

Advice From One In Hell

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Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

- [0 : 0 0] What if those from the grave could talk? What would they tell us? Well, the Apostle Paul apparently went to heaven, but he refused to say a word about what he experienced.
- He talked about it in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. In 2 Corinthians chapter 12, beginning in verse 2, he says this, I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago was caught up to the third heaven.
- Whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise, whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know.
- God knows. And he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. The first heaven, to explain what he's talking about when he speaks of the third heaven, the first heaven is what you see today in the sky.
- If you go outside and look right after worship, don't go yet, look right after worship and look up in the sky, what you see is what's described as the first heaven. The second heaven is what you see on a clear night.
- [1 : 2 3] I walked the dog last night about 1030. I saw stars in the sky. That's a second heaven. The third heaven is the dwelling place of God. Now, Paul is most likely talking about himself here.
- However, he is so overwhelmed by the glimpse that he would not speak of it. He said he cannot tell it. It looks like it took him 14 years to even bring it up.
- And I think that's the best account of a first-person look at heaven. Paul, you understand, Paul wasn't trying to sell books.
- There's a lot of people that talk about what they experience when they almost die that love to sell you a book. And some of those things have been proved to be not true.
- Years ago, they were written about a child that supposedly went to heaven and come to find out after they sold a million copies, the child didn't have any experience like that. The parents had fed it with them. So be warned, those who talk about what they saw in heaven many times have books to sell.
- [2 : 3 3] But in today's passage, Jesus gives us a first-person testimony of a man that went to hell. And I believe the advice that he gives is worth taking note of.
- It's found in Luke chapter 16. Luke chapter 16, beginning in verse 19, and it says this. There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted subtly every day.
- And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.
- The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.
- And he called out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue. For I am in anguish in this flame.

[3 : 52] But Abraham said, Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things. And Lazarus is like manner, bad things. But now he is comforted here and you are in anguish.

And besides all this, between us and you, a great chasm has been fixed in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able and none may come from there to us.

And he said, Then I beg you, Father, to send him to my father's house. For I have five brothers so that he may warn them lest they also come into this place of torment.

But Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them. And he said, No, Father Abraham. But if somebody goes to them from the dead, they will repent.

And he said to them, If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.

[4 : 57] Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, I am fully aware that the devil does not want this message to clearly be preached today.

Because of the difference that it makes when we realize what's at stake for our souls beyond this life. God, I pray that the sweet Holy Spirit of God will work and move in such a way today that there will be no distractions that will be clear what you would have for each and every one of us in Christ.

In Jesus' name. Amen. If the lost, that is those as Scripture describes them, who reject Christ could speak from the grave, what would they say?

Well, here you have a situation with two completely different men. You had one man who was poor and begging for crumbs like a dog at a lavish gate of the rich man.

The man was covered with sores, which speaks not only to hygiene issues, but it also speaks to health issue. But in the first century, yeah, that gate, I don't know if we had a show or not this morning, that gate must be something like it looked for that man, okay?

[6 : 37] Now, that's not the gate that Lazarus laid outside of. That's a gate outside of Buckingham Palace. But I thought I'd give you some insight into what it must have been like.

So this man's laying out in front of this gate with sores about his body which is a first century, to the first century audience, speaks of a curse from God.

Do you remember Job? When Job went through all of his difficulty, he was scratching his boils with the shards of pottery as he lay on an ash heap.

He looked cursed even to the point that Job's own wife told him to curse God and die because that's what it looked like. It says this man was licking, the dogs were licking this man's wounds.

Now that, that, I got a dog and I love my dog but we're not talking about a good dog that's worried about your boo-boo here, okay? That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about scavenger, they didn't have pet animals, pet dogs.

[7 : 39] That's what we're talking about a scavenger dog that's licking ready to take a bite is what we're talking about. He looks cursed. Surely he had to be.

And then there's the other man. The rich man had a lot in life. He was rich, lavishly so. Purple and fine linen clothing is the finest.

A robe of fine linen as is described here was said to be worth six times its weight in gold. This man was feasting subtly daily.

This is an ostentatious flamboyant kind of living. I mean he's living like a five star athlete with an IL money, you know? He had all the frills that you'd want and that's exactly what he was concerned with and that's exactly what his downfall with.

Life's luxuries became a curse for him. They spoke too loud to him. Now listen, it's not always about money. Jesus brings up this particular situation because he's speaking with the Pharisees and the Pharisees that he's speaking with that Jesus addressed in verse 14 earlier, that's what they particular, that was their particular situation.

[8 : 57] But in reality, some people can be caught up with so many other things that make up the pride of life. Some people are caught up with their looks. I'm going to tell you, it's not easy to look like this every day, you know?

Some people are really, I mean, they're caught up with their looks, you know? Some people are caught up with their education. Some people are caught up with their family, who they're from, their heritage.

Some people are caught up with their influence and they're so, they're so caught up in these things that they become a hindrance to them in really seeing reality. All of these matters can easily busy our lives.

They can drown out the desperation of our hearts. And his focus was on the importance of things that rust and wear and do not last forever.

He loved his stuff. And he prioritized his life around it. And the result is, as Christ put it about someone else, that this man gained the whole world, yet he lost his own soul.

[9 : 57] But Jesus then gives us a view of both of them in eternity. Now I want you to notice in the passage that it says that the rich man was buried.

Now he was buried and surely it was an extravagant gathering. But there's no mention of the burial for Lazarus. There's no mention of his burial because beggars typically didn't get a burial.

If their bodies were not claimed, they were thrown in the trash dump. The trash dump was in the valley of Hinnom. Also called Gehenna.

Which is the very name that Jesus used to describe hell throughout the Gospels. It's not mentioned here, but it's mentioned often.

So people didn't expect for eternity to be different than life was for these two men.

[11 : 09] But Jesus is a table flipper. I mean, he upsets stuff. I always like to say God throws curveballs. He lands in a place that you don't expect it to land.

And he does that here as well. For the poor man here is not cursed. The poor man here is not in hell. The poor man here is at the bosom of Abraham.

Now understand the significance of that. In the bosom of Abraham, that means that that represents him being in heaven at the right side of the father of the nations.

Abraham. The greatest pillar of faith in the mind of the Jews was Abraham. And Abraham is surely seated close to God in eternity.

A place of eternal splendor. This poor man was put in a place of privilege. Now based on this account, if this rich man who's not in heaven but in hell, if he were speaking to us this morning from hell, he would give us some advice.

[12 : 20] Hear the advice from one in hell. I believe if he could speak today to us, he would tell us, don't spend eternity in regret.

Don't spend eternity in regret. It's alarming to me that not only can this man see his brothers, but he can see their need of salvation in hell.

He can not only see that but he can also see into heaven. He can see that there's this great chasm that has been fixed.

In other words, what he means by great chasm that's been fixed is what's done is done. There's no returning, there's no changing, there's no difference anymore. He can clearly know for all of eternity the opportunities that he had and that he neglected and that he ignored and that's one thing to suffer of knowing of the missed opportunities.

It's another to know that you didn't have to suffer and to constantly be reminded about what you missed. I want you to think about this for just a moment. Based upon this passage, people that go to hell for failing to acknowledge that God is pursuing him.

[13 : 40] They sensed it, they felt it, but they never surrendered to it. Now let's personalize that. So once in hell, you are constantly reminded of the loved ones that tried to share the truth with you that you didn't listen to.

You are constantly reminded of the messages that you heard, the conviction in your heart that you ignored, the opportunities for your life and for your eternity that would change you forever that you walked away from for whatever reason.

Lost, caught up in this world, rolling through your mind constantly without any resolve and without any type of recourse, without any hope at all.

Here, sometimes in this life, we get a second chance. In hell, there is no second chance. It is eternal. There's no going back. And the regret of eternity without the Lord must be a lot of what hell's about.

I mean, we could stop there and it'd be enough, but Christ didn't stop there when he described it. So nor should we. I believe that man was standing here today and would tell us about hell.

[14 : 57] I believe he would tell us don't spend eternity in agony. Nowhere in Scripture do we gain a fuller understanding of the agony of hell than we do here.

In verse 24, he says, tell him to just get a wet finger of water on my tongue to bring me some relief. He speaks of two kinds of agony in hell.

For one, it speaks of a physical agony in hell. There's no doubt that hell is not on earth. It is beyond us. And if you ever say in gist, it's like a hell on earth, I got news for you.

We don't have a clue in this life. To imagine it in our terms is only a slight glimpse. It's much worse than that.

Christ is very clear. There is torturous agony in hell. He describes it again and again in the New Testament. He speaks of weeping and gnashing of teeth. That speaks of a tremendous emotional and physical pain.

[16 : 04] He refers to being thrown into outer darkness. That is a paralyzing fear that I'll speak of in just a moment that I don't really think we can imagine.

And then he describes it as a fire, a lake of fire and brimstone, an eternal place with constant punishment. Now, this weeping and gnashing of teeth that he speaks of so often about hell is spoken of in response to the agony of the eternal darkness in Mark chapter, excuse me, in Matthew chapter 8 verse 12.

The weeping and the gnashing of teeth is spoken of again in Matthew 13 verse 42 and it's spoken of in reference to the furnace of fire as it is described in the New Testament.

You cannot be biblical which is my priority by the way. You can't be biblical and hide the fact that hell is a painful, physically torturous place.

But see, that's only the physical agony. Then there's also the spiritual agony. The weeping and the gnashing, the darkness and the thirst.

[17 : 17] No doubt that that only, not only to speak the physical pain, it speaks of spiritual pain. Weeping and gnashing speaks of pain as mentioned but it also speaks of eternal grief. Never being able to break loose from it.

The darkness that it speaks of. Utter loneliness with no help of a break. With no companionship. So much for being in hell with your friends like a country song kind of theology.

The reality is it won't be like that. In reality, we don't quite understand darkness.

Some of you may have had an occasion to do that to understand real darkness but most of us are surrounded by street lights. Most of us are surrounded by night lights.

Most of us have motion detecting lights. and if you wonder in the dark these days, you do it by choice. It's because you didn't want to bother to have light. In a much greater weight, the folks that first heard this story from Jesus, they understood the real darkness because real darkness is desert kind of darkness.

[18 : 33] it is unsettling. It is lonely. Due to the fact that often you're in the desert in the dark not by yourself, it is absolutely horrific.

And that's the picture that is drawn here. There's no hanging out with you buddies. Just because you know somebody because they've never given their heart and life to the Lord Jesus and because they live in a way that does not honor the Lord and you know good and well they've never given their heart and life to the Lord Jesus and they will die and go to hell unless something changes.

Just because you may see that and feel that, don't believe that you will have companionship by your friend in hell.

There's no evidence of anything like that in scripture. scripture. What I see is this man pining for the relationships that he lost on earth. That's just a perversion of the devil.

People have killed themselves, prided themselves, and failed to surrender themselves because of the devil's lies. Don't believe them. And the way you ascertain what's the devil's lies and what's the truth is you invest your life in the word of God.

[19 : 58] You feed off of it. I want to be clear today, there'll be no friends in hell. The thirst that it speaks of, I'm sure it's a physical thirst, but it's more than that.

It's a thirst for relief. It's a thirst for a break. It's a thirst for help. I believe if this man was standing here today based upon this account of scripture, that Christ gives us, he would tell us to tell all the truth of hell.

Tell all of it. It's sad to know that many are more concerned about entertaining others and keeping their friendships than they are about the souls of those friends and loved ones and where they'll spend eternity.

We so often fail to acknowledge the eternal things. Evie Hill was an African-American pastor from Los Angeles who had a wonderful outreach ministry in his church, a feeding ministry that he called, and only the way Evie can do it, the Lodge Kitchen.

And every time he said it, I wanted to go to the Lodge Kitchen. Evie had a wonderful, powerful ministry. I'm sure through YouTube today you can pick up on that and catch up on that.

[21 : 20] Don't do it now. You can do it this afternoon. Man, what a blessed preacher of the gospel. One of the most touching things that I've ever heard is him preach his own wife's funeral. What a blessing Evie was.

He said he had a friend named Jack. He was an evangelist. And he said Jack was all about soul winning, soul winning, soul winning. He always wanted to reach somebody else for Christ.

Every conversation that he had, every message that he preached, everything that he did was soul winning, soul winning. He just wanted to win somebody to Christ. So finally he asked him one day, he said, Jack, why all the soul winning?

That's the only thing you got. You're always talking about it. He said one night my sister called me. And she told me about a dream about daddy.

She told me, she said Jack, daddy's in hell. He was looking through a gate. Fire was all around him.

[22 : 24] Tongue parched, swollen and cracked. And he said to me, please help me. Save me from these flames. He said Evie, when she told me that, it got in my head and it's never left me.

And ever since she told me about her dream, I must do everything and anything that I can that all may know. For I am convinced that if we could experience 15 seconds of hell or 15 seconds of heaven, it would change our lives.

us. But we can't. The reality is, folks, that I believe if you were exposed to 15 seconds in heaven, we couldn't do anything but wait.

Paralyzed in anticipation for what's to come. I believe it's glorious beyond our comprehension. I did my best over several weeks to try to describe the way the Bible shows us.

But I really believe even the word of God puts it in a way that we can somehow understand because it is just beyond us. I believe if we spent 15 seconds in hell, it would drive us insane by the horror of the scene.

[23 : 59] But a piece of advice from one in hell is, tell all the truth of hell. Don't hold back a thing. Friend, let me tell you something.

If you're not careful, you will friend somebody right into hell because you never wanted to bother to disrupt your relationship to share with them the hope of Christ for them.

I believe that if that man could stand before us today, I believe he would tell us, listen to the word.

Listen to the word. This man was desperate to let his brothers know the reality of eternity. He was desperate. He wanted to do anything he could to let all know.

But in reality, it made little difference. If people can see the work of God in his people, if people can hear the message of the prophets and know the message and death and resurrection of Christ and not accept him, they never will.

[25 : 19] The sharing of that message is what he wanted us to do, Christ wanted us to do, and it's the sharing of that message that we are responsible to do, and it is by the sharing of that message that the Holy Spirit sparks in people's lives and salvation comes to them.

That's what Christ commissioned us to do. Christian, we have no excuse. The last thing he said to us was tell somebody. And the only unpardonable and unforgivable sin is to refuse to answer God's pursuit of you in his message of grace and to instead say no to his offer.

Sometimes again and again results in eternity without him. If you don't want the Lord in your life, you'll get what you want in hell.

You will. Take advice from one in hell. Listen to the message of God's word. Now listen. I'll be completely honest.

I don't want anybody to go to hell, nor does the Lord. However, in the freedom of our decisions, he gives us a choice to surrender to him or not because our sin has separated us from him.

[26 : 47] There is that chasm between us and him. But it does not have to separate us forever. If you've never surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, never acknowledge the sin that is within your life that separates you from God and ask him to forgive you and to cleanse you and to come into your life and change you, I got good news for you today.

Today's the day of salvation. He'll work in you and move in you. All you have to do is respond to his speaking to you. Don't live an eternity in regret.

Don't live an eternity in agony. Don't live an eternity in hell. hear the truth of hell.

Christian, share the truth of hell. If hell could talk, well, through Christ, it has.

The question is, are we listening? with every head bowed and every eye closed, it is always the nature of my sermons and my effort behind them to try to take on the personality of the way the scripture was originally presented.

[28 : 20] to understand it in the same dire way in which it was to be understood in the day it was first spoken. And honestly, today, folks, through my prayerful preparation, I don't believe I've exaggerated any of the agony of hell.

I don't believe I've left anything off that scripture would point out about us. I don't believe I've exaggerated that at all. I've not tried to play off your emotions today.

That's not been my effort. My effort is to be clear to you that this is not all there is. When they throw dirt on your coffin, there's more left for you.

And if you don't know the Lord Jesus, you'll spend eternity apart from Him. If you're here this morning and you've never accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, we're going to stand in just a moment and we're going to sing, but more important than singing, I want you to do what God tells you to do.

Maybe there's an uncertainty in your life and you're struggling with that. You want some guidance. That's the time to come. Maybe you're here this morning and you know that you're a Christian, but you know that you've never publicly acknowledged that.

[29 : 45] The biblical way to publicly acknowledge that by Christ's commission and by His example is to do that through baptism. And we're going to celebrate baptism in a couple of weeks. And if that's a pending matter in your life, I encourage you to respond to that.

Maybe God's drawing you to this congregation. You know this is the place that God would have you to serve. And you just want to follow His lead. In just a few moments when we stand to sing, that's the time.

We'll be happy to guide you in that process. Or maybe you just need to do business with God. you got lost friends that you ain't shared with.

You haven't taken seriously the time in which God's given us, the commission in which He's charged for us. Maybe there's hindrances in your life that are in the way, just like this man's money was in the way for Him.

And you need to lay those things down at the foot of the cross. I'll never pretend to know how God is speaking to you. I have no idea. But I never want to leave without giving you the opportunity to respond as God speaks.