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# WHAT IS HELL LIKE?

BY JIMMY  
ALLEN



# What Is Hell Like?

Friday, August 7, 1964

## INTRODUCTION

We have an excellent attendance again tonight. There are probably 8,500 to 9,000 people in our audience. We thank you so much for coming.

This evening I shall speak to you on what I think is one of the most serious topics in all of God's word. The lesson is entitled very simply, "What is Hell Like?" Before reading the text, or beginning the sermon, let me say that in tonight's lesson I will make no distinction between the waiting place for the unrighteous dead and Hell itself. As far as I can see, there's no difference between the two except one is limited to time and the other is in eternity.

In the 16th chapter of Luke, beginning at verse 19, we find our text. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his 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 he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, with 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 my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and like-wise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 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. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest 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. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

I have read that passage tonight not because I intend to elaborate upon it to any great extent, but to get before you three facts. Number one, two men lived; number two, two men died; and number three, the situation of those two men in the next life was exactly the opposite of what it had been in this life. The rich man on earth became the beggar in Hell. The poor man on earth became the rich man in Paradise. The rich man here was clothed in purple and fine linen. In the next life he was robed in a garment of fire. The poor man was attended by the dogs here, but in the next life he was attended by the angels. The rich man here fared sumptuously every day, but in the next life he couldn't get a drop of water to cool his tormented tongue. The poor man here suffered evil things, but in the next life he was comforted. In the discussion this evening, I will have time to raise and answer only one question. The question is, "What is Hell like?"

### I. HELL IS ETERNAL

First of all, by way of answering this query, I submit to you that Hell is eternal. In Matthew 25:46 our Lord said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." At Romans 16:26 Paul described God as the everlasting God. In Hebrews 9:14 we read of the eternal Spirit. We have before us now three passages and four expressions in those three passages which must be considered. Here they are: "everlasting punishment," "eternal life," "everlasting God," and "eternal spirit." The only difference between the words "everlasting" and "eternal" in the English language is a difference in spelling. They mean exactly the same thing. The word translated as "everlasting" or "eternal" in these three passages is a form of the same Greek word. That word in the original language is

"aionios," "Aionios" means eternal, everlasting, without end, never to cease, or indeterminate as to duration.

My friends, there's not one single solitary argument a man can make against the Bible doctrine of Hell which cannot be applied with equal force against the Bible doctrine of Heaven. For example, if a man takes the position that Hell is going to last for only 1000 years, then at the end of that period those who are in Heaven will cease to be blessed. How do I know? Because the same word used to modify Hell's punishment is also used to qualify the bliss and happiness of Heaven. If Hell is going to last only 1000 years, then Heaven is going to last for only 1000 years. When the wicked cease to be punished in Hell, at that same moment God Almighty and the Holy Spirit will go out of existence. The same word used to describe the duration of Hell's punishment is also used to describe the duration of God's life and the life of the Holy Spirit. How long, then, is the punishment going to last in Hell? It's going to last eternally or everlastingly. The punishment will continue for ever and ever.

There are people who argue against that position. They say this is too long. They argue that it isn't right to take a man who has lived five years in disobedience and punish him for ever. Well, if it's wrong to take a man who has been disobedient for five years and condemn him for ever, then it's wrong to take a man who has lived five years in obedience and bless him for ever. And, if not, why not? The same argument which is used to get rid of the Bible doctrine of Hell can be applied with equal force against the Bible doctrine of Heaven. Now, let me repeat that. If it's wrong to condemn a man eternally for five years of disobedience, then it would be wrong to bless a man eternally for five years of obedience. Those who argue that eternal punishment is too long may not recognize it, but they are taking a slap at every system of justice in the world. How do you determine the hideousness of an act? By the time it takes to perpetrate it or by the act itself? For example, if I had a six shooter on the pulpit stand, I could raise it and start firing. I'm not a very good shot with a pistol, but

I could kill three or four people before anyone could get to me. Let's suppose it would take me thirty seconds to kill three or four of these individuals on the front row. How should I be punished? Should I go to the penitentiary for thirty seconds? Should I be put in the penitentiary for sixty seconds? Let's triple it and I would go to prison for ninety seconds. Quadruple it and I would go for one hundred twenty seconds. Would that satisfy the demands of justice? If I were able to escape the electric chair, they'd put me away in the penitentiary for the rest of my natural life. I might have to serve forty or forty-five years for doing something which took only thirty seconds to perform. Now, how do you determine the enormity or heinousness of an act? By the amount of time it takes to do it or by the act itself? Obviously, by the act itself. When a man says Hell is too long, he's overlooking one basic fact. He fails to see sin for all of its ugliness. He fails to see it for what it is. The most horrible thing anyone can do is live in rebellion to God's will. Live five years, five months, or five weeks in stubborn disobedience to God's will, die in that condition, and you'll be punished in Hell for ever. Yes sir, that's precisely what will happen.

Somebody says, "Hell's too ugly." If Hell is too ugly, then Heaven is too beautiful, for Heaven is on the one hand what Hell is on the other. Someone else says, "Hell is too horrible." If Hell is too horrible, then Heaven is too wonderful, for it's the extreme on the one hand exactly as Hell is on the other.

Another individual might say, "Listen, preacher, I am in agreement with much of what you have said in the lesson up to this point. I believe that Hell's fire is going to burn eternally. I also believe that the punishment is everlasting. However, I think you misunderstand the meaning of the word punishment." The people who hold the position I am about to deal with believe that when a man dies he is annihilated or cut off. According to them, the dead cease to exist. They argue that when a man dies he goes back to where Adam was before he was created. Well, where was Adam before he was created? He wasn't! If, when we die,

we go back to where Adam was before he was created, then we are annihilated. We do cease to exist. Incidentally, when Adam was brought forth, was he resurrected or created? Obviously, he was created. Now, if, when I die, I go back to where Adam was before he was created, how in the world could you talk about my resurrection? You couldn't discuss my resurrection. You might talk about my being recreated, but you couldn't discuss my resurrection. The doctrine of annihilation logically denies the resurrection of the dead. But, be that as it may, these people say when we die we're just like the proverbial dog Rover, we're dead all over. That which is let down into the grave is the whole man. When the Lord comes again there will be a resurrection. Then, all of the wicked are caught up before God to give an account of the deeds done in the body. They're weighed in the balances and found wanting. Then, they're cast into eternal fire. These people argue that in an instant the unrighteous are burned up. Hence, when they read the passage concerning the second death, they understand it to be a second physical death. We experience one physical death here. Some will experience another physical death there when they're cast into the fire and burned up. They sometimes use the illustration of a dog. They say when a dog is dead he is absolutely unconscious. He is dead eternally, you might say. So, when people are cast into the fire they become like that dog, dead forever. Everlasting punishment, then, means to be dead eternally.

Now, I wanted you to see that argument in all of its force and power. There's not but one thing wrong with it. It's false to the core! It just isn't so! But, how do I know it's false? Let's go back to Matthew 25:46 where Jesus said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." The word here translated "punishment" is from the Greek word "kolasin." Kolasin, in turn, is derived from the verb "koladzo," which means "I chastise" or "I torment." At I John 4:18 it is translated "torment." Let's read a few passages in this connection. According to the 16th chapter of Luke, in Hades the rich man lifted up his eyes "being in torments." Furthermore, he wanted a drop of water to cool

his "tormented" tongue. He also wanted Lazarus sent back to warn his five brethren lest they joined him in that place of "torment." Abraham said the rich man was being "tormented" and Lazarus was being "comforted." Four times in Luke 16 the word "torment" appears. Revelation 20:10 says, "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Revelation 14:11 states: "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever and they have no rest day nor night." Six times I have found the word "torment" used to describe the state of the wicked after death. The word "kolasin," found at Matthew 25:46, means "torment" or "chastisement." That's exactly what it means! Incidentally, I mentioned that dog a while ago. In the place where I was reared we used to torment dogs. Sometimes we'd tie a string of cans on a dog's tail, or put a little "high-life" on him so we could see him move on. Let's suppose we have a dead dog. Put a string of cans on his tail, on every paw, and on both ears. Drench him in "high-life." What have you done to him? Not a thing. Why? Because there is no consciousness. He cannot be tormented unless consciousness is present. He cannot be tormented unless consciousness is present. The import of "everlasting punishment," as found in Matthew 25:46, is everlasting, conscious, suffering torment! Now, that's what Hell is!

## II. HELL IS A PLACE OF DARKNESS

Secondly, Hell is a place of darkness. II Peter 2:4 states that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." In Jude, verse 13, the writer, in describing the false teachers, said, "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." In Matthew 25:30, a master, in dealing with his unprofitable one-talent servant, said, "He is to be cast into outer darkness." Put those three passages together. Do you see how the figure intensifies itself? Not simply "darkness," but the "blackness of darkness." Not simply the "blackness of darkness," but "outer darkness."

The last expression seems to suggest that Hell is the place farthest removed from the source of light.

I used to wonder why Hell had to be dark. Now I think I know. James 1:17 states that God is the "Father of lights." I John 1:5 says "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." But, God is not in Hell. In II Thessalonians 1:7-9 Paul wrote: "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God and 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." In Psalms 139:7-12, David wrote: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or wither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." David was saying that God is omnipresent. He taught that it's impossible to get away from God. Jonah learned that truth the hard way. But there is one place where God is not. God is not in Gehenna. God is not in the place of everlasting destruction. God is not in Hell. Where God is not is bound to be what the Bible calls Hell. That must be Hell, if God isn't there. There won't be any God to listen to your oft-repeated prayers in torment. There won't be any God to listen as you scream and beg for mercy. None will be granted because God will not be there. Since God is the source of light, where He is not must be a place of darkness.

I don't think you like darkness. I have sometimes thought we have an innate fear of darkness. It seems like we're born fearing darkness. When our first child was born in 1959, my wife's sister and her two little girls came over to stay with us until Marilyn was able to be up and around the house again. I had never been around children in my life. I went

in home one evening about 7:30 and noticed the hall light was on. I didn't feel there was any reason for the light being on, so I flipped it off. Those two little girls were in one of the back bedrooms trying to go to sleep and they gave me to understand there was a reason for the light being on. So I turned it back on post haste! I didn't argue with them about it. They were afraid of the darkness. But, someone says, "That's just a couple of children."

Let me tell you about a teenager I used to know. I knew him well. Really, I'm describing myself. I lived seven miles from the little community where I went to school. The last bus ran north toward my house at 9:38 in the evening. Well, a lot of nights I wasn't ready to go home by that time. That meant I had to hitch-hike. Sometimes I had good luck; sometimes I didn't. I've walked every step of those seven miles. Regardless of my luck, I always had to walk the last mile and a quarter for it was that far from the highway to my house. I had to go through one of the blackest and darkest creek bottoms you've ever seen. I've gone through those bottoms about twelve or one o'clock at night and heard a rabbit rustle in the cane. I'd look all around. Boy, I could imagine something terrible was going to get me. About that time the Phantom Killer was on the loose at Texarkana. I sometimes thought he might be out there in the woods. Now, I didn't really get scared, but, somehow, I couldn't convince my feet that such was the case. Really, I didn't run, but I walked a lot faster than normal. Friends, I never went through those creek bottoms in the day light afraid, but I went through them at night scared. Why? Because it was night. "Oh," you say, "that's a teenager." Well, why is it so much harder for an elderly person to suffer through the long hours of the night than in daylight? It seems there's something which causes us to rebel against the idea of being in darkness. If there were not another word in all of God's Bible on the question of Hell except its being a place of perpetual darkness, that would be enough to convince me that one should strive to avoid it. I don't want to live in a place of darkness and endless night.

### III. HELL IS A PLACE OF FIRE

Thirdly, Hell is a place of fire. In Matthew 13:42 it is described as "a furnace of fire." In Matthew 25:41, "everlasting fire." In Mark 9:44-45, "the fire is not quenched." In Revelation 20:10, "fire and brimstone." In Revelation 20:15, "the lake of fire." At Matthew 3:12, "the baptism in fire." But, someone asks, "Do you understand these passages to refer to Hell?" Read them in context; there's no doubt about it. FIRE, FIRE, FIRE, FIRE! That's what all of them say. But how do we reconcile the idea of having darkness and fire in the same place at the same time? If you were to step outside the building tonight and kindle a fire, it would illuminate, give light, or dispel the darkness. How can there be fire in Hell and darkness too? Well, really there's not any problem there. Man, by his own chemical ingenuity, has been able to create a fire which does not illuminate. If a man can do this, surely God would not have any problem with it. Of course, it is possible that God has prepared a special type of fire. In the 3rd chapter of Exodus we read that Moses was tending his sheep one day, looked back toward Mount Horeb, and saw a bush burning, but it was not being consumed by the fire. When he drew nearby to investigate, God told him to take off his shoes for the place whereon he stood was holy ground. Now, the miracle could have been performed on the bush, but on the other hand, God could have used a special fire on that occasion to accomplish His purpose. Had that been the kind of fire with which you and I are acquainted, it would have consumed the bush. Perhaps He prepared a special fire. Well, if He could do it there, He can do it in eternity.

It is likely that Biblical writers used the word "fire" as a metaphor. What's a metaphor? It's a likeness or similarity set forth as a reality. Jesus said, for example, "I am the door." He didn't mean He was a literal door, but He meant He was like a door. He said, "I am the vine." He didn't mean He was a literal vine, but He meant He was like a vine. He said, "I am the good shepherd." He meant He was like the good shepherd. On one occasion he described Herod

Antipas as a fox. He didn't mean that He was a literal fox, but that he was like one. Herod was cunning, treacherous, and wily. Metaphors are found repeatedly in God's word. It is possible that fire is used in a metaphorical sense to describe Hell. Perhaps you are wondering why. God is an infinite God and Hell is an infinite place, but we are finite creatures. Really, God is attempting to describe to us what cannot be described. I don't believe there is an absolute description of either Heaven or Hell in the Bible. Both must be taught by analogy and metaphor. God has to say that Hell is "like" this or that. He must reason from what we know to what we do not know. To show you the problem, suppose you make a trip to New York City and rode the subway. Upon your return home you try to explain to your little three year old son what a subway is like. He's never been on a subway. He doesn't know anything about one. What will you say? You might tell him the subway is like the tunnel a mole burrowed under your front yard last summer. Is a subway like that? Sort of. Have you exhausted the description of a subway with that analogy? No, but he's in a better position to understand what's involved than he would be if you tried to give him a technical and literal description of a subway. Suppose you lived in western Kansas and had just returned from a trip to New York City. You're trying to tell your little boy about a sky scraper. He has never seen one. You say, "Son, it's like a silo." He doesn't completely understand it, but he's nearer to the idea of what a sky scraper is like. Suppose you were trying to describe a Boeing 707 Jet airplane to a man who lived before the Civil War. What would you say to him? He doesn't know anything about an airplane, much less a jet, and you're trying to explain the matter to him. There's not but one comparison you could make. You'd have to say it's like a bird. But he might get the idea that it flapped its wings to fly! When you say an airplane is like a bird, have you completely exhausted the description of the jet? You've hardly started. Now, that's the problem with reference to Heaven and Hell.

Heaven is said to have jaded walls, golden streets, and gates of pearl. Are we to understand that literally or is that

John's way of telling us Heaven is far more wonderful than anything we've ever known? Surely, the latter is correct. The Biblical description of Hell is God's way of telling us that Hell is far worse than anything we've ever considered. The nearest thing to it in our vocabulary is fire. The nearest thing to it in human experience is that of a burn. If you want to know what Hell is like, strike a match and hold your finger in its flame. Or, when you get home, turn up the over to 500 degrees. Let it burn for about ten minutes, then put your hand in and leave it for a while. Sometimes we go fishing late in the afternoon. We set up our camping equipment and set out our lines for the night. We let the camp fire burn down real low. I've sat by the fire just to see how close I could get my hands to the coals before having to jerk them back. One might say, "That sounds a little sophomoric to me." I've done it to convince myself again that I'm in the greatest work in the world; saving people from Hell which is like a burning fire! Brother Marshall Keeble, outstanding Negro evangelist, once said that a man could build the hottest fire possible, remove the damned from Hell, place them in the man-made fire and in ten seconds they'd freeze to death. That has a note of levity in it, but I believe he was right. My friends, if Hell is just one tenth as bad as the description found in the Bible, that should be enough to produce fear in the heart of anyone. But, the truth of the matter is, it's a thousand times worse than any description found in God's word! It is worse, just like heaven is far more beautiful and wonderful than any description found in the Bible.

When you think of fire, you think of smoke. That's why, in Revelation 14:11, the Bible says, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." This simply completes the figure of fire.

#### HELL IS A PLACE OF PAIN

Fourthly, Hell is a place of intense pain. At Matthew 25:30, in describing the punishment of the one talent man, the Lord said, "there'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth." When individuals undergo great and severe pain, they weep

and grit their teeth. They can hardly bear it, and that's what our Lord was saying.

### NO REST IN HELL

Fifthly, there is no rest in hell. Revelation 14:11, the passage I've used several times, says, "and they shall have no rest day nor night." Do you know why? Well, Revelation 20:10 tells us that the wicked are tormented. There's not anything I enjoy more than going home after I'm completely worn out, sitting down in that big easy chair, taking off my shoes, propping my feet up on the foot stool, and unrolling. Or, better yet, go to bed, fall across it, and sink into the oblivion of sleep. Rest is wonderful when you're tired, but how horrible to be perpetually exhausted and have no opportunity to rest. Such a place is Hell!

### NO RELIEF IN HELL

Sixthly, there is no relief in Hell. The rich man wanted a drop of water to cool his tormented tongue but he didn't get it. Robert Ingersoll, an infamous skeptic around the turn of the century, said had he been present, he would have given that rich man some water. There's one little item Ingersoll overlooked. The rich man didn't have to be there. He could have received ten million gallons of the water of God's salvation in this life, but he neglected his opportunity and finally wound up in torment without water. You can stay out of Hell, my friend, but if you ever get in, you can't get out. There'll be no relief for you, if you ever go there.

### NO HOPE IN HELL

Seventhly, Hell is a place where there is no hope. Look at Matthew 25:46 again. It says, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." How long is eternity? Those of us who preach can't even discuss it sensibly. We stand in front of audiences and talk about spending eternity. You can't spend eternity. You can spend a dollar, but you can't spend eternity. If you could spend eternity, that would imply that it has an end. We talk about living throughout eternity. You can live throughout a lifetime or througho t a century,

but you cannot live throughout eternity. A little fellow said he wished he had a piece of peppermint candy with only one end on it. That's a good definition of eternity. It has but one end on it — the beginning end or starting place. I don't know when God puts immortality into the human heart. It may be at conception, during the time the embryo is in the womb, or at birth. But, whenever it's put there, from that time onward we live. Some place we will maintain an existence even after death.

Suppose this old world were made of solid steel. Put an ant on the equator and start him walking. He travels at the rapid pace of 1/17 of a mile an hour. This solid steel ball is 25,000 miles in circumference. How long would it take that ant to wear down a path a half inch deep? How long to completely wear the earth in half? Well, that's not eternity. That's less than eternity. Suppose this great building and everything in it were made of wood. How long would it take one termite to eat this building? Suppose Dallas were made of wood. How long would it take him to eat the city of Dallas? Suppose the state of Texas were made of wood, how long would it take him to eat the state? Suppose the nation were made of wood, how long would it take him to eat the country? Suppose the world were made out of wood, how long would it take him to eat the world? Suppose the sun, moon, stars, Venus, Neptune, Jupiter, and all the celestial bodies were made of wood, how long would it take one termite to eat all of them? I don't know, but that's not eternity. That's less than eternity. Suppose we had a ship of 30,000 tons displacement and filled its hold with English peas. Let's sail it at the rate of 25 knots an hour and throw out an English pea ever 10,000 miles. How long would it take to empty the ship? I don't know, but that, my friends, is not eternity.

If Hell were only a hundred years, I could stand it. After I'd been there one day, I could say, "I have only 99 years, 364 days and I'll get out of this place." If it were only a thousand years, I could bear that. After a day in torment, I could say, "Just 999 years, 364 more days and I'll get out." If it were a million years, I could bear it. After a couple of

days there, I could say, "999,999 years, 363 more days and I'll get out." That faint glimmering ray of hope would cause me to hold on. But, after a man has been in Hell a hundred, thousand, million, billion, trillion years, he has no less time to stay. The Bible speaks of everlasting and eternal punishment. Dante, in his famous poem, "The Inferno," said the sign hanging over Hell's door ought to be "Thou Who Enter This Door Leave All Hope Behind." Hell is a hopeless and helpless place!

When you look at a man or a woman, how do you consider that individual? Do you simply see a white person or a Negro, one well dressed or poorly dressed, some one with money or without money? We ought to see an individual as one made in the image of God for whom Jesus died and who will live in the presence of God in Heaven or burn in the fires of Hell. The only thing in this world that's going to last is people. Nations rise and fall, cultures come and go, but people live on and on. How many people do you know who have died this year without Christ. How many loved ones? How many relatives? How many friends? How many people are in Hell now because you never opened your mouth one time to turn them to the Lord? Oh, the tragedy of all tragedies and the calamity of all calamities is to die without Christ! The number one issue facing everybody in this audience is to get right with God and stay right with God. Yet, we are cumbered and worried about food, shelter, and clothing, when only one thing is needful. We must become children of God and serve the Lord. Friends, I don't want to be lost and I don't want you to be lost either.

#### IN HELL MAN RETAINS HIS MENTAL FACULTIES

Eighthly, Hell is a place where man retains his mental faculties. After the rich man died, he could feel, see, hear, talk, and remember. Abraham, in speaking to him, said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." Furthermore, he remembered his five brethren, who were still alive on the earth, and he wanted them to be warned. If he could remember his five brothers and the good things he experienced

before he died, I have reason to believe that he could remember the times he neglected to do the Lord's will. If you lose your soul and wake up in torment, one of the horrible things about it will be a haunting memory to plague you. You will think: "If I'd listened to the pleadings of my wife; if I'd paid attention to my husband; if I had listened when that Christian came to my house and begged me to do the Lord's will; if I'd answered the invitation that night in Dallas." Yes, you will say, "if, if, if," but it won't change your situation. In 1941 five other people and my mother were driving a new Ford. They pulled up on the railroad track in front of the Rock Island Rocket, a streamlined train. According to one of the ladies in the car, my mother saw the train and said, "Oh, my, there's a train." Then, she opened the door and was about half in and half out when the train struck the rear of the automobile. It pitched the car into a deep depression located near the railroad tracks. Mother was under the car and, out of six people, she was the only one killed. If she had been a little faster, she would have cleared the automobile and would not have been injured at all. Had she been a little slower, she would have stayed in the car and sustained an injury, but would not have been killed. However, she was caught half in and half out. I've been "if-ing" for 23 years, but it hasn't brought her back from the dead. Her body is still in the cemetery. "If" is a mighty big word! In torment, you may say, "If I'd obeyed the gospel," but "ifing" is not going to change your eternal destiny. Your memory will plague and haunt you day after day.

But, further, this man not only could remember, he could also recognize. He recognized Lazarus. I've had people ask me, "Do you think we'll recognize one another in eternity?" My answer is "yes." But, if we recognize one another in eternity and our loved ones aren't with us in Heaven, wouldn't we be unhappy? Well, let's consider the other side of the question. If we don't have any recognition in Heaven, we'll know only ourselves. We'll think that all of our loved ones missed glory. Take the position of no recognition in the next life and you will have far more difficulties than with the position of recognition. I believe we'll recognize one

another in eternity. The rich man recognized Lazarus because he had known him in this life. Many of us have tried to lead people to the Lord Jesus Christ only to hear them say, "I couldn't make a change because daddy, mother, brother, or sister wasn't a child of God." There couldn't be anything worse than meeting mother, father, brother or sister in the torments of hell! You would simply add to their affliction and to your own. In Jackson County, Arkansas, where I was reared, an atheist died and a friend of mine was in charge of the funeral service. The daughter of the dead man came to the casket, fell across his body, and said, "Oh, daddy, daddy, I'll meet you out yonder some day." Of course, we understand that the girl was heart broken and grief stricken. Likely, she didn't realize what she was saying. My friend said when he screwed the lid down on him that was the last time he wanted to see him. Why? Because he knew if he ever saw him again, he'd have to see him in Hell. Needless to say, he didn't want to meet him there. Wouldn't it be a catastrophe to run into a loved one or a friend there? If you have any relatives who've left this world unprepared to meet Christ, believe you me, they never want to see you again! The rich man was praying that his five brethren would not join him in torment. Surely, you don't want to go to Hell because a relative has gone there.

#### HELL IS WORSE FOR SOME THAN OTHERS

I believe in degrees of punishment. Why? For two reasons; number one, it's reasonable, and number two, it's scriptural. Criminal jurisprudence recognizes degrees of guilt. If a man perpetrates a premeditated crime, he is punished more severely than the man who commits a crime of passion. Of course, a crime of passion is never planned. There are degrees of guilt under our system of law and surely God recognizes such. But the Bible also upholds this view. According to Matthew 11:21-24, Jesus said: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon

at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Our Lord taught that in the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for some than for others. Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility. When we have the ability and are given the opportunity, then we have great responsibility. At Luke 12:47-48, our Lord said, "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Some are going to get many stripes and some will receive few stripes. Dante, in "The Inferno," divided Hell into ten parts. In the very center the most intense punishment was being meted out. In the second circle the punishment was not quite as severe as in the first one. In the third, it was not as intense as in the second one. He followed that reasoning into the tenth and last circle. Where did he get his ten circles? I don't know, but I do know where he got the principle for them. That came from the Bible. My friends, if I had to pick a place tonight from which to depart this old world unprepared to meet Christ, it wouldn't be Dallas. I'd rather die as an African savage who'd never heard about Jesus than to die in your unprepared condition. You and I have no reason for refusing Christ. If we lose our souls, we'll get the most severe punishment God can place upon us.

#### HELL IS A PLACE OF DIVIDED FAMILIES

Finally, Hell is a place where families are divided. When we think about our families, a lot of us are overcome with sentimentalism. I'm sure you remember the following words from an old hymn: "Will the circle be unbroken, by and

by, Lord, by and by, is there a better home awaiting in the sky, Lord, in the sky?" I don't know how you feel about that, but I think for most people, it's a lot of nonsense. How can we sing "Will the circle be unbroken by and by" when the circle is broken right now? How can we sing about being united in Heaven when we're not united on earth? Some people sing the song, "If I Could Hear My Mother Pray Again." How many of you ever heard your mother pray? Some of you have. You ought to thank God, if you had a good Christian mother. I never heard my mother pray one time. When we think of the family, we are sometimes overcome with sentimentalism and fail to be realistic.

I don't like to be away from home, but I do like to preach the gospel. Still, I despise being away from home even to preach. Many times I have left home knowing my wife was in the front room shedding tears because I was to be gone for two or three weeks. In our 13 years of marriage, we have never had to be separated more than five weeks at a time, but we have had a lot of these short separations. I don't like them and she doesn't like them either. Any man who likes to be away from his family is not much of a man. I tell you what would break my heart. That would be to stand before God in the day of judgment and see my beloved go in one direction as I go in another. It would be a terrible tragedy to see the woman I had loved in life, who labored with me, who had helped me to rear my family, led away to Hell as I was ushered into Heaven. In many families, this very thing will occur. A father and son will go to Hell and a mother and daughter will go to Heaven. The father and daughter may go to Heaven and the mother and son go to Hell. Families are going to be split and you need to think about it.

Have you ever really become serious about converting your own relatives? I like to see anybody obey the gospel, but I am especially interested in my own flesh and blood. Where do you think I held my first meeting? Back home. Incidentally, I couldn't preach elsewhere. But, my primary reason in hold that meeting was to get the man who had been my guardian, my uncle. After four of five nights of preaching, I went to see his wife and asked, "Aunt Dora, how

am I doing?" She said, "He has been talking to himself at the woodpile." I knew, if he started answering himself, we would get him. Sure enough, before that meeting was over, he walked down the aisle and did the Lord's will. He had heard many sermons, but had done nothing about saving his soul. However, when the little fellow who had grown up at his feet began to put the gospel to him, he could resist no longer.

I've heard people say, "I can't talk to mother and daddy about Christ. I can't discuss religion with my brothers and sisters." If you can't talk with your own relatives about salvation, pray tell me, with whom can you talk? Who will lead them to Christ, if you don't do it? Some people have said, "If I get to heaven and my loved ones aren't there, I won't be able to stand it." Can you stand it now? What are you doing to try to save them now? A lady came to me one night after a preaching service and said, "I want you to talk to my daddy." I said, "all right." That woman was about 30 years old at the time. She had never married. She had been living under the same roof with her daddy since she had a being in the world. I asked, "Is your daddy religious?" She said, "I don't know." I asked, "Does he have membership in any church?" Again, she replied, "I don't know." I asked, "How has he reacted to the preaching?" Once again, she said, "I don't know." Well, I was visibly perturbed. That woman had lived with her father all of her life, probably half of that time she had been a Christian, and had never spoken to her lost daddy about his soul. I said, "Lady, I'll be out tomorrow afternoon, but don't expect me to grab him by the nape of the neck, throw him into water, and baptize him." It upset me to think she had never told her daddy about Jesus and what to do to be saved.

A lady in Southern Arkansas was a "member of the church." I needed a verbal club to get her out to worship for an hour every three or four Sundays. She used to say, "I don't know why I can't convert my husband." I didn't have the grit to tell her why. That sorry example living under the roof with him kept him away from Christ. I talked to her husband about Jesus, I saw him cry when he heard the

story of the cross, but he never obey the gospel. Surely you know why. The bad influence of his wife kept him from changing. When I talked with her about her duty to the Lord, she said, "Well, Jimmy, I say my little prayers." Yes, I knew what they were. "Now I lay me down to sleep." You say, "That's mean." Do you think that's half as severe as God will be with her in the day of judgment? She could save her soul and the soul of her husband, but what's she doing for him? Unless she has made a change, absolutely nothing. Think of how terrible it will be for that man to be lost eternally when he could be converted, if she were simply a Christian.

A brother in northern Arkansas was talking to a preacher friend of mine and said, "Brother Henderson, I don't know why I can't convert my wife." He was talking to the wrong fellow. Obert looked him straight in the face and said, "I'll tell you why you can't convert your wife. If she wants to go out of town over the weekend, you load up and leave. You forget about the church and your contribution. As a matter of fact, you'll put anything before the church. It's no wonder that you can't convert her." That man wasn't the dedicated, loyal, obedient, and godly Christian he should have been. He couldn't lead anybody to Christ with that disposition and attitude. What's going to happen to his wife? She will go to torment, if she isn't converted. She will go because he didn't care.

There are some good women in this audience. Bless your hearts, you've really had to carry a burden across the years. You haven't had any help from that husband of yours. You've had to teach your children to pray. You've had to teach them the word of God. You've had to carry them to Bible school on Sunday morning. You've had to carry them to Bible classes on Sunday and Wednesday nights. Everything those children know, spiritually speaking, you've taught them and lived before them. Your husband hasn't given you a bit of help. Of course, he has said, "I'm not in the way." Did any of you non-Christian husbands and fathers ever try to plough with a dead mule in the hardness? Still you say, "I'm not in the way." Some of you ladies have done

everything in your power to convert your mates. Ladies, all I can say is "God bless you." The Lord loves you and the Lord's going to honor you. Just keep on keeping on. Continue to teach those children. Rear them to serve God. If your husband wants to lose his soul, I guess he will have to lose it.

After having said that, let me say this. There are some in this audience who don't want their loved ones converted. That's quite an accusation. It's true, nevertheless. Perhaps you are ready to say, "I get down on my knees every day and say, 'Oh, Lord help me to convert John'." But what are you saving down deep in your heart? You are saying, "Lord, don't touch him. Leave him alone because, if he were to become a Christian, I'd have to get out of my negligence and indifference. I'd have to become a devoted and dedicated Christian and I don't want to be that. No, Lord, don't touch him, leave him alone." Is that what you subconsciously pray concerning your husband or wife? Are you living the kind of life that will bring your mate to Christ or the kind that will cause him to wonder if Jesus Christ is that Son of God?

Families are going to be divided. You should want to save yours. There may be a husband here tonight who is not a Christian. Perhaps your wife and children are already disciples of Christ, but you are on the outside looking in. There may be a lady here who is not a child of God. The rest of the family is Christian, but you aren't. There may be unsaved young people who have Christian parents. That family ought to be united in Christ. Talk about a little bit of heaven on earth, that comes when you have a devoted Christian family. Certainly, in the next life you will never regret it. Remember this, if you don't get anything else from the sermon, families will be divided in the day of judgment! I hope yours will not be divided. I hope you and everybody in your family can go to heaven.

In just a moment we are going to sing the hymn of invitation. We have a vast audience of people. We ask that you be very quiet. Please remain in your places, unless you want to come to the front and answer this invitation. No one should leave because the next few minutes are the most im-

portant part of the service. Now the ushers are taking their places. They will stand and face that part of the audience where they have been stationed. When you step out into the aisle, one of the ushers will walk with you to the front. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to every lost person in this audience, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." If you will trust the Lord and be baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins, you can leave here saved. The Bible says to every erring brother and sister, "Repent and pray, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." There are several hundred people here who are lost. I wish everyone of you would come while we stand and sing.

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