and Other Sermons

by

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SERMON EIGHT

AND IN HELL
(Luke 16:19-31)

THIS is the hardest, most distasteful subject in all of the Bible on which to preach. But, considering its fearful importance, no amount of unpleasantness should permit its being slighted.

It is difficult to suppose that doctors like to tell their patients that they are dying of malignant cancers or of incurable tuberculosis, yet, at times, such terrible information becomes painfully necessary.

Regardless of our opinions or feelings, the Book definitely, specifically preaches and teaches the existence of a place of endless torment called hell. So without any further preliminaries, let us **“to the law and to the testimony,”** to see what the Word of God tells us about the certainty, the character, the crowds, the cries of hell, and the cross on the road to hell.

THE CERTAINTY OF HELL

Hear the **“thus saith the Lord”**:

- **“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God”** (Psalm 9: 17).
- **“Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming”** (Isaiah 14:9).
- **“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”** (Isaiah 33:14).
- **“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”** (Matthew 10: 28).
- **“The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”** (Matthew 13:41-42).
- **“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: and these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”** (Matthew 25:41, 46).
- **“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their**

worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43-48).

- “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

- “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever” (Revelation 14: 10-11).

- “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20: 14-15).

- “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

This is God’s Word. As such, you must believe it. I have nothing to add to it. The certainty of hell is based on the inerrant, unmistakable, unchangeable, declaration of the Holy Spirit.

THE CHARACTER OF HELL

What sort of a place is it? Is it a place of actual, literal, burning, tormenting, consuming, blazing fire? I do not know of personal, experimental knowledge and information. I believe it is. Because God says fire, I believe it to be fire. Yet, there are some characteristics of that fearful place described in the text we are considering that demand our attention.

First, *it is a place of indescribably fearful physical torment.*

“**And in hell,**” says Jesus, “**he lifted up his eyes being in torments . . . and he cried . . . have mercy . . . for I am tormented in this flame.**”

What could that be but the shrieking of a soul and a body in pain, the pain of insatiable desires, of unslaked appetites, of burning passions? What a world of horror that must be!

- Picture the drunkard with the eternities baking his appetite for drink deeper into his innermost being, never, never being able to content that raging longing.

- Conceive the lustful person with the red demon of his passion running riot in his flaming veins never, never, not even for a moment of surcease being able to still that gnawing madness.

- Paint any other sinner in that lurid pit with his sin etched on his soul deeper and deeper with every passing aeon, never being able to forget it, no, not even for one merciful breath of time.

O brethren and sisters, that note alone, the note of physical anguish in the awful symphony of hell, should drive every one of us into the open arms of Jesus.

Second, *it is a place of memory, of remorse, of unavailing repentance.*

“But Abraham said, Son, remember.” Son, remember! Daughter, remember! Remember now! Remember your opportunities, your privileges, your responsibilities, your chances at salvation, your way of escape from that bottomless pit. It will be too late in hell to remember these things. You will be given no more opportunities to avail yourselves of the love of God, of the blood of Christ, of the pleading wooings of the Spirit, once your soul is torn loose from its body in death, once the burning gates of hell close behind your shrinking form.

Think of those poor lost sinners in that Tophet of torment. Let your minds and your hearts reach down to them. Go beyond that. Think of them at the end of time, when the books will have been closed, when this old world will have been changed, when the church will have been redeemed, when the new heavens and the new earth will appear out of the heart and will of God. There they are, poor lost souls, men, women, children, lost, tormented in hell. What is their guilt? In what way are they worse than these Christians who now rejoice forever in the presence of the Lamb? In but one way—in that they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, in that they put off salvation.

Tell me, brother, tell me, sister, will you be in that hopelessly remorseful crowd in hell or will you reign with Jesus in the heavens? The choice is yours.

Third, *it is a world without hope.*

There is no way out of hell. **“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.”**

There is no road out of torment. Not God, nor Christ, nor the Spirit, nor prayers, nor tears, not time, nor eternity can pluck the doomed soul from the depths of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. What a fearful word of woe is that word forever for those who die out of Christ!

Forever! Forever! Forever! You die out of Christ. You sink into hell. A thousand years go past. Out of the haze and the flame of your agony, you look up. Shimmering between you and the bliss of heaven is the miasmatic smoke of ten thousand times ten thousand burning fires. Dancing in that smoke in letters of hopeless doom is the word forever, forever.

Ten times a thousand years go past. You look about you out of your unbearable anguish; you look at the chain that holds you to the pit. Each blazing link flares up at you with the mocking symbol forever, forever. You gaze at the bolts, the bars that block up the gates and the walls of hell, and every bolt, and every bar, and every studded nail leers at your weeping soul with its damning message forever, forever. You listen. What is that ghoulis shrieking, that unholy noise, that sound as of the devil’s mass? It is the hellish glee of the demons of the pit as they dance about stoking the lurid furnaces of Tophet.

Hear the mockery of their song. It is in one key, on one note, has but one word—forever, forever. You listen again. From every corner of that vast prison chamber there comes the groaning, moaning, heart-rending refrain of souls in suffering.

They, too, have learned the song. They, too, cry rather than sing, forever, forever. But, oh, let us hasten to go deeper into this fearful truth.

THE CROWDS IN HELL

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

There is your answer. Regardless of race, of clime, of condition, of any other thing, those whose names are not written in the Book of Life are candidates and subjects for a devil’s hell.

Regardless of personal opinion of self, regardless of the opinions of others, regardless of social, economic, political, or any other sort of standing, the unbelieving together with the out-and-out sinner will find themselves in destruction. Where do you stand, friends? Are your names in the Book of Life? Have you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and accepted Him as your personal Saviour?

There they are, crowded into hell, creatures of all sorts and descriptions. There is the queen, fresh from her dainty boudoir, side by side with the harlot from the den of sin. Here is the clean, moral, self-righteous man, the banker, the lawyer, the doctor, the furniture man, the storekeeper, the mechanic, side by side with the gangster, the racketeer, the kidnapper, the thief, the murderer. There is no choosing and picking of company in that salon.

The people you would no more invite to your homes than you would bed with rattlesnakes will be your companions in hell if you refuse Christ.

But there are groups infinitely worse than that in the pit.

Here is a father who died unsaved. Tormented by his side, glaring at him with bloodshot eyes, cursing at him with every tortured breath, is a son the father dragged to hell by his own indifference to the things of God and of Christ.

Here is a mother, lost forever because she put off the gospel invitation too long. Burning, weeping, shrieking by her side is her daughter, whom she might have led to Christ and saved for heaven if she herself had given Christ the right of way in her heart and life and home.

O fathers, O mothers, O brothers, O sisters, for the sake of your perishing loved ones, come to Christ, be washed in the blood, be saved from hell. Let your holy light and influence lead these loved ones into the haven of safety.

THE CRIES OF HELL

Again let us go back to the text.

First, *there is the cry of pain, the groan of suffering.*

“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 my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”

The man thought of himself first, naturally. His own pain was so frightful that if he could only get a bit of relief it would seem like heaven in comparison. Conceive his awful suffering when a drop of water at the tip of a man’s finger would be welcome relief. But he did not stop there.

Second, *he thought of his loved ones.*

“Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father’s house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”

The greatest evangelists in all the world are the sinners in hell, but it is too late now. If by some miracle of grace, the gates of torment were to be opened and the dead released, every last one of them would become a flaming preacher of the gospel. But it was too late. The man had missed his chance. While he was here upon the earth with his brothers about him was the time for him to have been concerned about their souls. Nevertheless, there is a message from that poor soul to every one of us Christians here. Brethren and sisters in Christ, it is up to us, the living children of God, the believers in the Word, so to pray, so to work, so to sacrifice, that we may not miss a single opportunity to warn these poor lost sinners of their desperate plight, of their fearful destiny.

Third, *by inference, out of hell, there comes a cry of warning to every unsaved soul.*

- You are treading on thin, rotten boards that any minute may crack and plunge you into that horror from whence there is no return.
- You are hanging over the brink of hell by the brittle uncertainty of your lives that any minute might be snapped in twain and you yourselves hurled into that lake of fire and brimstone.
- You are standing on the brink of the pit with the ground crumbling beneath your feet and hell enlarging its borders to swallow you up.
- You are in danger, mortal danger, terrible danger, eternal danger.

Be warned. Flee from the wrath to come. Flee while the gates of mercy are still ajar, while the arms of Christ are still open to you, while the blood is still available to wash away your sins.

Flee to

THE CROSS ON THE ROAD TO HELL

God, for the love wherewith He loved you, sent His only begotten Son into the world to take your place under the wrath of God, under the wages of sin, under the curse of the law.

On the road to hell, God nailed His Son to a cross. There He drained Him of His blood for your salvation. In the broken body, in the shed blood of His Son God offers you salvation from your sins and escape from the doom of the lost, the everlasting burnings of hell. The way is sure. The way is safe. The way is simple. Take it at once. Delay no longer.

If in your soul there is but a spark of desire to respond to this appeal, it is of God, prompted by the Holy Spirit. Quench it not. Heed it now. You have waited long enough as it is. The Holy Spirit is tugging at your soul, knocking at your heart, pleading with your mind.

- **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”**

- **“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”**

Believe and be saved. Confess and be saved. You are standing at the crossroads of your life. Here is Jesus. Here is Satan. Here is Salvation. Here is sin. Here is heaven. Here is hell. The choice is yours. Will it be said of you at the end of time, **“And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments”**? Or, will it be said of you, **“These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There they are before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.”**

Will you have Christ or Satan? Will you be saved or lost? Will you be pardoned or punished? Will you choose heaven or hell?

~ end of sermon 8 ~

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