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The Doctrine of Hell

Is there anybody here that you expect that when you die, you will end up in hell? Is there anybody here that thinks that when you die that you be cast into hell? Nobody thinks that.

[to person in audience] You think that. You expect to go to hell. Do you want to go there? But you expect to?

Is there anybody here that has ever believed they were going to hell even though now they don't believe they are? Yeah, that would be me.

Do you think that is normal? Do you think it's normal that people don't think they're headed there who really are, who then come to realize that they are, and then they're saved and they don't? Does that make any sense or does that totally confuse you?

[Inaudible comments from audience]

Let me ask this: do you think it's common that people who are very much lost and headed there think they're not?

[Inaudible comments from audience]

Right. But give me a Scripture that would tend to lead us to believe that people by the multitudes think things are okay when they're not.

Matthew 7 would definitely be one place, but Matthew 7 is one that we talk about a lot. And I mean for a reason, it has some really powerful truths. But prove it from somewhere else.

[Inaudible comments from audience]

There's a way that seems right to man but the end is not so nice. Right? Yeah, and that's a good text. Was that the one you were thinking about? No, you were thinking about a different one? Right.

[Inaudible comments from audience]

And do we not have in Ecclesiastes, the reality that because the punishment for people's sins is not carried out immediately, men seem to think that punishment is never going to come. Yes, men are naturally deceived.

You know one thing we know about all men? All men fear death. No one wants to die. Who wants to be thrown into a lake of fire? Obviously, nobody. And you know what the problem is? Again, out of Ecclesiastes, God has written eternity on men's hearts. God has given man a conscience. You know what Romans chapter one says – there is no true atheist. Men try to suppress truth but the problem is they have eyeballs, or they have senses that tell them that creation has God's fingerprints all over it. And they have a conscience whereby they know right and wrong, as shattered as that may be, that image of God that was first implanted upon man, there's vestiges of it. And men know and they can't run. And death haunts them. Men know they're going to die. Now even though they may, in some ways, act like they're going to live forever, men have a gnawing fear inside. And here they are in life and there's a way that seems right.

In other words, men have a plan. Men think that they are going to construct a way that they're going to escape this. Every single man desires to miss hell. Now they may try to replace hell with annihilation or they stay here with the Jehovah's Witnesses, or there is a kingdom, or there is heaven – they try to construct something. Mormons have all their insanity. You've got the paradise of Islam, you've got basically Nirvana, I mean you just reach a state of nothingness. But anyways, whatever it is, it's not hell.

Men try to construct any way they can because everything about hell is absolutely hellish. Men recoil at everything that hell is. But the thing is, every single man has constructed in his own mind, or her own mind, some way...

No man plans to go to hell. I guarantee if we could randomly take a cross-section of people – ethnicity, color, race, economic status – and we could resurrect them out of hell right now, if we could bring up a hundred or a thousand people from hell right now, I guarantee every one of them would tell you, "I never thought to go there. I did not believe I would go there." And you know what? They went there. Why? They were dead wrong. They were dead wrong. They were deceived. Men are always thinking, somehow I'm going to miss it.

How do they think to do it? One, by constructing religion that they think is going to get them, whether it's some form of Christianity by name, or it's some other religion, they construct religions whereby they think to be moral and good and basically please God out of their own doings, and thus miss it. But you know the vast majority of people that have heard of Christ, you have to think that the way they thought they were going to miss it is, "I'm going to get right tomorrow." Right? It's procrastination. They put it off. "I want to live it up now, and I'll settle matters [later]."

Brethren, you know I'm talking to real people here in this room. You know this is how we thought. I mean I thought, with all the wickedness in my life, I thought that I was going to be good enough. I thought somehow that I was going to be good enough. And I realize things weren't exactly right but I also had that other idea that I'll get it more right tomorrow.

I mean one of the things that the missionaries that work over in Turkey told me is that you see these nominal Muslims (Turkey is vastly populated by nominal Muslims, very few of them are radical) and what the missionaries over there pointed out is that most Muslims get serious about their religion when they're old. Now you think about why that would be. You know why it is? Their conscience is telling them something's wrong. Now they may be deceived about who the real God is, and who the real Prophet is, but the fact is they have a conscience that's telling them, "You are in trouble." And so now when they get older, they're making sure they go to prayer all the time.

Men never think to go there. Or men say this, and this kind of goes along with constructing their own religion. But men basically say, "Oh, well the Bible says all I have to do is believe. I've called on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture tells me I'll be saved." And yet, they've never repented of their sins. They've never bowed their knee to Christ. And they've got this idea that they are forgiven of their sins, they've got this idea that they're forgiven.

One of the truths that the writers of the New Testament try to emphasize as much as almost anything, is this reality that if you are truly forgiven, if you are truly justified, if you are truly a Christian, if you truly belong to God, if you're truly heaven bound, your life is radically different. Doesn't Scripture literally deal with that everywhere? You know why it does? Because men are masters at wanting to think that they get to heaven and keep their sin on the way. And they totally forget that the way is very narrow. And that there are few that are on it. Because unless you forsake all that you have, Jesus keeps you at arm's length. You can't come to his side, you can't be His disciple, you're no follower of His, if you think that you're going to get to heaven and still enjoy all your sin on the way. Hell is a reality.

And just like we were talking about several weeks ago, you know there's people in Reformed circles today, or at least that would identify in those circles, that are seeking to dismiss the idea of hell. And I don't know how I came upon it, but something somebody sent me, and I think it was actually good stuff, but has anyone ever sent you a good video, and then you got the thumbnails over there, and you're like, oh, that one interests me. I ended up watching something by Rob Bell. And he's just putting out a book where he said that they had some kind of art exhibit at their, I don't even want to call it a church, but within their gathering, there in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and somebody had done a picture of Gandhi, and he said, somebody came and did a handwritten note and put it on that picture and said, "Why is everybody making a big deal out of this picture? Gandhi is in hell." Well, that just stirred Rob Bell to no end. Rob Bell is a Universalist, he thinks everybody's on their way to heaven. He thinks that

it's a strike at God's character if we would believe in a god that puts people in hell. And I would say Rob Bell is destroying the true character of God by saying that God wouldn't. His idea of God is not the biblical idea of God.

But let's think about hell. Let's think about what Scripture says about it. Somebody tell me somewhere in the Bible that you can think of where something about hell is described. [Inaudible comment from audience] Where is it? Matthew 25, well let's turn there. I'll have you guys guide me around the Scriptures and we'll look at various verses that have to do with it. And by the way, if Jesus is right, and He is – few there be that find life.

Do you know what the reality is? The reality is it's very likely that there are a number of people in this room that will actually end up in the place that we're going to look at. You don't think you are. But see you are crafting your own means of escaping it. And there's only one way to escape this place. You see, this place is that which God created to righteously deal with sin. It's a place where people rightly suffer what their sins deserves for assaulting the glory of God the way that they do.

Listen, can I tell you something before we look at this Matthew 25 verse? I want you to hear something very carefully, because you know when we talk about hell, what happens is, a lot of times, people begin to think God's a monster. Rob Bell thinks the God that will send people to hell is a monster. But listen, God is no monster. You know right there in Romans 2 where it talks about God's fury, and God's wrath, God's judgment, it says that God's kindness is meant to lead people to repentance. You need to think on that. Listen, one of the reasons people just have this idea that somehow it's just going to turn out okay in the end is because – listen, that text in Ecclesiastes is so real. You know what happens? People sin and then they eat. Or even when they're eating they're sinning. God is giving them food, He's being kind. Men and women sin and the sun shines on them and it rose on them today.

I mean, Jesus Christ by the word of His power, He upholds this whole universe. He is so relevant to every single little particle of dust and everything, every bird, every aspect of this creation. Christ is so real to it. He upholds all the atomic matter that makes up the air, that you can wave your hand through, He upholds it all. He is this reality that virtually engulfs this world, and yet man looks around at it, he strikes God out of it, he suppresses it, he suppresses what can be known, he doesn't want to see, he doesn't want to know, he looks around at creation and invents evolution, and he wants to just dismiss God. You can go through 95% of the radio stations and God isn't there. You can go through 95% of the television stations and God isn't there. And you can go through 99% of all that's made to show at the movies, and He is not there. You can look on the billboards and He's not there. He is this great reality and in the midst of all of it, the sun and the moon and the rain, and just the beauty we can look at, and blue skies and to hear birds singing, and to enjoy the things that He allows us to enjoy, and to actually have a night where we can lay our heads on our pillows and rest and rise up. That happens repeatedly over and over and over to people who are wicked and they sin and they think because that's the case there's no God to content with.

Certainly He couldn't be like what we're about to look at, because if He was, how in the world does He abide us when we sin like that? And it's because God is indeed kind and God is indeed patient, and He's giving time for us to repent. And the time that He gives us to repent is never meant to make us think everything is okay. Oh, how many people think that?

Listen, I've had people tell me this, you've had people tell you this, undoubtedly, if you've done any amount of evangelism. But people tell me, well, I was sick and God healed me. I got better. I got sick, I prayed, God made me better, so I think everything is okay with God. But you see God's kindness isn't meant to lead people who are living in their rebellion to think that everything is okay. God's kindness is meant to lead them to repent and turn to Christ.

Brethren, you see, it's hard for people to imagine – you know, the fornicator and the adulterer, he goes and does his thing, the homosexual goes and does his thing, and then he comes home and he eats. And he sleeps. And he feels health pulsating through his veins. And he lives like that. He can't imagine that he just sinned in the sight of a God who is so angry, and whose glory has been so assaulted and insulted, and diminished and stamped on and trampled over. He can't imagine that what he just did deserves to be punished forever and forever and forever and forever and

forever, because when he just did it, all he got was kindness. And that's right, he did. But that kindness, the Scripture says, isn't meant to convince him that it's all okay. It's meant to convince him that there is a kind God that will indeed receive him and forgive all of his sins if he turns.

Let's look at Matthew 25. Here's one place that we see hell described. Listen to what describes people who are going there. Verse 41: "[Then He will say to those] on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Eternal fire. Brethren, being burned alive is one of the most horrific things we can think about. When you see somebody that has been burned...I was just reading about gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom. It used to be, I understand, a pleasant place. In fact, it was pleasant, had a river flowing through it, it was a valley not far from Jerusalem. But what happened in evil days is that that's where they sacrificed to Molech, and if you've read anything or know anything about it, it is basically this god, they created a statue that was part man and part cow, and had arms. They would heat that thing up until it glowed red hot and they would put their children in the arms of that statue. And in days of good kings that became a repulsive place and they would put their garbage there. That's the picture that is created...

If Jesus could liken hell to anything, He likened it to a place that was absolutely abominable to the Jew. Where children had been sacrificed to a false god. It was a place where fires burned all the time to burn up the garbage that was stacked there. Dead bodies and refuse and sewage and all sorts...I mean it was a place that was absolutely defiled, it had fire. To a Jew, you probably couldn't imagine any more horrible place in the world. Cursed people...

Listen, when Christ says, "Depart," people don't understand. Jesus upholds the universe with the word of His power. And in His kindness he gives you everything you have. Anything that is enjoyable, anything that is pleasurable, anything that is peaceful, anything that is restful, He gives it to you. Men don't realize it. Because they live habitually seeking to strike God from their minds, suppress Him from their thoughts, they exchange the glory of God for everything else, they seek to worship money and fun and pleasure and sex and sports, power. And they have so sought to *atheitize*, if that's such a word, themselves and to suppress God out of it, man doesn't realize that every good thing comes from the Lord. And when He says, "Depart," He is withdrawing every good thing. When He says to "Depart," that's it. Cursed. Everything in this life that was a blessing, everything in this life that was an expression of His kindness, it's pulled.

Men don't understand [that] if God withdraws everything, it's not just the church down on the corner goes away, [but] every pleasure is gone forever, every satisfaction is gone forever. Every joy, every smile, every form of happiness is gone forever. Any sense of relief – you know the relief when you've had a bad cold, and you start getting better? Or you pounded your thumb with a hammer and the pain begins to go away? You're exhausted and weary, and you're able to lay down your head and rest. Don't you understand? There's no rest, night or day, forever and ever. There is no rest. It's cursed. It's blackness of darkness. It's a fiery furnace. Listen, if you were thrown bodily into fire, that's the kind of reality. When you go to take a breath, there's no cool air, fire goes in your lungs. If you seek to have relief, there is none, because every nerve is being confronted by pain. There's no rest in the soul if that happens. Listen, when things go bad now, we can find relief, typically. There's some relief, there's some way out. There's no way out.

"Depart from me..." Those are the words of the cursed. And listen, they're words that are falling upon the ears of people who deserve it. Nobody is going to say, "This isn't fair."

You say, "Isn't that overreaction? That if I sin once God's going to remove every kindness?"

You haven't sinned once. You've done nothing but sin. That's what Scripture says. Scripture says we're worthless. And even our righteousnesses are filthy rags. And here's the catcher for everybody in this room. You can't argue the way a cannibal can who might live on a South Seas island and he died before Clark and Harris and Paton arrived. You don't have that. You've sinned a lot, and you've had Christ offered. And if anybody in this room perishes, it

will be with so much light, there will be no excuse. God's judgments may seem severe, but brethren, I think if we could have talked with Isaiah the moment that he came out of the temple there in Isaiah 6 – I mean he saw the Lord. Brethren, there probably was not a more righteous man in the land. Isaiah was "the" prophet. When God was looking for somebody to take the message, He chose Isaiah. Isaiah saw the Lord and he said, "I'm a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst a people of unclean lips." He said, "Woe is me." If you would have gotten him coming out of the Temple and said, "Isaiah, what do you think? You think when we sin it is overkill for God to send us to hell forever and ever?" He'd have said, "You have no idea. The Lord is so glorious, to sin against Him is a crime of unimaginable heinousness and wickedness, and depravity, you have no idea when you sin the glory that you are sinning against." He would have been speechless, I'm sure. He probably would have looked at you with glazed-over eyes of amazement and astonishment, to even think that he could have come into the presence of the high and exulted Christ like that and have emerged without being consumed.

And there's only one way, it's the only way that you and I will escape judgment day, it's if our sin is forgiven. Brethren, we're talking [about] a place that was made for the devil and his angels. There's a reason why, if you die unrepentant, you go to a place that was made for the devil and his angels. It's because you are as bad as they are. They may have had a lot longer to do their wickedness, but listen, if you're being sent to the same place they are, it's because you are like they are. Do you not realize that? Men are like demons. They're like the devil. That's why they're sent there. They are liars, they're murderers, they're God-haters, they're in rebellion. It is a place for those who have sinned against a kind God.

Listen, if you end up there after all the kindnesses He showed you, and after the times you've had to repent, and after the pleadings of God's people to you, the brethren even from this church, and you are given opportunity upon opportunity. I mean, what can you say if you come to judgment day, and you're told to depart and every goodness, every kindness is withdrawn and taken away? And not momentarily, it's not like when you get sick here, or you fall into some infirmity – no, there's no relief. And it will be just, and you will see that it will be just. Eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And who goes there? Mass murderers, Adolf Hitler, pedophiles, no – yes, they do – and some of those *don't*, because they looked to Christ in faith.

But listen to the description of those who find their place in the lake of fire: "I was hungry and you gave me no food." (Matt. 25:42) Wait, where's the pedophiles, where's the sodomites? Where are the real wicked people? I mean, I thought you had to be like Adolf Hitler to go to [hell]. This is saying somebody was hungry and I didn't feed him. That ought to startle us. It's not just the Adolf Hitler's, it's not just the people that killed the six million Jews. This brings it down to where you and I live. No, you didn't kill six million Jews, and neither did I. But all you have to do to be like the devil and end up where he is, is basically see other people in need and you turn your back.

You say, "Is that evil, is that wicked?"

You better believe it is. *"I was hungry, you gave me no food. I was thirsty, you gave me no drink. I was a stranger, you did not welcome me. Naked, you did not clothe me."* (Matt. 25:42-43) Brethren, we jump down to verse 46: *"...these will go away into eternal punishment."* (Matt. 25:46)

You say, "What?! Some guy needed clothes, and I didn't give him clothes? I'm going to hell forever, eternal punishment? Isn't that a bit overkill?"

But you see, this is an expression of what's in men – rebellious, lawless, all they think about is themselves. Brethren, the idea here isn't that if you go feed somebody, you're going to earn your way to heaven. The idea here is look, if you turn from your sin, you repent, you bow the knee and surrender to Christ, and you trust Him, what Jesus does in your life is He gives you a heart to love people. If you don't have a heart to love people, you can't say you're one of Christ's. And you have no claim on heaven. And listen, if you'll flee to Christ, He'll make you into a person who will be concerned to feed others. If you look and you say, "All I've had is hatred, all I've had is

selfishness, all I've had is self-centeredness, that's all I have. I don't really care about others. If I ever do anything for others, it's just what I can do to be seen by others, just so I get a good reputation.”

If that's all it is, and you know in the secret places, you don't really care about other people, you just care about how you're perceived, you care about your reputation, but you don't really care about others, turn from it. That doesn't mean you have to fix it. It just means run to Him who can. Confess it all to Him. Ask Him to make you like He is. Ask Him to begin to make you into His image. That's what He does. Trust Him. Turn from this. Turn from the selfish life. The righteous – they go into eternal life. Eternal punishment – the fires there don't burn out. There's no end. Eternity. I mean, think about eternity.

Listen, we can sit here now and we feel comfortable we're not there. We can breathe. You know, men comfort themselves – [they say], I'm not there right now. I've got time. Well, listen, what time do you have? Your life is but a vapor, you don't know if you have tomorrow, there's no guarantee of it. People get cut off. What you have time for is right now to repent. Listen, God has been kind to bring all of us to this hour. This is a real place.

I can just move through some other verses. Just right here in Matthew. Matthew, by itself, just gives us material for an outstanding study. Let's all turn over to Matthew 13, a tremendous study on hell. It shows up again and again. Matthew 13:24-30:

He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

And then He goes on to explain it, down in verse 36. But we'll just jump down to verse 39:

The enemy who sowed them is the devil. These are the sons of the evil one who find their way into the kingdom. The harvest is the close of the age. The reapers are the angels. And as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, (If that's your life, if you're a lawbreaker, and you're a cause of sin, here's your lot at the end of this age:) and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let me hear. (Matt. 13:39-43)

You get the same thing, look at verse 47:

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. 13:47-50)

Listen, if you have a red-letter Bible, you'll notice that's in red letters, which means Jesus Himself, the Christ, He came and He looked men square in the face, and He said, "There is a hell to be avoided." It is a place of outer darkness, it is a place of weeping, it is a place of the gnashing of teeth, and it is a place that He likens to a fiery furnace.

Now look, you say, "Well, it's called the lake of fire, it's called the fiery furnace, how can it be fire, if it's outer darkness? Isn't that maybe just symbolic?"

Okay, maybe it is. But I'll tell you what. If the closest thing Jesus has to describing it is fire, if that's all there is in this world that He can come up with, that even approximates what it is, I would say, even if it's spiritualization, even if it's symbolic, that certainly would not be anything to find comfort in, because it's not going to be better than fire, if anything, it's going to be worse than fire. And if it is the same as fire, being thrown into a lake of fire forever, brethren, do you recognize, when it happens, you're there. When you wake up, you're there. And it's all over. Eternity is written over everything. There is no escape, there is no second chance, there is no time to repent now. And for all you would kick yourself, and feel foolish, and hate God for putting you there, and hating everybody else that encouraged you in your sin, and realizing how many times you despised the preaching of the word, how you'd want to pull your own hair out, gnash your teeth whether in hatred to God or in absolute devastation because of your own foolishness. Brethren, this is real and Christ says, "Wake up."

Christ says in another place, Matthew 18:8:

"If your hand or your foot causes you to sin (or to stumble), cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire." (Matt 18:8-9)

Listen, Jesus knows what hell is. And He is not only the Way and the Life, He's the Truth, and He came to bear truth and to speak truth and He looked at men, and He said, "I know. I know what you don't know. I know how bad, how hellish, how fiery it is. I know the punishment that takes place there."

Listen, Jesus Christ is the One who tramples out the fury of God the Almighty. It is the wrath of the Lamb you have to fear. He knows His own wrath. He could look at everything in this world, everything that is to be prized, everything that is to be cherished, everything that is to be yearned for and longed after by man, and He could look at hell, and He could say to men, "I know, I know what the real value of things in this world are, and I know the real terror of what hell is. And I'll tell you this: whatever it takes for you to cut off or tear out the things of this world that hold you back and keep you from following me – every idol, every lust, every sin, everything that you would have over me, that you would follow after to disobey me, that you think you need in your life at the expense of me, and surrendering to me, and trusting me, believing in me, coming to me, calling upon me, putting all your trust [in me]. I know it is not worth holding on to all the money that Gates has, it is not worth all the money that is to be had in this world, all the treasure, all the pleasures, even if you could live as long as Methuselah and enjoy everything to the full and live life to the complete in this life, to have it all, to have all that men aspire after, all the fame, and all the money, and all the houses, and all the beauty, all the health, to have it all, all that men think they want and think they need. He knows, if you had it all, and you could live as long as the oldest man ever lived, if you could have it all for a thousand years, He looks at it and He says, there's no comparison, whatever it takes to cut it off and tear it out, you better do it. It is better for you to do that than to end up in this place. It's insanity to go after anything in this world that's going to be gone soon.

And the truth is, here's the truth: you're not going to live as long as Methuselah. The truth is if you live eighty years, it's long. And the truth is, you're not going to get all the money in the world, and the truth is that whatever you do get in this world, it's not going to satisfy you, it's going to leave you empty because it's a lie. Brethren, Jesus is offering men eternal life. He's offering men forgiveness. He's offering men the opportunity of seeing God face to face. He's offering men the opportunity of having every tear wiped away. All sorrows and pain and death. He's offering you the treasures of Christ, an eternal inheritance. He's offering you riches and He's calling you to flee from the wrath to come.

Folks, this is what it means to be saved, to be spared from the wrath of God. Jesus said many are going to come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and they're going to sit down in that kingdom. They're going to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob while many of the sons of the kingdom are going to be cast

into outer darkness. Brethren, let me hit you with another verse. One of the pictures that we see comes at us in 2 Thessalonians, when Jesus comes. It says mid-way through 2 Thessalonians 1:7:

"...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven (here is His coming) with his mighty angels (that's what we saw in the parables, He's coming, He's going to send His angels out to gather in the wheat and the chaff, the good and the bad, here He comes) in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed." (2 Thess. 1:7-10)

Listen, who are these people who are going to face this punishment? They're the people who are going to be condemned when He comes. Can I show you a picture of these people? It says here that they will suffer this punishment who did what? They didn't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, they didn't know God. But jump over to chapter 2 verse 12: *"...in order that all may be condemned (here's our group who's being condemned) who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:12)*

You say, who are the people who are going to go into the hell-fire? What describes them? They just simply live lives where they had pleasure in unrighteousness. You say, what, it's not the Adolf Hitler's? Yes, it's them. But listen, who has pleasure in unrighteousness? People who can sit down and watch things on the computer, on the television, that unrighteous, and just delight in those things. They can hear a filthy joke at work and laugh with the other guys then go to church on Sunday.

Listen, one of the things about the parables – those parables by and large are not talking about the whole world. When it says the net gathers in the good and the bad, when it says that the angels are going to go out and they're going to gather some into the barn and the others they're going to burn, folks, this is a picture of the kingdom. This is the idea of who looks like they're in the church. Who looks like they're on the Way.

When Jesus talks there in Matthew 7 about the broad way – *wide* is the gate, *broad* is the way – that leads to destruction, He's not talking there about just anybody and everybody. He's talking about the crowd that's down in verses 21, 22, 23, who are saying, "Lord, Lord, we did many mighty works, we were there..." He says, *"Depart from me."* Why? Because you're lawless. You are people that took delight in lawlessness. You loved unrighteousness. That's it. And now they've lost it all.

Listen, that's what repentance is, it's turning away from the unrighteousness. It's not making yourself righteous, it's not making yourself clean. It's fleeing to Christ, in your filthiness, to Him to clean you, to Him to save you, to Him to help you, and forgive you and wash you in His blood, confessing your sin to Him. That's the picture. He says this is to be escaped at all costs. And He bids men, "Come." The Scripture says, whoever comes to Him, He'll never cast out. You come to Him, He'll never let you fall into a place like that.

But listen, if you think you're coming to Him to get your sin forgiven, but you're going to go on loving your unrighteousness -- no, no, no, no. You're not coming to Him in reality. No one comes to Christ in reality who just wants to get delivered from hell. That's not it. We come to Him to be saved from the wrath of God. The wrath of God is for our sin. It's to take care of all of the problems of our sin. The guilt of the sin, the power of the sin, the presence of the sin, my inclination to sin, and my love of it.

Brethren, folks, friends, I'll just look at one last verse. I know there's a whole lot more and I was going to have you guys throw them at me but I guess the one you threw at me was almost good enough for an entire message, but just think of Revelation 19. You have them singing there, the marriage supper of the Lamb, they're singing, *"Hallelujah!"* Great things:

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; (Oh, you want to be there at all costs.) It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints." (Rev. 19:6-8)

You see that? Jesus changes His people into righteous-deed doing people. *"Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."* (Rev. 19:9)

But this Christ, who is marrying His people, down in verse 15: *"From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty."* (Rev. 19:15)

Do you realize this? When Jesus comes, Scripture says this, earlier in the Book of Revelation, verse 7, chapter 1: *"Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, (and listen to this) and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen."* (Rev. 1:7)

That verse strikes me. You say, wait, over in 2 Thessalonians 1, it says that there are going to be those who are awaiting His return. They're going to rejoice when He comes, they're going to be amazed. That's true. But, brethren, can I tell you something? Scripture speaks about a remnant, and it speaks about few there be that find it, and it says many are on the way that leads to destruction. There are so many on the way to destruction that when Jesus comes, it says not *some* tribes wail, *some* tribes rejoice. In John's mind, he sees a picture of the coming of Christ, where *all* the tribes wail. Why? Because there's so few in light of the vast multitudes of humanity that John can speak that way and be biblically accurate and biblically true, even though he does not mention the saints being there.

Why do I stress that? I stress it for this reason: throughout all of history, most men do not hear a clear presentation of the gospel. In all of history, most men miss heaven. You know it's true. There are people in this room that are going to perish. You know it's true. I'm saying this because if God has not only shown you all the kindnesses of creation, but in addition, He's shown you the kindness to allow you to hear the gospel and hear the truth and know that Jesus Christ died on that cross to save sinners just like you and me, to save even the chief of sinners. I mean, why would God want us to know that God has saved the chief of sinners? Why would God want us to know that He saved the thief on the cross – a thief? Why would God want us to specifically know that Mary Magdalene had seven demons? Ever think about why these things have been specifically told to us? They're told to us so that you might see how bad the people are that God saves. And if you've had this kindness, that God has not only given you all this light of creation, all the light of His kindness, but in light of all that, in addition to all that, on top of it, you've been allowed to hear the truth, come, flee to Him at once.

Listen, I remember my step-dad, [he] came down to Texas, and I wanted him to hear the truth. And he sat under Pat Horner out at Community Baptist Church. I was out there then. He came and he heard me preach, at a nursing home I know he heard me preach, but he was able to sit under the preaching several times. I had evangelized my dad, I had spoken to my dad, but I think that was the most truth he ever got in his life, I know that was the first time he ever sat under a good and solid sermon that had truth in it that was actually preached by one of God's messengers. He refused it, even when I was speaking at the nursing home he was rebelling against it, he was rejecting it, and he no more than went back to Michigan, he had a massive heart attack – it was amazing – he had a massive heart attack, then he had a stroke, then he got cancer, and then he died.

Brethren, folks, when you hear the truth, there's a real hell out there. And Jesus, by way of His ambassadors is telling you, escape that place at all costs. What will you give in exchange for your soul? You'll give everything. Look, don't wait until the flames overflow you to realize, "Okay, okay, now I'll give everything in exchange for it!" Don't wait till then, it's too late. He speaks to you now while you have life. Do not leave this place tonight if you are lost and run back your sin. It is suicidal. Don't do it. You've heard the truth. Oftentimes, when people hear the truth and they harden themselves, God will see to it that they get hardened. And many times when you harden yourself

against the truth, it's all over. You won't get to hear it again. You'll be like my step-dad. The next thing you'll be in the grave.

I don't remember who it was, they told the story about the two young men that had girlfriends that went to church. Their girlfriends' parents made them go to church. The two guys showed up to get the girls and the preacher saw them come in. They stood there in the back waiting for the service to get over and he make a beeline to them and went back and began to talk to them, and they rejected and they refused. And one of those young men died right away after that.

We sought to proclaim truth to a prostitute who came and lived with us and she rejected it and died after that.

There was a man that joined our church, he was a heroin addict, and he went back to his heroin after he'd heard the truth, and God took his life.

There was a young man who joined this church, exposed to a lot of truth, he went back to his coke, and God took his life.

There's a prostitute by the name of Zebedee, she was exposed to the truth in this church in our early days. God took her life.

There was a man from one of the local churches that had us come preach, and he tried to pull a scam on us, but we preached truth to him, he rejected it and God took his life. He was young.

Brethren, folks, do not go out the door tonight and go back to your sin. This could very well be from God, that it's your last time. It's it. It's over. It's done. And what's been described, you may in unbelief go back to your sin right now, but you will believe it one day. And the sad things is, it's going to take you being plunged into it to realize how valuable your soul was, how bad your sin was, how foolish you are to reject...

Do you realize the place was made for the devil and his angels and they don't get any chance? They don't get the opportunity to repent. Can you imagine those demons in hell, screaming at you: "You had the truth set before you, you had the opportunity we never had, you had the opportunity to be in heaven, and to have Christ, and to walk with God and to live forever, and you chose drugs, alcohol, sex, partying, money, greed, sports, fame, and just wanting to do life your own way."

"I don't want to feed any hungry people, I want to live for me" – just do it your way. What a fool if that's what you would do. Listen, there are people in here that love their sin. I'm telling you, do not go out the door without crying out to the Lord, confessing your sin, calling on Him to save you from it. Don't go. There's a good possibility you will never come back again, some of you. Amen.