

Hell Is Real

by William Blackburn

The sermon emphasizes the reality of hell and the importance of placing one's faith in Jesus Christ to avoid eternal torment.

Duration: 24:16

Scripture: Matthew 5:22, Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 10:28, Matthew 16:26, Matthew 18:8-9, Matthew 25:41, Mark 9:43-48

Topics: "Hell"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of talking about hell. He explains that preaching about hell is necessary because it is mentioned in the Bible. The preacher also wants to wake up Christians who may be complacent about the reality of hell. He urges viewers to be burdened for the lost and dying world and warns them about the certainty of hell. The sermon emphasizes the need for individuals to be saved before it is too late and highlights the urgency of sharing the gospel with others.

Transcript

The headline in the Metropolitan newspaper simply read, Man on Fire. And it was the story of a Midwestern Union official who had been forced into his automobile at gunpoint. He'd been driven to the outskirts of town.

There he'd been drenched in gasoline and set on fire. His photograph was in newspapers all across America. The article told about how horrifying and painful it was to burn to death.

The article told about a wife and children that he left behind. And our hearts were touched and we sympathized with a man on fire. In Chicago several years ago, a school building burned to the ground.

Eighty-nine children were burned to death along with three schoolteachers. A newspaper article described it as a glimpse of hell. And again our hearts were touched and again we sympathized.

Off the coast of New York many years ago, two ships collided. One ship was filled with a million gallons of gasoline. The explosion that resulted literally set the water on fire.

Many seamen were lost in the blaze that day. A New York paper described it as an unquenchable, fiery grave. You see my dear friends, fire and tragedy are two words that always go together.

In Franklin County, Arkansas, near my hometown of Fort Smith, several years ago an oil well exploded. Three men were burned very badly. Two of those men were rushed to the hospital in Ozark.

There standing in the emergency room, a woman who had been a nurse more than 20 years, said she had never seen anything like it. Here were these two grown men. Their clothes burned off their body.

They were screaming and wailing and crying as the flesh on their bones literally melted and dripped to the floor. Fire and tragedy are two words that always go together. Oh my dear friends, as awful as those true stories are, the Bible teaches us there's something worse than that.

The Bible teaches us that there is coming a day when every person who has rejected Christ, they will be cast into a lake of fire and they will be tormented forever and ever. Oh my dear friends, the most important thing in your life is to know for sure that you really are truly born again. One second after you die, one second after you drop into the lake of fire, it'll be too late to say, I thought I had it right.

Jesus said, Now you may be asking, William, why in the world would you talk about hell? Well, I want to talk about hell today for three reasons. Number one, I want to talk about hell because it's in the Bible. Now, do you want your preacher to preach out of the Saturday Evening Post or the Reader's Digest, or do you want me to preach the Word of God? You say, William, we want our preacher to preach the Word of God.

Well, dear friend, when a man preaches the Word of God and he preaches the whole counsel of God, he's got to preach about heaven and rejoice in it, but he's also got to preach about hell even though it breaks his heart. You see, my dear friends, I haven't been called to preach what men think, and I haven't been called to preach what a church thinks, and I have not been called to preach what a denomination thinks, but I've been called by God to preach what God has said, and God says hell is real. So I want to talk about hell, number one, because it's in the Bible, and I'm a Bible preacher.

But the second reason I want to talk about hell is I want to wake up the Christians who are watching. Oh, my dear friends, there are people all around us going to hell, and most Christians are asleep. I mean, everybody watching this program right now, you know somebody who's going to hell, perhaps in your own family, maybe your mom or your dad, your son, your daughter, your brother, your sister, your uncle, your aunt, somebody at school, somebody on the job.

But everybody watching knows somebody who's on their way to hell, and we're not motivated. We're not concerned. And so today I want to wake you up.

I want to motivate you and inspire you to be burdened for a lost and dying world. So I want to talk about hell, number one, because it's in the Bible, and number two, I want to wake up the Christians who are watching. But number three, I want to talk about hell to warn lost sinners.

There are many of you right now who are watching by television, and in the eyes of God, you are lost. And what that means is, friends, your heart beats once, and then it's got to get permission from God to beat again. There's not a doctor in America who can guarantee you that you'll even be alive tomorrow.

So I want to warn you about hell, and I want to beg you to get saved before it's everlastingly too late. Many people don't want to hear a sermon about hell. Many people think it's wrong to tell people about the lake of fire.

I had a lady one time in a very large church come up to me, and she said, William, you seem like a nice guy, but she said, you know, that old hellfire preaching's gone out of style. She said, you really can't be a success today with that negative kind of preaching. She said, if you want to be a success today, you need to be a positive preacher.

She said, William, what you really need to do, you need to preach like Jesus preached. And I said, well, ma'am, tell me, how did Jesus preach? And she looked at me, and she smiled, one of those little smiles that people sometimes get when they think they know more than you. And she said, William, everybody knows Jesus always preached on love.

Well, I knew right away here was a lady who didn't know much about Jesus, because contrary to popular belief, Jesus Christ didn't go around talking about love all the time. In fact, Jesus Christ was an old-fashioned hellfire preacher. You say, well, William, how do you know that? I know it because Jesus Christ preached on hell 57 times in the Bible.

He preached on heaven only 24. Jesus Christ preached on hell 10 times in the book of Matthew alone. Jesus Christ preached on hell in the very first sermon that He ever preached, the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus Christ preached on hell in the very last sermon that He ever preached, the Mount Olivet Discourse. Jesus Christ was an old-fashioned fundamental hellfire preacher. You know why? Because Jesus knew there were a lot of folks that were going to hell, and Jesus loved those people.

He didn't want them to go to hell, so He preached about hell to warn them to flee from the wrath to come. The Bible says, For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Here's what Jesus said about hell. One day He was preaching a message.

He said, here's what hell is like. He said, there was a rich man. The rich man died and he went to hell.

Now don't miss the point. He didn't go to hell because he was rich. He went to hell because he was lost.

And Jesus said, there was a poor man. The poor man died and he went to heaven. He didn't go to heaven because he was poor.

He went to heaven because he was saved. And Jesus Christ said, there's a contrast here in lifestyles. These men had different lives, different deaths, and different eternities.

And Jesus said, if you'll study the lives of these two men, you can learn what's really important here on planet earth. The first man was a rich man. The Bible says he wore purple robes and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

Now that purple robe he wore was an indication of wealth and religion. In those days, only the most wealthy people could afford the purple dye to have a purple robe. So this man was a very wealthy man.

Perhaps he was a businessman. He obviously had a house and a garage for three or four chariots. He had everything the world says it takes to be happy.

In fact, the Bible says he fared sumptuously every day. Now let me translate that for you into Arkansas. That means he ate high on the hog.

I mean, anything this old boy wanted to eat or drink, servants waited on him hand and foot. He was a rich man. He was also a religious man.

That purple robe he wore indicated he was a man who believed in God. He might have been a church member, a deacon, a Sunday school teacher. He was a man who believed in God.

He was a man who thought he knew God. But when the rich man died, Jesus said he went straight to hell. His big house, his cars, his influence in the community didn't keep him out of hell.

His church membership did not keep him out of hell. When the rich man died, Jesus said he went straight to hell. Now the poor man was different.

The poor man didn't have anything of what the world says it takes to be happy. Why, he didn't have a place to sleep. He had to sleep out there by the front gate of the rich man's house.

He didn't have any food. He had to eat the crumbs that would fall from the rich man's table. He didn't even have any friends.

Why, the only friends he had were the dogs that would come and lick the sores on his body. This man had absolutely nothing of what the world says it takes to be happy. But he had a lot of what God says it takes to be happy.

Because when the poor man died, he went to heaven. Now do you see the contrast? Here's a man on earth who has everything, but when he dies, he has nothing. Here's another man who has nothing, but when he dies, he has everything.

The Bible puts it this way. For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul? Oh, I imagine the funerals were something. I imagine the headline in the Jerusalem Gazette said, Rich Prominent Businessman Passes Away.

They probably had to get the biggest auditorium in town so people could come to the funeral. They probably had the rich man in a coffin that was worth thousands of dollars. The place was probably packed.

Every big shot in town was there. Oh, the mayor was there, the police chief, the fire chief, the school board, the city council. All the religious leaders, all the business leaders were there to pay their respects to this rich prominent businessman who just passed away.

Some of the men probably stood out there in the foyer and talked in little quiet voices about what a good man he was. They probably said things like this. You know, he was a very wealthy man, but you know what? He was always helping less fortunate people.

Somebody would say, yeah, you know, he was on the school board for 15 years. He was on the city council for 20 years while he was president of the United Way three different times. And they would say, yeah, you know, he was a member of that church down the street always talking about God.

And they all agreed, my, my, my, this man's going to be missed. And little did they know that as they bragged on this man and honored this man and revered this man, Jesus said, this man's in hell being tormented by the flame. Now the poor man was different.

The poor man, he probably died out there by the front gate of the rich man's house. Perhaps one day he was so beat up by the world, so exhausted, he just gave up the ghost. Perhaps the servants of the rich man came out that morning and at first they thought it was just some old bum asleep on the boss's sidewalk.

So they went out there to run him off. They probably kicked him a couple of times trying to wake him up. Then they saw he was dead.

They probably reached down and dragged him by the ankles and dragged him out to a field somewhere and just dropped him into a hole because after all, he was nobody. Nobody to the world, that is, but he was somebody to God. Jesus said the angels came.

The angels came and escorted him into the very presence of God. For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world? And yet lose his own soul. Friend, what good does it do? If you've got the biggest house in town, the finest car that money can buy, a pile of money in the bank, and you're the biggest big shot in town, if you die and go to hell, it profits you nothing.

Well, the rich man died and he went to hell. He learned three things about hell. Number one, he learned the certainty of hell.

He learned that hell is real. Now, dear friends, we live in a day when folks don't believe in hell anymore. And I'm not talking about outside the church.

I'm talking about inside the church. People inside the church don't believe in hell anymore. Many preachers don't preach on hell anymore.

But dear friends, I want to tell you, men may have changed their mind, but God has not changed His mind. And it's true, preaching on hell has cooled off. But friend, hell is as hot as it ever was.

And this man in our story might have been one of those guys that didn't believe in hell. Maybe he debated back and forth, is there really a hell? I mean, how could a God of love send somebody to hell? And anyway, how can you have flame and darkness at the same time? But dear friends, one second after he died, the debate was over. One second after he drew that last breath, the theological discussion came to an end.

And he found out what the Bible says is true. Let God be true in every man, a liar. He found that hell was a real place where real people go when they die without Jesus.

The second thing he learned about hell was this. He learned about the character of hell. He learned what hell was really like.

The Bible describes hell as a lake of fire, a bottomless pit, outer darkness, a place where the worm dieth not, a place where the fire is never quenched, a place where men have no rest. Jesus Christ said this. Jesus said, listen, hell is such an awful place that if your hand is going to make you go to hell, cut it off.

Jesus said hell was such a terrifying place that if your foot was going to make you go to hell, cut it off. Jesus said hell was such an awful place that if your eye was going to make you go to hell, pull your eyeball out. Jesus Christ said you'd be far, far better off to go through this life maimed with one hand, one foot, and one eye rather than be dragged into a place where the fire is never quenched and the worm dieth not.

The third thing that the rich man learned about hell, he learned about the citizens of hell. He learned what kind of people go to hell. Revelation 21, verse 8 says, But the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and slaughters, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

You say, well, William, I'm not on that list. I'm not a murderer, or a robber, or a whoremonger, or an adulterer. I'm not on the list.

But dear friend, the second name mentioned by God is unbeliever. You see, God puts unbelievers in the same category as murderers. God puts unbelievers in the same categories as those who practice witchcraft.

God puts unbelievers in the same category as the most vile, wicked sinners the world has ever known. Now, what does it mean to be an unbeliever in God's eyes? Oh, my friend, you can believe in God and be an unbeliever. You can believe in Jesus and be an unbeliever.

See, to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ means you don't believe facts with your head. It means you have committed your life to Christ. You have surrendered your will to Christ.

You have become one with Jesus. And my friend, if you have not been born again the way the Bible says to be born again, then you are an unbeliever and unbelievers go to hell. When does hell begin? The minute a man dies without Jesus.

No purgatory, no soul sleep, no second chance. A man draws that last breath without Jesus, he goes straight to a devil's hell. But my friend, listen to me.

I did not come to glorify hell. I have come to glorify the one that saves from hell and that is Jesus Christ. Yes, the Bible teaches that there is a hell.

And the Bible teaches that we deserve to go to hell. But the Bible says that God has mercy on us. And so God has sent His Son to save us.

And the whole story of the Bible is God's plan to reconcile sinful man with Himself. You see, the story of the Bible is we have broken all of God's laws. We have rebelled against God.

We have lived a selfish and self-centered life. And the wages of sin is death. But the Bible says God has sent His Son to save us.

And what Jesus did simply is He took all of our sin upon Himself. And He said, Father, I'll take their place. You can punish me for what they've done.

So Jesus took our sins and He took our place. He went to a cross and on that cross He died paying for our sin debt. He suffered hell on that cross so that we could enjoy heaven.

He died. He was buried in a tomb. And after three days God raised Him from the dead.

He's alive today and one day He's coming back. And the Bible says God gives every man a choice. A man can turn from his sin and place his faith in Christ and be forgiven, be saved.

Or a man can reject Jesus and hang on to his sin. But that condemns him to hell for all eternity. Oh, my friend, listen today.

If you were to die today, where would you spend eternity? Would you spend it in a place called heaven? Or would you spend it in a place called hell? You see, Jesus said when the poor man died that angels came to escort him into the very presence of God. Charles Spurgeon, the famous English preacher said that he believed the purpose of demons was to come to a lost man when he died to drag his soul into hell. Thomas Paine, the great revolutionary soldier, Thomas Paine was an atheist.

Thomas Paine said there is no God. But when Thomas Paine got on his deathbed, he lifted up his head and the last words of old Thomas Paine are these. He said, Can't you men see the head of that demon at the foot of my bed? He's come to drag me to the pit.

Are demons real? Yes, they are. Are demons sent by Satan to deceive men and women? Yes, they are. You would have been amazed if you had been at a big convention there in Ocean City, New Jersey, a big youth rally, 5,000 kids in attendance.

A young girl comes forward screaming and crying and wailing. She says, I've read the Satanic Bible through six times. I told them I wanted to join the witch's coven.

She said, people don't believe that demons are real. But she said, I know they're real. I've seen them with my own eyes.

Morris Rawlins, a medical doctor, a cardiologist, wrote a book called Through Death's Door. One chapter's title, Descending into Hell. In that book, he talks about a young girl who had overdosed on drugs.

They had her in the emergency room on the operating table trying to save her life. She kept screaming, saying, Mama, help me. Mama, help me.

They're pulling at me. They're tugging at me. They're trying to get me.

Please, Mama, help me. Help me. She died.

They pronounced her dead. They were able to bring her back to life by means of resuscitation. Two weeks later, she went through a hypnotic session, said the very same thing, that demons had come to drag her to the pit.

Oh, we don't believe that, do we? Oh, but my dear friends, if today in God and His mercy and grace would roll back the covers of hell and let us peer in for 30 seconds, I promise you, it would change your theology. A few years ago, I did a revival at West Memphis, Arkansas. On a Wednesday night, there were about 1,200 people there, including 300 teenagers.

There were two young men in the middle of those teenagers dressed in solid black. They were professing witches from the local high school. As I poured out my heart that night in begging people to come to Christ, as I was preaching, a young teenage boy there in West Memphis named Damian Eccles, and he and two of his high school buddies were out in West Memphis, Arkansas, murdering three little eight-year-old boys in satanic sacrifice.

And everywhere I go across America, I see Satanism and demonology and witchcraft. And my friend, the devil is alive and well. And what the devil wants more than anything else is to drag your soul to hell.

William Booth, of the Salvation Army fame, was talking to a group of graduating preachers one day, and he told these young men, he said, young men, I wish we didn't have to send you to school for several years to learn how to serve God. He said, if I had my way, we wouldn't do it like this. He said, if I had my way, what I would do to train young preachers is this.

He said, I'd take you into hell for 24 hours, let you get a vision of hell, then we could bring you back, we could evangelize the world. You know, as an evangelist, I get invitations all the time to go to mission trips. I get invitations to go to Russia or the Philippines or Brazil or India.

I'm always getting invitations to go to faraway places to tell people how to be saved. But you know the mission trip I'd really like to take? I'd like to come over here in America and I'd like to get a bunch of Greyhound buses. And I'd like to fill them up with old back-slidden church members.

Then I'd like to take those Greyhound buses into hell for about 24 hours. Watch those old back-slidden church members watch a few lost people burn in hell. Let them see that the flame is real.

Let them see that the torment is real. Let them get a smell of the stench of hell. Let them get a sense of the hopelessness of hell because when a man goes to hell, he doesn't get out.

We could bring those old back-slidden church members back to America. We could evangelize this place. If Christians could just get a vision of hell, I promise you, it will change your life.

And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. My friend, it is true that hell is an awful place and an awful subject to talk about. But the good news of the Bible is a person doesn't have to go to hell because God has done everything necessary to save you.

You can be saved from hell right here, right now, if you'll turn your life over to Christ. See, the Bible says the whole story is that you have sinned against God. If you will agree with God that you're a sinner, if you'll simply say, God, you're right and I'm wrong, but God, I want to repent.

I want to change my mind. I want to turn away from my rebellion and I want to take Jesus as my God, my Lord, my Savior. I want to commit everything I have to Him.

If you'll do that right now, God will save your soul. Why don't you kneel right where you are and pray with me and commit your life to Christ. Let God save your soul right here, right now.

You don't have to go to hell. You don't have to be separated from God for eternity. You can be saved, born again right where you are and one day spend eternity in heaven.

If God is speaking to your heart and you want to be saved, pray with me right now. Just pray, Lord Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner. I know I've broken your laws.

I know I'm lost. I know I cannot save myself. But God, I believe you love me and I believe Jesus died for me to pay for all my sin.

The best I know how, I repent. I turn away from my sin and I receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I commit my life to Him.

I believe in my heart that God has raised Him from the dead. Forgive me of my sin, Lord. Come into my heart and save me.

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