

Is Hell a Reality

by David Gooding

The doctrine of hell is a reality and a place of eternal torment for the impenitent, but it is also a demonstration of God's love and justice.

Duration: 55:44

Scripture: Luke 16:27

Topics: "Hell"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of the final judgment as described in Holy Scripture. He emphasizes that the principles of the final judgment are often misunderstood. The preacher also mentions a quote from Shakespeare about the fear of judgment and describes a visual depiction of demons and a furnace associated with the final judgment. The sermon also highlights the importance of receiving Christ and being acquitted through faith, and the ongoing battle against sin in the believer's life. The preacher concludes by referencing the famous verse from the Gospel of John about God's love for the world and the significance of believing in Jesus to avoid perishing.

Transcript

We regret the rather poor quality of this recording, but trust that the Lord will bless you as you listen. The Christian doctrine of the final judgment has, as we all know, an exceedingly solemn corollary. So solemn and unpleasant to contemplate that perhaps all of us here present in this have at some time or other wished that the doctrine were not true.

Indeed, we may have tried one of those popular escape routes along which people, even people who profess to be Christians, try to escape the idea of the final judgment with eternal perdition for the impenitent. Certainly, most Christian preachers and lecturers at some time or other in their careers wish that the doctrine were not true. Some of them, as I say, have invented escape routes, notably two.

They have said that the whole idea of eternal punishment is, in its origin, an idea that took place in the pre-scientific age. Primitive men living near volcanoes and watching fire erupt from the jaws of the mountain imagined that there must be a terrible hot place in the middle of the earth, and their primitive imaginations coupled with their uneasy conscience has got to work. And they came to the conclusion that the gods must have put down there a terrible big furnace for the purpose of coping with those who are finally impenitent.

And the argument goes that, of course, now that we have emerged into the scientific age and we know that the middle of the earth isn't fire anyway, we can no longer accept such a crude idea that had its basis in pre-scientific observations. And others have said that surely this idea that God would punish people eternally originated with people whose moral sense was primitive, and not merely who lacked modern science. People who lived in days when a man could easily be butchered or strung and quartered or burned at the stake for holding different religious views from the views that were then orthodox.

And because people were so primitive in their moral outlook, they imagined that God held the same view of things that they did, and that God would punish his enemies just like they were disposed to punish theirs. But now, of course, so this argument runs, our moral sense has been a good deal enlightened by great prophets such as Jesus Christ, and we have learned that God is a God of love, and it's quite unthinkable that such a God of love would ever punish anybody, at any rate, punish them eternally. And so it is held that the whole notion of a final judgment and its corollary of eternal perdition for the impenitent was a nightmare of the dark ages, and that we are happily escaped, who have emerged into the broad daylight of this modern era.

Well now, certainly it is the fact that the Bible, when it falls to discussing this matter, does speak of a lake of fire, and does say that those who are finally impenitent will be cast into a lake of fire. And we do know, of course, that some of the many evil people, with their fevered imaginations, debased this biblical figure into the most crude literalism. If you should go, for instance, into the chapel of St John the Evangelist in the College of St John in Cambridge, you will find there in the doorway, as you go in, that tremendous window that has for its theme the final judgment, and at one corner, down at the bottom right, there in the stained glass, is a tremendous furnace, a sort of a brazier thing, and around it are demons dressed in green livery, with forked tails and cloven hooves, and tremendous pitchforks.

They are in process of sewing away into this furnace human beings, rather in the manner in which the Gestapo people sewed away Jews in their gas chambers. But we must observe, if we are going to be honest and fair with ourselves, that the crudity of the notion lies not in the Bible, but in the medieval interpretation of what the Bible says. The Bible's phrase is a solemn figure indeed.

Our Lord himself used it. Our Lord spoke of the Gehenna of fire, and as we shall all know, Gehenna, meaning literally the valley of Hinnom, was a gorge outside of Jerusalem, where the city's refuse was cast, and eternal fires were kept burning there to clear up this terrible stinking mess of stuff, and save the city from infection. And our Lord used those physical flames, that physical burning, as a vivid figure of spiritual torment.

He was expecting nobody to imagine a hell, in the form of a literal gorge outside of Jerusalem. But he was solemnly warning us, that just as there is a fire which can consume our bodies, so there is a torment for the impenitent. Now if the medieval people please, and indeed if we please, to drag down that solemn, noble figure into crude literalism, then we cannot fairly charge the Christian doctrine with being crude.

But at least if we do, we have no honest logical grounds thereupon, and because the doctrine according to us is crude, of rejecting it in total. The Bible doctrine is not crude. And then as to that other matter, that the doctrine is inconsistent with the love of God, and must have been invented by somebody with a cruel sadistic turn of mind, that escape route too quickly closes to us, when we consider the grounds for our belief in a final judgment.

They are of course, pre-eminently and primarily, and in the first place, the solemn statements of our Lord himself. Our Lord, who was the one to teach us that God is love. You will search for instance, through our Old Testament history, to find anything comparable to what our Lord said about the love of God.

It was our Lord who taught that God was love. It was our Lord who taught us salvation that stems not from man's efforts, but from the love of God. Therein is He unique.

But it was that same Lord who preached to us a God of love, and so demonstrated in work and word that God indeed is love. It was our Lord who preached more than any other man, and for the impenitent they await eternal torment. Was it not our Lord, for instance, who took up and enforced in the spiritual realm, the phrase that Isaiah the prophet had used in the physical realm, about a torment in which the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched? Was it not our Lord who depicted to the mocking Pharisee, who jibed that Jesus of Nazareth was taking things far too seriously, was it not our Lord who retorted with the story of a rich man, who, finding himself in eternity, found that he was the wrong side of a fixed God, and in torment? Was it not our Lord who said in answer to the question, Lord are there few that be saved, look, you make it your earnest business to be sure that you are inside the door of God's salvation.

Because the day will come when that door will finally be shut, and there will come many people to that door who had imagined they were on the inside but shall find out in the end that they are on the outside. And they shall not say that, Lord we took holy communion and we often attended the public preaching of holy scripture, Lord open to us. And he shall say, but I never knew you, depart from me.

Is it our Lord who said that, not even one of his apostles? So that even those of us who may find it fashionable and attractive to argue that we prefer the teaching of Jesus Christ and we're not so stricken with the teaching of some of his lesser apostles, cannot even go along any escape route. If we believe Jesus Christ at all, we must be honest with him and face the fact that he more than anybody else thought that for the unbelieving and impenitent there will be a shut door, a gulf and corn. I should like us to notice that not only did he teach this, but that his teaching of this solemn fact was inextricably bound up with his teaching about the love of God.

So inextricably bound up with his teaching about God's love, that we cannot argue, ah but look, surely the passages that speak about the love of God, they were taught by Christ. But you know, a lot of people were used in compiling the Bible and could it not be that the parts that tell of this very solemn and fearful fate for the impenitent were never originally given us by Christ at all, but somebody else put them in the general scrapbook of the Bible. And that the nice pieces come from Christ and the nasty pieces come from somebody else.

But even that argument fails us. I need do no more perhaps than quote that famous statement of the gospel that we have, many of us, known from our infancy. For God so loved the world, says the thought gospel, that he gave his only begotten son.

Here is the most profound statement of the love of God. Here is God's love in its furthest extreme, that he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. But then if you inquire why he gave him, and thus wherein is the love of God practical and significant? Then the answer comes that he gave him so that whosoever believeth on him should not perish.

The word is inextricably bound up in the very heart of the gospel. And unless we are prepared to say that the cross of Christ, that extravagant expression of the love of God, was all to no purpose and an idle

exercise, we must admit the Bible's statement of its purpose, it was to rescue those who will believe him from perishing. Not only do we believe the doctrine of the final judgment on the authority of Christ's word, God has gone out of his way to give us confirmation.

Paul said, to the learned chamber of the Areopagus, that God has appointed a day in which he will cast the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained, whereof he has given assurance to all men. And the assurance that there is to be a day of judgment is found, it says Paul here, assurance to all men in that God raised Christ from the dead. Now this is an exceedingly important statement and I would like us to ponder this.

For we are told, in fact we are told in some modern versions of Christianity, that the idea of a coming judgment and the idea of a resurrection and the idea of our Lord's atonement, these are all myths. And indeed that the resurrection itself is a myth, that you have to accept solely on the grounds that you find yourself disposed to believe it. If you don't believe it, then you don't that's all, it's only true for those who really believe.

But I remind us all that that is not the Bible's position, nor was it indeed Paul's position. Paul knew that among his listeners there in the Areopagus court were philosophers of the Epicurean bent. And as you will know, one of the leading tenets of the Epicureans was that there was no final judgment.

Epicureans of course had many exponents and many variations upon their central theme. But you'll remember Lucretius in his version, how gladly, how exultantly does Lucretius preach his doctrines of materialism. He welcomes them as a man welcome to gospel.

He welcomed the theory of evolution, not merely because he felt it was scientifically true, but because in it he felt there was a gospel for men. And that's why Lucretius wrote and wrote in poetry. And the powerful passages in Lucretius, as you will know, are those passages where Lucretius expounds what you may call the gospel of evolution.

And that is simply this, that when a man dies the atoms of his body go apart and join that indelible non-personal stream of indestructible matter. But that the man himself ceases to exist. And the gospel Lucretius draws from that is that because the man ceases to exist, all those stories of a coming final judgment and torments for the impenitent are so many grandmother's yarns and booby tales, with which nannies have been wont to correct their children, that they have no existence.

And as we well know, evolution nowadays is likewise accepted, not merely, I nearly said not at all, because men are compelled thereto by the evidence. It is accepted and held as a gospel because it seems to hold hope for man that when death do breathe, nothing will be left to face a judgment. Anyway, when Paul stood before the Areopagus Court, he was facing learned philosophers who held that view, whether to evolution and the idea that when man dies he is finished and there is no judgment.

These men were not predisposed to believe Paul's Christian theories. He must present them some evidence that a man can survive without first granting the Christian premise. And very boldly and without any hesitation at all, Paul offered them the historic fact, not merely Christian belief, I repeat, the historic fact that Jesus Christ literally rose the third day, divine confirmation of what he himself has so consistently taught throughout all his life, that there is a resurrection of the dead, there will be a final judgment.

And I offer that same evidence to all non-Christians present, and if there be any of the modern epicureans, then to them especially. That you don't have first to believe what Christianity says before you may have evidence that there's going to be a final judgment. You can read your bible if you like as you read the mirror.

The bible will claim that there is objective historic evidence that Jesus Christ rose the third day, which evidence God offers as confirmation of Christ's teaching that there will come a final judgment. And we may know this matter too, in the third, very real if lesser faith, by the witness of our own moral sense. There's a very interesting story in the bible of a so-called thief who hung alongside of Christ on Calvary.

Interestingly enough, of course, the word translated thief is a word that the historian Josephus used of the political rebels, the men that were trying to lead revolutions, throw off the capitalist Roman system and come up some other kind of a state. One of these men, for his crimes against the then government and people, was being executed alongside of Christ. That man, you remember, got converted.

And the four processes that led him to conversion have been recorded in brief and are exceedingly interesting. He first observed that Jesus Christ was innocent. Comparatively speaking, he was no theolog.

Innocent in the sense that the revolutionary himself realized that he personally wasn't innocent. He had done crimes enough. He knew that.

But Jesus Christ, he knew, to be an innocent man, guiltless of any such revolutionary or anti-social activity. Then he observed that Jesus Christ being innocent was being hunted to death by unscrupulous politicians and religious leaders and suffering the same condemnation as men who were self-evidently and self-confessed guilty. And in this final moment he pondered that situation.

Here is a world in which, not uncommonly, the innocent suffer along with the guilty. We find ourselves ever and again reflecting on that matter, telling ourselves how wrong it is, feeling our temper rise against this wicked perversion of God. But let us observe what is happening.

We have within us a moral sense that can see the difference between right and wrong and calls aloud that right should be vindicated. And the unfair judgments of this world and all the suffering they have brought should be put right and reversed. But now, where does that moral sense come from? If it just happened, if it is not backed by some absolute standard, by some absolute deity, then of course it is but a cheat of itself, a will of the wisp, that there is no practical relation to the facts.

It's an utter cheat. The world outside us, as history has proved down many centuries, is a world of enormity and unfairness. If there is no God outside to give us that moral sense which makes us decry this situation, then we better admit that our moral sense is no more than a translocation of atoms within the brain.

And it's a lie and a cheat because it doesn't square with the facts of the world as we know it. But this revolutionary dying beside Christ believed that his moral sense came from God. It seems self-evident to him that if there is a God who cares so much about right and wrong that he has given us the moral ability to see the difference between right and wrong, then there must come a day when that God will redress the battle and vindicate right, else he will deny himself.

And the whole man's experience is a farce. And inasmuch as the thief was now two or three minutes thought dead and thought that justice was not going to be vindicated in this life, he expressed his firm

belief that morally there must be another world and there will be a final judgment. I would like now to turn to the principles of that final judgment as we are given them in the words of Holy Scripture.

And here too I want to dwell because it is my feeling that the principles that will operate at the final judgment are not generally understood. That is why incidentally I put that quotation from Shakespeare, resting it of course quite from its context, as the subtitle for tonight's talk. What judgment shall I dread doing no wrong? A common plea of course, a common squiggle by which we try to conquer ourselves.

We say well of course perhaps yes, there may be, probably is, a final judgment. Then with a shrug of our shoulders we say well of course I suppose I stand as good a chance as anybody, I've not done anything really wrong. What judgment shall I dread doing no wrong? That sort of argument of course does proceed from the assumption that the final judgment is going to be a great weighing machine.

Or as I put it in another lecture, it's going to be a sort of an examiner's meeting to mark people's scripts. As a good and famous surgeon in the city recently put it, he expected that when he stood there his life would be weighed and he had, he did sincerely hope that the good would be at least 51 percent. That's a very common idea.

We like to tell ourselves that we've good hope at least of making 51 percent on the good side. But of course that is not how the thing is going to proceed anyway. The standard by which men will be judged, the bible explicitly says, is God's law.

And anything that comes short of the 100 percent mark will be judged as sin and worthy of the sanctions of that law, which is separation from God. This must I know sound somewhat cruel. But ladies and gentlemen unless we are prepared to invent a religion of our own, we're going to know any claim to being Christian at all.

We must be honest to what Christ and his apostles said. They say that whosoever keeps the whole law and defends in one point is guilty of all because he has broken perfection and come short. It will not be a question of weighing whether our good deeds are well led.

Nevertheless the bible does say that the death final judgment, and I quote here from the words of holy scripture, that the dead are to be judged every man according to their works. The dead shall be judged by the things that are written in the books, that is the books of God's records, according to their works. That is to say, there will not be indiscriminate judgment.

It does make a difference whether a man has attempted to be honest and decent or whether he has lived the life of careless selfishness and cruel sadism. It does make a difference. In fact our Lord has a very pointed remark to make to the people of his own day, the people of his own city Capernaum, where he lived a good deal of his life, people that had heard the christian gospel perhaps more than any other person on earth and he said to them that in the day of judgment it would be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah than for the people of Capernaum.

The judgment will not be indiscriminate and all alike. People shall be judged according to their works in that then. You'll see the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had never heard the christian gospel in the same way as the people of Capernaum.

Therefore though the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were some terrible sexual perverts and the people of Capernaum were prim and proper religious people that went to the synagogue every Sabbath, our Lord

announced that eternal perdition for the people of Capernaum would be far more solemn and painful thing for the reason that they had had more privilege, more chance of accepting God's saviour and they had more light in which to decide the matter. And therefore when eventually they decided to reject the saviour and go on with their own little religion, the guilt they incurred was inevitably far greater than the evil and sexual perverses of Sodom and Gomorrah. We who live in a city that has been so fully evangelized for so long ought not to let the point of this escape.

But the perhaps the most important thing to get hold of it seems to me is what the bible says about the consideration that shall govern whether a man as a result of that government is finally lost or saved. I do call your attention to the actual explicit words of scripture. It talks of those that are cast into this lake of fire and we look very keenly to see on what decision, on what ground.

And if any man was not found written in the book of life he was cast into the lake of fire. I'm sure we see the point of that. It does not say that if any man failed to get 51% it does not say that those who fell below 35.

It does not here say that those that were guilty of the enormities and perversions, these were cast into the lake of fire. The determinant you'll see is not a man's works at all. For if men should be judged by God's law the bible tells us already that all men should be found to come short.

And those who enter heaven to use the popular parlance are not those that come up in the 90 percentage and only come 10% short. It's not on that basis whatsoever. But on another thing completely if any man's name was not found written in the book of life and it's the Lamb's book of life that heavenly register that records every single soul that has had personal transaction with Christ has been saved, has received the saviour.

I want if you will allow me just to repeat a sentence or two of what I said in an earlier lecture because this is so intensely important. According to the bible a man's salvation does not depend upon his effort to keep God's law or his success in keeping the faith. God's law merely proves a man is a bankrupt, complete bankrupt.

When he has done his best he is a bankrupt. So that by the deeds of the law says the bible shall have no flesh to be justified before God. Man is saved not by his self-effort but he is saved by what Christ has done for us.

When Christ died at Calvary the bible tells us that he bore our sins in his body. God laid upon him the iniquity of us all. God who is a realist knows us and foresees that at the very end we shall still have come short of his perfection.

Has given his son to deal with this great cosmic problem of sin. For the man who will own his bankruptcy and receive Christ into his personality then God says of that man that he is forgiven. He is right with God.

He is redeemed if you like. His name is entered in the Lamb's book of life. Now we should try and get this because I repeat the determinant that this shall decide whether a man is in the end lost or saved is not whether his works were good or bad.

The determinant is his name in the book of life. That is has he received the favor is he one of Christ. And of course with this square the words of our Lord.

When the people come at last and the door is shut and they come knocking on that door pleading for admittance. You will notice that they come with what is the popular version of Christianity saying Lord but look at our good works. How many times we attended holy communion we ate and drank in thy presence.

And as we were attending the public preaching of the words we heard you preach in our streets. The popular impression of Christianity. But outside.

And the reason why outside says our Lord. Not look at this this and this and the other. He says I never knew you.

Not I didn't know you existed. But I never had those personal intimate dealings with you. And you with me.

When I accepted you and you accepted me and we became one. In a far more deep and spiritual sense in which man and wife accept each other and become one. I never knew you.

That is the determinant. But from that I want to point out what is in its way a most delightful thing. And yet in its way a most solemn thing.

It is the common notion that not all these things be true. They are indeed solemn. But at least we have a breathing space in which we may wait.

But we must wait at any rate to the last and final day to know how our own personal case will fall. Therein some of us find a good deal of comfort. But the reality of the situation are otherwise.

The Bible is emphatic. Although the judgment does not come till after death. The decision is knowable in this life.

It is knowable on what I may call the good side. And therein I say the wonderful glory of Christianity. Those who will be cast into the fire are those whose names are not in the book of life.

But the Bible asserts that those whose names are in the book of life may know it during this life. In fact the impression the New Testament leaves is that this was common knowledge among the early Christians. Paul Wright wrote to a church of Christians not long converted at a place called Salipi.

And in a casual reference about some of his fellow Christian workers he has this delightful phrase. Their names are in the book of life. That was written somewhere about A.D. 50, 60 maybe.

And they already knew. Again I must admit that this is not popular Christianity. But this is Bible.

Says Paul of these ordinary people who had received Christ and were a Christian. Their names are already in the book of life. With what comfort did they proceed to life end.

And how profound was their peace with God. However dissatisfied they were about their own spiritual attainment. Yet their peace with God, their prospect of eternity was brilliant, profound.

They knew it. Their names were already in the book of life. Paul at one stage says that for those that are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation.

There is none. And our Lord himself, on whom in fact these teachings derive, made the point explicit. Would you remember that famous occasion recorded in the fourth gospel in chapter five.

When our Lord was talking to the Jews and made his astounding claim that he was the son of God and equal with God. And that at the final judgment he, Jesus of Nazareth is going to be the judge. That was an extraordinary claim for a 30 year old person to make.

He made it. Making the point that God has committed judgment of him because he is both human as well as divine. And understands how humans see the judge of that august tribunal shall be human as well as divine.

But having claimed that he is going to be judged in that last day he said these tremendous words. He that hears my words and believes on him that sent me has, and we notice its present tense, has everlasting life. And in comes the very important phrase, and shall not come into judgment.

Or if you prefer the authorized translation, shall not come into condemnation. I do beg you to observe that this is not a theory put forward by some philosopher. If there is any truth in Christ at all these are the words of the judge himself.

Giving a forecast, giving a statement beforehand of what shall be the decisions of the court. He says he that hears my word, hears it now and believes on him that sent me has here and now eternal life and shall not, the Greek is exceedingly emphatic, shall in no wise whatsoever ever come into condemnation. But is passed over already from death to life.

Like a man who was a condemned criminal in the death bed, as good as dead, just awaiting his thinking. And the pardon is given him and he holds it in his hand and with the pardon he walks out of the cell to life. He is passed over.

So Christ said in that most profound and spiritual sense the man that hears Christ's word and receives him in this life already has eternal life and already has passed over from the condemned cell into life. You say how can it be known? How can the result be known than before the great final day? Well it springs from what the Christian gospel is and from the way it works. I have quoted it before that there is to be one judgment says the bible and it comes after death.

There are not several judgments. One judgment after death. God tells us already that just as there is one judgment so Christ was once, not twice, not three times, he was once offered.

It's over now. The offering is complete. No more is for it to be done or suffered.

The sacrifice has been made and it is finished. The sacrifice that secures a man's forgiveness with God has already been done. And God wants us to know it.

God courageously tells us it's done, it's finished. So that the man who receives Christ as his savior and they too will become one. That man knows it already.

That the bill is met. The sanctions of the law are fathered already. He has passed over already from death to life.

I must confess that as a Christian preacher and lecturer I am exceedingly proud of that. I think God is supremely wonderful. Far more courageous as well as realistic than the petty theologians that peddle popular Christianity.

Popular Christianity will have a man waiting in suspense all his days, digging him into heels and telling him to be good by fear of a coming judgment. Not real Christianity. Christianity will tell the man who receives Christ already that whatever may happen he is accepted with God.

He will never come into judgment. He will never be cast out. He is already saved.

There is no condemnation. He shall be saved from the wrath of God. That's what Christianity means when it says that Christ gives us peace with God.

That does not mean of course that the man who receives Christ is therefore free to do as he pleases. The New Testament is full of explanation that when a man receives Christ then is he right with God. His relationships with God are right and God receives him for Christ's sake and will never ever cast him out.

Then of course begins the path of discipline in the school of God's family. A man does not become a saint, a perfect behaviorist overnight. There will be many falls, many mistakes.

The battle against sin will go on to his last day. If a man grow careless, the Bible bluntly says that that man God will chasten. Discipline.

Indeed God will use the final discipline of removing the man's physical life. The discipline in God's family is a real thing. The discipline within the family is one thing.

Acceptance is another. The glory is indeed the heart of the Christian gospel is that the man who comes confessing his bankruptcy and all realism to God and stakes his faith solely in Christ and receives Christ, that man is received by God and shall never come into justice. But of course there is a downside.

It is already known. It can already be known in this life. Each man may know it for himself if he shall be lost.

Because again you see the determinant is not how he shall prove to have done in the end. The determinant is whether his name is in the book of life, whether he has received God's son. And the man that refuses God's son as saint, of him the Bible says, perhaps I better quote you the actual text, the words are so infinitely solemn.

The Bible says, he that believeth on him is not judged, but he that believeth not hath been judged already because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten son of God. We must not therefore let ourselves run away with the idea that we are safe for long as the results are not yet published. Each man in this room, each woman may know for him and herself right now the Bible says that the man that has not believed is already judged.

Of course there is opportunity while life lasts to change one's outlook. There is opportunity to come and through repentance, confession of one's spiritual bankruptcy to receive Jesus Christ as Lord. But the thing that determines the result is a something that happens in this life, which we may already know.

We started a little bit late. By your kind care to give me five more minutes would you? I speak such a solemn thing that I would be grateful for five more minutes to answer some of the objections that probably rise in your mind. You say that this doctrine that the impenitent will be eternally separated from God, isn't it crude? Is it not altogether out of proportion with a man's sins? Suppose a man has been a sinner.

The idea that in the coming world he will be eternally separated from God for it, surely that's a punishment altogether out of proportion with the crime. You see, one can understand the objection but it leans on the popular notion of why man is judged anyway. It says look this man has not been such a big sinner at all that has he? I repeat the determinants that will decide whether man is sent to eternal torment.

He's not how big of a sin to be. No. But has he received God's son? The man that comes to his final decision and says no to God's son is refusing eternal life, is refusing eternal redemption, is refusing God.

There is no alternative to God but eternal perdition. This is not a cruel doctrine. This lies in the nature of the fact that a man to me, and I'm sure he will not mind my quoting it, just recently at this point sort of dawned on him.

He saw that all his religion was not going to improve him enough to gain him acceptance with God and that the only thing that would save him was for him to come in confess bankruptcy and receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Ah but he said you know not just yet because the kind of people I associate with my friends you know this wouldn't be popular. He said look you Christians come every night don't you and if you've done anything wrong every night of the week you come and you ask God to forgive you and he forgives you? He said yes.

He said well can't I go on like that? Can't I just go on every night asking God to forgive my sins without that receiving Christ as you call it? Yes. That is the fundamental human problem and sin. We will have God's forgiveness, but we're not quite sure whether we want to receive Christ as Saviour and Lord, put him unreservedly into our personality.

And that's all God is really basically interested in for everything hangs upon it. If a man rejects Christ, he rejects God. And a nice examination paper full of good works is irrelevant to say that surely a man would get a chance to change his mind in eternity.

That is supposing a lot of things that we just do not know. We don't know what eternity is. He who does know and who loves our souls by laws himself tells us and he gives us to understand that when eternity dawns it shall not be a place of change in that sense.

Man will be fixed. His choice is fixed. Moreover a man in that day shall not have the means with which to repent for the only thing that can possibly cause a man's heart to change and repent and receive God is the love of God.

And God has demonstrated that love in giving his son to a cross for us and raising him from the dead and offering us that we receive him into our personalities. And the man that says no to the love of God in Christ that man shall find in eternity as he has rejected the only thing that could lead him to a change of mind. God shall not annihilate a man that would not be loving on God's part for God has given a man a will.

Rank him as a responsible creature. If man takes that will and says no to Christ God will not degrade that man to the level of a beast. God cannot for his own sake wipe out the decision so that nobody knows of it.

God in all his courage will honor that man's decision will honor his personality which will be known eternally that that man refused Christ. Who shall say that what the man had what he himself. I want to end this lecture and this series of lectures with a few quotations.

I do it for this reason that when our Lord warned us of that man who found himself in Hades in torment he was reminded that in this life he had the Bible. He said that no father Abram go to my brothers because my brothers are likely to follow me to this place of torment. Send somebody from the dead he said.

Don't listen if somebody came from the dead. But father Abram said oh no they won't. So father Abram they had the Bible and if they do not believe the naked word of holy scripture then they would not be convinced by any ghostly apparition from the other world.

This is the fact. We may not expect we must not expect that God is going to give us strange feelings and wonderful apparitions to convince us of this truth. We have the word of God.

God is no emotionalist with firework displays. He expects us to believe what he says because he thinks. Therefore I all leave I end with God's word.

On this we must each one make his and her decision. Says holy writ is in as much as it is appointed unto men once to die and after this comes judgment. So Christ also having been once offered to bear the sins of many shall appear a second time apart from sin to them that wait for him unto salvation.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent not his son into the world to judge the world but that through that the world should be saved through him. He that believeth on him is not judged.

He that believeth not has been judged already because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten son of God.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23678.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-gooding/is-hell-a-reality/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net