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Hell is Necessary

Revelation 14:9-11

by Tim Conway

Good morning. I have to admit to you that the topic matter that I'm going to bring this morning is with some trepidation that I bring it to you. Even as near as last night I was asking, "Lord, is that really what I should bring?" I know that it may not be a popular message but it's biblical. And I think just in talking with the leaders of your church in the few minutes before the service started today, one thing I believe that I've seen in these men already is that you are a church that does desire to be biblical. And therefore, I have come from San Antonio this morning, God has sent me here to bring you a message on the doctrine of hell. And I have been studying this topic for the last three weeks and it is fearful. I thought at first I'd bring you a message on prayer. Because I know some of you will go away today with a bad feeling, that bad feeling will be connected with this guy from San Antonio, I understand that. And I may not be the most popular preacher for it.

One thing that is true about the doctrine of hell, it will test you. It will test you as to whether you are truly a God-centered church. The doctrine of hell does test our God-centeredness. It is a biblical doctrine. And it is a good doctrine for us to look at this morning. Before we dive into it let's pray.

O Father, even as I consider myself preaching on this Lord, how I've been reminded how much I deserve this place. How much I deserve the torments that I'll describe today. Lord, you've not only saved me you've made me a preacher, I don't understand it. Lord, you are a God of wrath but you are a God of such great goodness as well, such a God of grace, a God of glory. Lord, I pray for your help right now. May you give me the thoughts, may you give me the words. Father, I pray that your Spirit would attend to this. Lord, do in this place this morning what I can't do. Do in the hearts of these people what I can't do. Please Lord for your glory's sake and for Christ's sake. Amen.

Well if you have your bibles please open to Revelation chapter 14. Revelation chapter 14. Would you like to stand and we will read God's word. Revelation 14 and I'm going to begin reading in verse 9. "And another angel followed them saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath poured full strength into the cup of His anger and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and they have no rest day or night.'" You may be seated.

I've got four points this morning: security, severity, suitability, and sanctity. Now what I mean by that is the security of the world, they don't think they're going there. The severity of this place described. The suitability of it and the sanctity, sanctity that's a word that has to do with the holiness. Hell is a fearful place. But it's a good place when we understand it right, when we understand the glory of God aright.

First, the security. Yesterday, I and some others we were out, we went to a place where the homeless gather, and we take the gospel to them. I stood up on the back of a

pick-up truck and I preached to the people that were gathered there. Most of them are homeless, they're drunks, they're drug addicts, they're prostitutes and I said, "How many of you think that you'll go to hell?" How many hands do you think went up? Not one. The world has themselves convinced that this is a place that they are not going to. Every man devises when men hear the doctrine of hell, when they hear that there is a hell, even when they hear that few go to heaven, few there be that find it. They suppose, they contrive, they reason, they scheme, not me, not me I'm not going to go there. Somehow everyone of us...for twenty-five years of my life I was lost, I served sin, I served self, I served Satan, I did not think I was going to hell. Now, praise God I'm not, but it wasn't because of any of my plans back then. No man wants to believe he's going there. You know some of you, you've read this text, I know that there are those of you, I know, I know based on what God's word tells me, some of you in this place that hear my voice will go to the place I describe today. Some of you are headed there, you don't think you are but even now you provoke God by your very attendance of His worship today because you have not Christ. You have no hope. You're without God. But you don't think you'll go there. You think that somehow you're going to reason, you're going to figure out because of something that you have done or are doing or hope to do in the future, somehow you plan to miss that place. And I know some of us we can look at this text, you know when I was lost I would have said what maybe many would say out in the world and in this place too, "I don't worship the beast, I mean we can go into the bathroom after the service and look in the mirror, I don't have..." And part of the problem with that is we've watched too much of the Left Behind series. Because if you go looking for a 666 on your hand, your not going to find it. What does it mean when it speaks about the mind? Or the forehead and the hand? We have it described in other places. If we want to rightly interpret the book of Revelation we ought to look at what the rest of the scriptures say to us. We go to the eighth chapter of the book of Romans and he speaks about the mind. The mind that is set on the things of the flesh is death. It is eternal damnation. It is at enmity against God. It is hostile toward Him. Do you want to know what a mark on the head is? The head has to do with the thoughts; I can pretty much describe accurately those of you who are right now on the broad way of destruction. What fills your thoughts? I'm not asking if you're a member of this church or whether you own a bible and maybe even read it. What consumes your thoughts? That will tell me and that will tell you who your god is. Your god is who you think about. I didn't think about God very much when I was a lost man. But God fills my mind now. And the hands, the hands they're a symbol of what we do. Do you want to see this described for us? Matthew chapter 25, no better description in all of God's word. The hands, do you want to know whether you have the mark of the beast on your hands? Size it up, what does Christ say? Who is it that's going to eternal punishment? "I was in prison, I was sick, I was hungry, I was naked, you didn't help Me." Lord when didn't we help you?! As much as you did not do it to one of the least of these you have not done it unto me, and they will be told to depart and they will go away into eternal torments. Men reason and men scheme but the fact is God's word says that many, many, many are on that way of destruction. Many there are. That is fearful. In a Gallop Poll taken in the United States less than 4 percent of Americans believe that they might go to hell. Not four percent, less than four! And they don't believe that they are going, they believe that there's a

possibility they may go. Do you know what that tells me, there are many that are deceived. And I don't want to be those in here that are deceived.

Approximately one hundred million people will die between now and the twentieth of February of next year. One hundred million people, that's staggering. If you do the mathematics that comes to about 3 people every second are passing into eternity. (Snapping) That fast souls are going out of this world into an eternal hell or an eternal joy. And God's word says that most of those are on the broad way to destruction, Christ is the only way to the Father. Those who are Buddhist in this world are passing into damnation. Those who die practicing Muslims are going. Practicing Catholics if they are worshipping Mary they are not worshippers of Christ. One of those clicks has your name on it. Think about it, another and another and another and another and another you have passing off into eternity right now and another and another when you take your next breath in the time it took more souls are passing off into eternity. Men walk around they say peace and safety, peace and safety and the word of God says that sudden destruction takes hold on them, then they have these plans, if we could bring up the damned from hell right now what would they say to us? "I never thought to go here, I never thought, I never thought that hell would take me. I thought I had it figured out. It took me in a moment. It took me in a moment I didn't expect it." Another, another they're passing off into eternity, they did not expect hell to take them when it did.

Jonathan Edwards so long ago, he described men as walking over the pit of hell on a rotten covering and there are weak places in that covering and they know not where they are or when they're going to step on them. And in a moment when they think not their feet slip and they're gone. Your sins if you are without Christ your sins are mounting up, they're increasing. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 Paul speaks about the Jews and the measure of their sin filling up. You know there's a place in the Old Testament in Genesis where God told Abraham, your people will go into Egypt and they will come back into this land but not yet, it will be after four hundred years because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. There's a place in Daniel chapter 12 verse 2, it speaks about the transgressions reaching their limit. If you are without Christ your sins are mounting up and the moment is coming when God will no longer endure you to stay here. God created man in His image to be bearers of good fruit in this life. Christ told His disciples that. You're going to glorify My Father by bearing much fruit. Christ died to make us fruitful people. But if you will not bear good fruit, remember what John the Baptist told the people, the axe is laid at the root. If you don't bring forth fruits meet for repentance or indicative for repentance that axe is laid there. Now God has a purpose to be glorified. God will be glorified by every soul in this room. He will be. But if you will not glorify Him actively by good works you will glorify Him passively by a demonstration of His power. In Romans chapter 9 it says very clearly that the vessels of wrath are being fitted for destruction and God will glorify His power and His wrath through you. You will glorify God actively or passively. And speaking of statistics that we talked about just a second ago, statistically one hundred percent of all people who do not bring forth good works, one hundred percent of all people who die without Christ they are in hell now.

Second thing, the severity. I have literally trembled as I have studied this topic. What causes my soul to shake within me is the eternity, the forever-ness of hell. Before I did a series on hell in my own church I did a series on heaven, it's a glorious doctrine. It is glorious, but you know there is something glorious about the doctrine of hell too. It is

glorious and its dreadfulness and its fearfulness because it reveals to us a part of God that often times we don't like to admit is real and exists. But it is necessary. We love to talk about God's love, God's goodness, God's mercy, God's compassion, God's forbearance, God's tender mercies. Oh it is good; it is good, good to give thanks to the Lord for those things. But when you think about the severity of hell you begin to realize it is not slap on the wrist. Hell is fearsome. It is dreadful. We read our bibles and we can pass over those texts so freely, so easily, weeping and gnashing of teeth. In the ESV Matthew 18, it speaks about the hell of fire. Hell is a place of fire. I've thought about my grandmother's house, I grew up in Michigan. My grandmother she kind of lived in a past age, in the home she lived in she had a fire burning furnace in the basement. And I can remember at times going down and throwing fire in the furnace to keep grandma's house warm in the winter. And you open that door and there is a raging infernal fire inside that furnace, and Christ described hell as a fiery furnace. I can't imagine being pushed through that little hole and then the door being shut! And it will never open! It will never open. You've burned yourself on the finger, if anything can be attached to the idea of fire; it is the idea of pain. It should strike within our minds that hell is a place of pain unimaginable. The man in Luke 16, he cried out in his torments if only he could have a drop of water for his tongue. But not even that would be given to him. The thing that is so fearful about hell is not just that it is a fiery furnace. Not just that Isaiah would say God who can dwell with those fires but who can dwell with the everlasting burnings. Everlastings, that is the horror of horrors about hell is that it never ends. It is pain, it is excruciating, it is anguish, our generation knows very little about pain. We have so many medications; so much to dull the pain but here there will be nothing to dull it. God will not relieve your pain no matter how you cry, no matter how you weep, think of weeping. Have you ever just wept uncontrollably? You've just lost a beloved one, something traumatic has happened in your life where you just wept uncontrollably. That is how Christ described hell, a place of weeping. You will weep; think of this, to weep forever, you will weep forever. You will weep, when you land in hell, you will weep more than all the weeping that has ever been done in all the ages of all the earth. You will fill up the measure of the weeping of every individual who has passed through life because you will weep and you will weep and you will weep. And there's the idea of the gnashing of teeth, whether its in the unbearable excruciating pain, there are places in scripture that attach the gnashing of teeth to anger as well. The anger at others, the anger at yourself, the anger at God still. Hell is not what some make it out to be, like purgatory. Hell does not make better. The doctrine of hell is about destruction. It doesn't make better, it destroys everything that has any semblance of good. The image of God that is upon you man will be eternally defaced and defiled, you become even more and more and more contemptible as the eternal ages pass by. And think about that, Daniel describes it as a place of eternal contempt. Do you know what the word contempt means? It means that in the sight of God he will find you absolutely vile. Absolutely loathsome to behold. I know; 2 Thessalonians talks about destruction, eternal destruction, away from or apart from His presence. Christ would say in the gospels, "Depart from Me." And there is a departing from all of God's goodness. Some of you may say right now, "I don't mind that, I don't mind living apart from God. In fact, God makes me uncomfortable. I don't like the demands on my life. I don't like this thing about repentance. I don't mind being without God." But nobody is without God, not even in hell; everything you have right now, everything you are able to enjoy, you sink your

teeth into an apple or you enjoy a piece of pie, you have a nice warm blanket to cover up with.

I talked with a young man yesterday; he had a scar from a bullet hole in his head. He had been shot in the leg. He's here in Texas now because he's running from California because he's got two strikes against him, one more and he goes to prison forever, well forever in his life. He said, "What has God done for me? My moms dead, my grandmas dead, my dads in jail for life, I don't know where my brothers and sisters are, I have nothing." I said that's not true, you have a coat on now, you've enjoyed the day, you just had a meal, and you're wrapped with a blanket. You see in that sense we are departed from God. But in a real sense as well we do not leave God's presence because it is God Himself who with a perfect hatred forever will pour out His contempt upon us. Ezekiel, some of the Old Testament prophets had very fearful things to say. God says in Ezekiel 8, "Therefore I will act in wrath, My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. And though they cry in My ears with a loud voice I will not hear them." He will hate you will a perfect hatred. He will hate you and He will have you. That is the fearsomeness of hell, the text we read says that those in hell they are going to be tormented where in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. One of the most fearful things about hell is not the total absence of God, the absence of all of His blessings yes; can you imagine forevermore not any joy, no more comfort? But God is going to be there. One of the fearful things about God is that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He is a consuming fire and when He sets His face against you He will trample you out in the winepress of His wrath, and it is forever.

Jonathan Edwards, he said, "Almighty God will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the unspeakable," he said "the ineffable extremity of your case and sees your torment to be so vastly out of proportion to your strength and sees how your poor soul is crushed and sinks down as it were into an infinite gloom, you will have no compassion upon you. He will not forebear the executions of His wrath, or in the least lighten His hand. There will be no moderation, no mercy. He will have no regard to your welfare. Nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense in that you shall not suffer beyond what strict justice requires. Nothing shall be withheld because it is so hard for you to bear." Now I said hell is going to test our God-centeredness. Sometimes when we go out on the streets in San Antonio with the gospel to some of the homeless, we'll run into people from other churches. They want to tell these people all the time, "God loves you. God loves you. Jesus loves you." I know that God shows great compassion upon His enemies. I know He does. He causes the sun to rise on the just and unjust. Someone has done a study of God's hatred in the word of God. They examined 33 text, and you can do this yourself concerning the hatred of God. Do you know that only 12 of those texts, describe God as hating the sin. Twelve. Twenty-one described God as hating the sinner! The Psalmist said, "His soul hates the wicked, He hates all evil doers." One of the things that we have to grasp, you come to a text like John 3:36, "the wrath of God abides upon you already if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ." Already, that doesn't mean that God goes around with a perpetual smile upon you, it means what it says, His wrath is upon you. If you can get this idea into your minds, into your souls, into your thought process, that there are those of us in this place right now who sit here at relative ease. God hates you. God's wrath, God's indignation, God's anger is directed towards you more than some that are in hell at this moment. You say, "Can that be?" Yes,

because some of you have sinned in the face of greater light! God's Word says, "To whom much is given, much is required." That servant who knew his master's will and didn't do it will be beaten with greater stripes. There are some of you, you have heard the gospel. You have heard the truth. You have mothers, or fathers, or husbands or wives that have prayed for you. You have a Bible in your hand. And you know what? You have provoked God more than some who have lived in past generations in England and China, or Central Africa, because you have far more light! And God's hatred for you is stirred; His indignation is stirred, far more than for those who are there. And the only thing that keeps you out of hell right now – the only thing – is God's will to keep you there, God's forbearance. There is nothing else. There is no promise, because the covenants of to abide you to stay upon this earth one moment longer – not one moment longer.

And it is a fearful thing, and as I study this, and sit at my desk, and constantly thinking of my children, it is a fearful, fearful thing, but it is a reality. And preachers who will not preach on this, they're not faithful to you, because God's Word says this. Oh, the series on Heaven was glorious, it took me to levels... This one is fearful. We lack, by and large, a sense of fear of God in our assemblies. The weeping and the morning has long since departed many of the churches of the United States of America. The fear of God, the trembling. Because, by and large, we've lost the doctrine of hell in our country. God is love, and He is. We have a lopsided theology today.

The third thing I would say about hell is its suitability. Do we think it's too severe? We can think – we will think it is too severe if we are too man-centered our thinking. I was thinking I love missions. I desire, my heart and soul, is eventually to be on the foreign mission field permanently. I love to read the missionary biographies, but I look around today, and I see very few in our generation that are willing to what they did in the days of Adoniram Judson or William Carey or Hudson Taylor, who are willing to go off to the foreign lands. You know why? Because they could not stand that among the heathen God's glory was not being exalted. They couldn't sleep at night. Carrey would stand for hours working on shoes and stare at maps thinking about the heathen that were passing off into eternity, with no knowledge of Christ, no knowledge of the Gospel. They wanted God to be glorified among the nations.

What happens in the US today? Young men and young women run off the mission field. You know it. You've studied the numbers in the Southern Baptist Convention. You know it. The average stay on the foreign mission field is one term. They come home, it's all over. You know why? Because God's glory is not the main thing. Their comfort is, and we live in a generation – that you know it – God's glory is not the main thing. We drive down our highways. God's glory is the greatest reality in all the universe. Driving down the highways, where's God? Where is He on the billboards? Where is He on the talk radio? Where is He on the television? Where is He? God's glory doesn't matter anymore. But hell wakes us up to it! Hell stares this humanistic mindset straight in the face, and as one has said, "It is like a brutal claw that just tears through the fabric of our humanistic thinking." It is exactly that. We need to hear about this, and furthermore, the doctrine of hell - it shows us, it shows us - that our view of sin...our views of sin... I don't know exactly what is happening, but we can think.

One of the ladies at our church had her purse stolen. We have people come off the street, eat at our church, prostitutes, crack addicts. One of them stole my wife's purse. We look at that, and our mindset today is "Oh, look what they did to Ruby." We get to the

point in our generation where self-esteem, man's importance, man's happiness, there's such a self-centered view, such a humanistic – the horizontal plane is where we view sin. We tend to forget that when we sin, when God's law says, "Thou shall not steal," it is not ultimately you I violate when I sin against you. It is God who gave that law. It is His law that is broken. You remember how Joseph said, oh not, "How can I do this sin against Potiphar?" How can I sin? When Potiphar's wife was trying to seduce him, "How can I do this sin before God?" In Psalm 51, David is not preeminently sorrowing over the fact that he had killed Uriah or committed adultery with Bathsheba. He looked up to God and said, "Oh, God before you, before you, I have sinned." The doctrine of hell is a wakeup call to us that our sin is not ultimately against one another; it is ultimately against God, and the doctrine of hell wakes us up to the fact that we have made God into some little, man-centered image as well.

We see God primary, oftentimes, for what He can do for us. God is mainly there to answer my prayers. God is mainly there to take care of my problems. God is mainly there to help me with my financial difficulties, mainly there to heal my marriage, mainly there to take care of me. He's like – we make Him into this celestial Santa Claus, who's at our beckon and call to do what we call upon Him. Just recently I had a woman email me. "Would you please pray for me? I don't feel that I have gotten all the riches I think I should have in becoming a Christian." That's the mindset today. That's where we come up with a God who's all about our health, our wealth, our prosperity. But again, the doctrine of hell, it jumps in our face. It comes to the edges of our conscious. It puts disturbing whispers in it that there is a God here that we cannot manipulate. There is a God here that we cannot minimize. There is a God who is holy. There is a God who is mighty. There is a God who is going to exact perfect judgment on sin. There is a God who is fearsome. There is a God who is not to be toyed with, not to be played with, and He is the preeminent being in the universe. It is not all about me. Yes, I can look to God to provide my daily food, but whether I eat or I drink, it is to be done to His glory, His glory. The thing God values most of all is His glory. Not mine, His. Oh, it is a doctrine that can help us to realize that we are small. That he is big. You begin to realize that sin is satisfactory, satisfactorily dealt with in hell.

See when I look at sin, and I see it as a relatively small thing, and I look at the eternity of hell, it seems that there is a vast difference between them. Spurgeon said that when those who fall into the pit of hell they are going to see everywhere, above everything, "Forever. Forever." Above every door, if there were such things there, above everything, above every chain there is going to be written, "Forever." There is utter hopelessness.

But sin is such a small thing. I mean if I commit it for seventy years of my life here how is it that God can torment me forever in hell? Doesn't it seem like there's some disproportionate dealing with the sin there? But not at all once we realize who our sin is against ultimately and who the God is that we sin against. What He is. You know its one thing, its one thing, if we squash a fire ant or if we squash a mosquito. But its another thing altogether if you find your child out in the yard, rather than stepping on ants, he's out there taking living cats and mutilating them in your yard. You would probably respond differently. You know why? Because you attach greater significance to a cat. There's greater worth in your estimation, and it would be different if you saw somebody brutally killing a child. In your own estimation, the sin would be much greater, because

the one the sin is against has greater worth. But how do you measure sin that is committed against an infinitely holy God. Even the smallest sin committed against an infinitely holy God is infinite, and its infinitely wicked. When we hear, “Forever, forever, forever,” hell is reasonable when we see in the one who is sentenced to that place wickedness that is infinite.

Some of you that hear my voice, you’re quickly moving in that direction. And the fearful thing is, and I realize this about my children as well, my children are the children of a pastor, of a Godly mother, who have the Word of God brought to them just about daily, multiple times per day, they have been born under such light and to resist that light – I know that those cannibals in Papa New Guinea, as wretched as that sin seems to us, the hottest parts of hell, the most incredible torments are reserved for those that have sat under the greatest light, who have filled our churches on Sunday mornings. Sin, as the apostle says in Romans, “is exceedingly sinful.” If we saw something in wicked men that should appear as wicked to us as eternal misery, appears dreadful, something that should stir up as much indignation and detestation in us as eternal misery does terror, all objections against this doctrine would vanish at once. See, the doctrine of hell it confronts us with two infinities: An infinite God and an eternal hell.

And just to finish it, the last thing, the sanctity of hell. I know to some degree we are man-centered the best of us in here, and to some degree this lifetime, our compassion directed to the lost is something we should give our heart to and we should mourn over. But those of us that are here are in Christ. When you stand in glory, and there are a number of texts that would give us every indication that we will see the damned in hell, we will. The last verse of Isaiah. The fact, even the one we read, we are going to be in the presence of holy angels and the Lamb, and if those who are going to be suffering are going to be there as well, I believe it is very likely that we are going to see them. In Luke 16, Lazarus saw the rich man. The rich man could see. There was a great chasm between them, but the visibility was there.

In this life, there are parents here - I know you’re here, because I feel it myself – you would gladly do what Matthew 18 says. You would gladly lose an eye, lose a foot, and lose a hand that your children might be spared from hell. Wouldn’t you? In a moment. But even if it’s your children, your mother, your brother, who ends up in that eternal place of torment, and your in glory, believe it, the glory of Christ will so consume you. The suffering of the damned at that time will not cause you sorrow. It will not cause you grief. It will not cause you pain. Those who are in hell will be so stripped of any good. They will be seen for what they are. Every bit of good will be taken from them. What they seem to have they will no longer have. Every bit of common grace that was bestowed upon them will be withdrawn. They will be seen to be the horrible, detestable creatures they are. And you will be so in love with Christ, and so enamored with His glory.

What hell will do in that day – it will open your eyes to the glories of Christ all the more, because there what hell is going to do is vindicate the majesty of God that was despised by those who are in hell. You see our sin can be measured by the one who is insulted by it. God is ultimately the one insulted by our sin. His majesty is insulted. How many times in the first chapter of Romans does it say, “They exchanged.” The exchanged the glory of the immortal God. They exchanged it. In Jeremiah he says, “My people – they’ve committed two evils.” But what did they do? They exchanged! It is that deadly

exchange. Drinking from the broken cisterns and giving up Him. See how it tramples on the majesty of God? And when God shows His redeemed that hell is so utterly infinitely dreadful, you know what it is going to do? It is going to magnify the majesty that was despised by the sins of those who are there, because you understand, if they're punishment was less, if their suffering was less, it would speak of lesser glory that was insulted by the sin they committed. So His majesty is going to, it is just going to glow all the more brighter in our estimation because of it. And His perfect justice is as well, going to be glorified. The glory of God is the greatest good. The glory of justice is going to shine. He will appear as the just governor of all the universe. As Edwards says, "The vindictive, or retributed, penal justice of God will appear strict, exact, awful, and terrible." And, therefore, glorious. But also God is going to glorify His grace and His mercy to those of you who have come to Christ.

You know, I read one time about Adoniram Judson. He had been imprisoned, they had hung him upside down, the bottom of his feet were raw, the mosquitoes would come, and they would chain him upside down so his head was on the floor. And after he got out of prison, he was on a raft, with his wife, with his child, sailing down the river. And he was talking about how glorious freedom was. Freedom, we take it fore granted. Our forefathers didn't. Our forefathers who fought for their independence in this country did not take it fore granted, because it cost them. Adoniram Judson floating down the river that day did not take freedom fore granted. You know why? Because it was set off by the stark contrast of what he had been suffering before that, and in hell, that is what is going to happen. You know that those coworkers, those schoolmates, those family members, you were more wicked than them. There they suffer. Lord, why did you spare me? Oh Lord, such glorious grace! I deserve what they have. I see it Lord. I deserved it worse. Lord I despised greater light. And hell it will be that stark contrast to the love and to the glory and the honor and the immortality that God will rain upon His people.

And you know, I finish with this. Hell shows us, and puts a proper estimate upon, the cross of Jesus Christ, because when you throw the doctrine of hell out the door, you've just begun to undermine the whole truth behind the cross of Jesus Christ. Because what hell does is it shows, it shows us, what Christ had to pay on our behalf. It's a wake-up call to the fact that sin is not a small matter. If hell were not so severe, then what was the need of an atonement that was so severe? But when we begin to realize how dreadful it is, oh, it begins to clarify in the mind how much Christ suffered in those three hours. What was behind those wounds, we cannot know. "My God, my God. Why have You forsaken me?" But it helps us to understand. It helps us.

This is no game. If you're not certain, if something rings true to this in your conscience that I'm in great danger of this, Christ stands ready to pardon. This is a day of mercy. This is a day of grace. Today the voice of Christ beckons you, "Come. Come unto me you that labor and are heavy laden. I'll give you rest for your souls. Come." Today it's "Come. Come." Then it will be "Depart. Depart. Depart...Depart." And the door will shut. Then it's all over. No hope. No hope. Eternity. Eternity will multiply your sufferings. No matter how great the pain, the thing that will constantly fill your mind is, "its forever." You will wish to be annihilated. You'll wish to not exist anymore. But today Christ says, "Look and live." Just as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness so those who look upon what Christ did on the cross, look, look to Christ. Whatever sin you

have to leave behind, He says, “It is better to go blind than to go with two eyes into that eternal fire.”

You may have some friends. You may have somebody that put pressure on you – children. You hang around with friends that would laugh at you if you did this. Don’t let anybody be responsible for damning your soul. There’s too much at stake, and don’t believe, as some say, that there’s some great party in hell. It’s not that way. You will look and you will gnash your teeth at them if you should both wind up in hell. You’ll say, “Damn you. Damn you. I’m here because of you. You lead me in that sin.” It is not a game. Your soul is at stake. Your soul is at stake. Oh God help you.

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