

# Hell, it's a real place!

Pastor S. James

[www.gracetabernaclehyd.org](http://www.gracetabernaclehyd.org)

A Texas billionaire threw a party for his friends. This guy was very proud because he had gone up the hard way and made his wealth. He had this huge massive swimming pool and as they were all outside, he threw this challenge to them and he said, "Look. Life doesn't come easy. You need to really work hard to reach the place where I am today. So, I am giving you a challenge – anybody who can swim from this end of the swimming pool to the other end which has six man-eating sharks in it and can reach the other side, can choose from one of the three – either the hand of my only daughter in marriage; half my assets; or you can take my oil fields." Suddenly, one guy just flew into the water, crossed and reached the other end. The billionaire was so surprised and amazed. He said, "Okay, what do you choose? The hand of my daughter?" He said, "No." "Half my assets?" He said, "No." "You want my oil fields?" He said, "No." He was surprised and said, "What do you want then?" He said, "I want to know who pushed me into the swimming pool!"

Amen? Shall we pray? Pray along with me.

*Father, give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation that I might know You better. Lord, open the eyes of my heart that I might know the hope to which You have called me. And I pray, Father, that every day, as I hear and meditate upon Your Word, that my faith will arise to fulfill Your purpose in my life. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*

We are looking at the Kingdom. How many of you used the blank cheque you got last week? Amen. So, the young kids used that blank cheque. Remember the blank cheque. He is 'I AM' and you fill your blank cheque and receive it from Him.

Today, I want you to turn with me to the *Gospel according to Luke*.

## **Luke 16:16-17**

***<sup>16</sup> "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.<sup>17</sup> And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.***

Then, come to verse 19.

## **Luke 16:19-31**

***<sup>19</sup> "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.<sup>20</sup> But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,<sup>21</sup> desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.<sup>22</sup> So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.<sup>23</sup> And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.<sup>24</sup> "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.<sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'<sup>27</sup> "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,<sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'<sup>29</sup> Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'<sup>30</sup> And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'<sup>31</sup> But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"***

As you listen to today's word, I want you to listen to the Word of God with an absolutely positive mind because some of the things that you would hear today may sound unpleasant.

You see, in life, we prepare for everything. We prepare for education; we prepare for our jobs; we go through all kinds of training; we prepare for our business; we prepare for marriage; we prepare for old age, don't we? That is why everybody looks for pensionable jobs and take life insurance. You prepare even for the day of sickness. That's why we have Medi-

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Claim. But none of these things are actually certain. It's not certain that you would get married; it's also not certain that you would fall ill; it's also not certain that you would use your pension money; it is also not certain that, after education, you will get a job.

Actually, in the Bible, there is only one thing that is certain. It says, *"It is appointed unto every man to die and then, comes judgment."* One thing that God says in His Word and we all know it – it is death. Yet, that is the least prepared objective of man. To tell you the truth, yesterday was 777 (7<sup>th</sup> July 2007). But how many of us were really prepared, if we were to die today? How many of us are prepared if you were to die today? Yet, it is as sure as that. Because we are looking at the Kingdom. You need to realize that death is certain for everybody. We will all die one day – some young, some old, some in their middle age. One way or the other, we all will die. And what matters the most in our life is that, after death, where do we reach?

The Bible talks about Heaven. Jesus preached about Heaven. The Kingdom of God is different from Heaven; the Kingdom of God is a system of government. Heaven is a place. The Kingdom of God basically talks about a system of government. Heaven is a place. Jesus, in the Bible, spoke less of Heaven and more of hell. Did you know that? If there is one topic Jesus spoke more in the Bible than hell (in the four Gospels), it is money. He is warning us to be careful.

And the second topic, if you actually study the Word of God, what it talks about most, if I'm right, is hell. He talks about Heaven 11 times and He talks about hell 54 times. If my numbering is correct, He talks and teaches more about hell. And yet, today, honestly, all these years in Church, ask yourselves – how many times in your lifetime have you heard a message about hell? Why is that we, as Pastors, don't preach more about what He (Jesus) spoke most about? We preach more about Heaven, about the Kingdom and about life on earth. But He spoke more about hell. He said, "This life here on earth is just like a few minutes." And the real thing that matters is going to start; that is eternity. And what matters is where you end up in eternity. That is why we are laying the foundation. I keep telling that you need to be very sure that you are saved. You need to know where you are going.

A long time back, there was a vacancy in a particular regiment for a Chaplain, the priest who ministers in the army. Whenever anybody applied, they asked him one question, "Do you believe in hell?" And if the Chaplain said, "No," then, they would say to him, "We don't want you." This is because if you don't believe in hell, then you are going there. "We don't want you to minister over here." You know, that is what is actually happening today. Lesser people actually believe in hell. Many seminaries and theological colleges do not believe in a literal hell anymore while Jesus believed in such a place and spoke about such a place, including big leaders. In 1999, before he passed away, John Paul II said, "Hell is just figurative. It is just a state of mind. It's not a place." Why I am saying this is that it does not matter who speaks; you need to get back into the Word and see what the Word of God says.

Also, people talk about *Luke 16* and say, "But that is just a Parable." Let me tell you – what we have read just now is not a parable. Because in parables, Jesus never names people. Tell me about any parable in which He has named a person. He doesn't name people in parables. You have the man's name being mentioned – a rich man and Lazarus. You might be wondering why is the rich man's name not mentioned, right? The reason the rich man's name is not mentioned is because Jesus Himself says, *"I know My sheep and My sheep know My voice."* So, He mentions only His sheep by name. He knows about us. But those who don't know Him, He says, "I also don't know you. I will just use you as you are – a rich man. That's all." And when you read it very carefully, it's very clear about the fact that the rich man did not end up in hell because he was rich and Lazarus did not end up in Heaven because he was poor. The rich man ended up in hell and Lazarus in Heaven because of one thing that is the last verse –

**...*'If they do not hear Moses* (that is the Torah, the first five Books) *and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded...***

Both of them made their choices when they heard the Word of God. The choices which we make here today are going to decide our destiny.

We will look at one more thing – when we look at this topic in detail, the rich man says, "Father Abraham, I have got five brothers at home. Please send Lazarus and let him go and testify." Can you imagine somebody from the dead coming and saying, "Hey, you know what? There is a real place called 'hell' and a real place called 'Heaven'. Repent"? Wouldn't we think

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that would be wonderful? But Jesus said, "No. Those who don't believe the Word will not believe even after witnessing a miracle." Miracles, signs and wonders do not necessarily bring people to repentance and into the Kingdom. Signs and wonders are only an affirmation of the Kingdom. He said, "If he has heard, he has heard Moses (the written Word) in the synagogues preaches day and night and if he did not believe the Word of God," He says, "signs and wonders are not going to make any difference." Signs and wonders are only a proof that the Kingdom is real. But to get into the Kingdom, you don't need a sign and a wonder; you need to believe. And that is what we are going to look in the Word of God today. People say (when I say 'people', I mean the theologians and intellectuals) 'hell is not a real place'. But we are going to look into the Word of God today to see that hell is a real place. And we are going to look into the Word of God to see, also, where hell is actually located. The Word of God, very clearly, tells you exactly where hell is located. There is a real physical place called 'hell'.

First, let us look at *Matthew 25:41*. You need to realize that God says that He has prepared Heaven as a place for His children. In the same way, hell is also a place that is prepared for something.

### **Matthew 25:41**

***<sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:'***

You need to realize that hell was not prepared for man originally. It was not meant for man. Hell was prepared for the devil and the angels who took his side. The second thing you need to remember is that hell was not there in the beginning. *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.* Hell was not there in the beginning; hell was created later after the rebellion of satan and one third of the angels. So, hell was prepared for them. And then, all those who take the side of the enemy also go to that place. So, hell is a place that is prepared just like Heaven is a place that is prepared. People are more willing to believe in Heaven than hell but both are real. Jesus says, "Both these places exist."

Then, turn with me to *Romans 11*. What people say is, "How can a good God send people to hell?" That is a question that is always asked. "How can a loving God send people to hell?"

### **Romans 11:22**

***<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.***

There are two sides of God. One is side – God is very good because He is a loving God. On the other side, He is very holy and He is very severe with unholiness. So, Paul says in the *Book of Romans*, "Consider both the goodness and the severity." This is because what is going to happen and is already happening is – you will start hearing false gospels which will tell you that, "At the end, God is such a loving God. He will forgive everybody and take everybody home. It does not matter how you lived, what you did and what choices you make." But there is no such gospel in the Bible. The Gospel says that the choices you make here are going to determine your destiny. It is going to decide where you are going to be. We need to get this right because the Scripture says that, "In the last days, the enemy himself will come as the angel of light." Lucifer, his original name means 'light bearer'. Jesus comes and says, "I am the light of the world." So, there is this conflict between the true light and the false light. He does not come and say, "I am the prince of darkness." He will say, "I am the light bearer." You will always go through this conflict because you will hear something that looks so close to the truth; yet is not the truth. And most of this is what you will hear from pulpits. Whenever they preach from the pulpit, and they are not speaking the truth, they will not refer to the Bible. They will start using their emotions and imaginations to say that God is so good, so kind and so loving; and they leave the rest of what Scripture actually says. Yes, He is loving but He is also holy. And because He is loving, He sent His Son. Because He is holy, He punished His Son. If He was not holy, He did not have to punish His Son. He punished His Son on our behalf because He is a loving and a holy God.

We need to get our foundations very clear because Scripture says, "Repent and believe." Repentance is moving away from all these things. The Bible gives an entire list of people, the kinds of people (mankind) who will make it into hell. It also mentions the kind of people who will make it into Heaven. What we have to do is go through them and ask God, "Do I fit into this category? And if so, God, I need Your help."

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The other misconception is a teaching they started in the middle ages called 'purgatory'. It means that souls will go to an intermediate place called 'purgatory'. There, you will be purged of your sins and finally, everybody will go to Heaven. There is no mention of that in the Bible. There is another teaching that has started in the Church saying, "Hell is temporary." But Scripture says that it is everlasting. It says, "forever and ever." There is nothing temporary about Heaven and nothing temporary about hell. Both are permanent. Nobody is going to hell for a short period of time. Towards the end, I will come to the tough part.

Let us look at the nature of hell. Turn with me to *Mark 9:43-47*. We will look at what Jesus said.

#### **Mark 9:43-48**

***<sup>43</sup> If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— <sup>44</sup> where 'Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.'***  
***<sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— <sup>46</sup> where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'***  
***<sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— <sup>48</sup> where 'Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.'***

Is this Jesus speaking? Do you see how serious He is about getting into the Kingdom? How serious we should be? Otherwise, you will end up in a place where the fire is never quenched. The fire never goes out.

#### **Matthew 13:41-42**

***<sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, <sup>42</sup> and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.***

What will be there in hell? Wailing. It is nothing compared to what we have heard on planet earth. The cries, the screams, the groans, the anger and the gnashing of teeth. But it does not last for a day or two. This will last for eternity. It never ceases. *Jude 1* – a small letter by Jude. He talks about people who will go to hell.

#### **Jude 1:13**

***<sup>13</sup> raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.***

Have you heard about a term like that before? It is darker than anything you can think about. If you read the account on *Exodus*, about darkness covering, it actually says that you could almost feel the darkness. Because in hell, there is not only an absence of light as we see it; there is also an absolute total absence of moral light. That is the darkness which is mentioned in the *Book of Jude* – a blackness of darkness. It is a place where the fire never goes out. It is also mentioned as a place where the worm never dies. It is a place where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. It is a place where the darkness is more real than the greatest darkness. We have never experienced darkness like this because there is always some light getting into our houses even when the light is put off. But here, it is talking about the blackness of darkness.

Who goes to hell? Turn with me to *2 Thessalonians 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> part of verse 7-9*.

#### **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**

***<sup>7</sup> ...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,***

Two things are mentioned there in *2 Thessalonians 1:7-9*. The first thing it mentions is about those who don't know God. That is why it is so important that you know God. It is not enough that you know about God. A lot of head-knowledge about God makes no difference; you need to know God. There is always a difference between knowing about a person and knowing a person. Knowing about a person and knowing the person are two different things. How many of us know the Prime Minister of India? Not many know. We know about him. Because if you knew the Prime Minister of India personally, you would not be sitting here in the first place. Your position in the society automatically changes because you know the

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most important person in the country.

God is talking about knowing Him and not knowing about Him. And that is what Scripture is asking, "Do you know God?" And then, after knowing God, have you obeyed the Gospel? We have been called to obedience.

Let us look at the other list we read in *Matthew 13* about those who practice lawlessness. Do not practice lawlessness because it is possible to know God and practice lawlessness. We say, "I know God but I am going to do things my way." God says, "It will be called to account one day." That is what Scripture means by *working out your salvation with fear and trembling* because we are not saved by good works but *we are saved unto good works*. That means good works have to be shown and lawlessness cannot be manifested. "If lawlessness is indeed manifested," God says, "confess, repent, get back and ask My Spirit to make you law-abiding." And we are not just talking about rules in a country; we are talking about rules of living. God's Spirit and God's grace empowers us to keep that law. We need to seek it and keep it because it is God's Word. He says, "This is what I desire from you." That is why Jesus walked without breaking the law. He walked and was found without sin. God keeps on saying, "*Be holy as I am holy. Be perfect,*" Jesus says, "*as your Father in Heaven is perfect.*" God is seeing if we are serious about Him, His power and His Kingdom, if we are working towards that and allowing Him to work in us towards that.

If, as children, God has said, "*Honor your father and your mother,*" as they grow up, if they do not honor their parents, it is lawlessness. It does not matter how many times they have taken the altar call. "*Husbands, love your wives and Christ loves the Church.*" If you don't keep that, it does not matter how terrible she is, God says, "You are practicing lawlessness." "*Wives, submit to your own husbands as unto the Lord in all things.*" If that submission is not there, God says, "It is lawlessness. You did not actually believe in My Gospel. You just stood there and accepted in your mind but you did not enter into My Kingdom and you did not allow the power of that Kingdom to work this out in you."

I am not saying we will become perfect in one day. But God is saying that this has to start working in us. It has to start showing. That is why, in the *Book of Acts*, Paul says, "*Repent and prove your repentance by your works.*" How do we know that you have repented? It starts showing as we start changing qualitatively. Otherwise, God says, "The day death knocks on your door and if you are transported to the Kingdom of God, it shows that the Kingdom has no lawlessness." How do you expect to practice lawless till the 7<sup>th</sup> of July and be law-abiding from the 8<sup>th</sup> onwards? It is not going to happen.

God is looking at us and is checking if we are trying to be law-abiding. If we fall, are we going back to God? Are we serious about God's Kingdom? Are we putting His Kingdom over and above everything else? Then, when our destiny knocks, God says, "Into My Kingdom because the Kingdom was real in you." Because in the Kingdom, there is no rebellion. Weakness is one thing; rebellion is something else. That is what God is talking about. Let us look at *1 Corinthians 6:9-10*,

#### **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**

***<sup>9</sup>Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, <sup>10</sup>nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.***

It's a list that is given over there. Now, especially, in these times, in the west, you can't put some of those things in that list because you have to be politically correct. Otherwise, the gay lobby will come and sue you. I did not write it. From the beginning till the end, God said, "If you are gay, come and be delivered." But He says that they cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. That is the truth. We are not condemning them. God loves them and He says, "Come to me and I will set you free." There are records of umpteen cases where they have come to God and have been delivered. They are happily married and settled today. Because, in Him, there is deliverance. But for deliverance, the first step that you need to accept is that this is wrong. But the enemy will come and say, "This is not wrong but an alternative lifestyle" As long as I don't accept that something is wrong, there is no hope for deliverance. But the minute I am accepting that is something is wrong, then I am opening myself for deliverance. But the enemy will always try to negate it.

You need to understand how the enemy works. The enemy has worked in some of those very liberal European countries where today, even from a pulpit, you cannot preach against homosexuality. It's banned under the law. In the world that God created, His Word cannot be spoken. In some of the European parliaments, the members of the parliament are trying

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to bring in a new legislation saying that any literature which talks negatively about homosexuality should be banned so that they can stop the printing of Bibles in those countries. We need to be grounded in the truth. We will not understand things otherwise. We might say that things like that don't happen here in India. Don't be so sure. It will only take a little time when the world is a global village (a small world) and because of technology, everything comes over so fast. God is talking about being careful about not getting carried away by what you hear in the universities. You will hear this in the Universities in Hyderabad. You don't need to venture out much. In some of the top universities in this country, some classes will teach you what I'm talking about. If you have doubts, you can refer to the papers from the universities and in their classrooms where they teach this as an alternative lifestyle. It is free and you can explore it. There is absolutely nothing wrong with it – morality, codes and rules are old-fashioned. There is a God who stands there and talks to a generation. The generation is now different; it is a young generation. Scripture talks about a generation who came and did not know God. They did not know God or understood what kind of a God He is. Then, when you face a situation like this, you will have to take a stand.

Lying is a continuous process. It never ends with one lie. Nothing ever ends with one lie. You will have to build up a foundation of lies. God says that He has called His people in the Kingdom to live by His standards. We need not be fearful about anything in life because we know who our Father is and therefore, there is no fear. We have the courage to face the consequences of the mistakes which we have made. That is the other side of being brave. Being courageous is not that we will never do anything wrong but when we do, we stand up and acknowledge and are willing to face the penalty, if necessary. That is God's kind of people. God is saying, "I am working in each one of you to bring you to be that kind of people."

You need to realize that the road to hell is a six-lane or an eight-lane highway. Jesus said that the road to Heaven is narrow. It is very narrow. It is not a highway.

Where is hell located? Let us turn to *Acts 2:31*,

**Acts 2:31**

<sup>31</sup> ***he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.***

He is saying that His soul was not left in hell. If you turn to *Matthew 12:40*,

**Matthew 12:40**

<sup>40</sup> ***For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.***

This is what Jesus said. "For 3 days and 3 nights, I will be in Hades (hell), which is in the heart of the earth and I can give you any number of references which talks about hell being in the heart of the earth." Turn to the *Book of Amos 9*.

**Amos 9:2**

<sup>2</sup> ***"Though they dig into hell...***

Where do you dig? Do you dig up or dig down? There are at least 100 to 200 references in the Bible to make it very clear that hell is somewhere inside the core of the earth. Here is an incident in the Bible, in the *Book of Numbers 16*, where we have the first set of people taken alive into hell – Korah and the people who followed him into rebellion. The earth opened and the whole lot was taken. Thousands and thousands of years before modern science discovered that the crush beneath the center of the earth is hot, molten and fiery, it was written in the Word of God that it is so.

For the past one week, I have been working on hell. It's really been hell working on hell because it is not pleasant at all. I have not only been looking into the Bible; I have also been looking into all secular and scientific information about hell and from the middle ages onwards, there are recorded manuscripts talking about when volcanoes have erupted and when they die down, the lava is still there in the crater; the explorers who went to those craters heard screams coming from beneath. It has been written and recorded down till the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the bottom of the sea, there are vents and through those vents, lava and fire comes out and at that vent, when the ocean scopes are sent, they have found worms which live in that

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fire and the scientific name for that is *Riftia pachyptila*. Because they are found in the rift, the worm shall not die. It is a real place.

There was an incident that took place during the age of the Soviet Union. In Siberia, as they were digging down the ice, they hit the ocean floor. They put in a microphone to see whether they could record the sounds of the plates moving. These people were all communists and atheists. The sound they got was terrifying because in that recording, when they found out what they got, it was screams and wails of people. These are screams and wailings. It's real because Jesus does not lie. There is a real place called 'hell' and a real place called 'heaven'. That is why Jesus spoke more about hell. Do you know why? Because He knew what kind of a place it is.

Turn with me to *Isaiah 14:9*. It talks about the king of Babylon and it talks about satan also.

**Isaiah 14:9-11**

***<sup>9</sup> "Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations. <sup>10</sup> They all shall speak and say to you: 'Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us? <sup>11</sup> Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, And worms cover you.'***

Sheol, Hades, Gehena and Tartarus are the four words which are used in the Bible to describe hell. This portion talks about the king of Babylon who was such a mighty and powerful king. He had defeated so many kings and killed them. Now, he himself is dead and as he goes to hell, the other kings are waiting for him to come and are saying, "Come. You were so great and pompous. Now, you also have become like us. We have spread a carpet of maggots for you, a carpet of worms. Come and be welcomed." That is what the passage is talking about. That is why, God was more concerned about helping people out of hell because He knew what kind of a place that was.

Sometime back, a lady called Elan was driving. She ran into a terrible automobile accident where her feet were caught. They could not cut her out and her car was on fire. The police tried and could not rescue her. She said, "Don't leave me," but she was burnt to death. The policeman who tried helping her also was very badly burned in his hands and his upper body. And on September 11<sup>th</sup> also, when those Twin Towers came down, a lot of people died. Those were the firemen. Are you getting what I'm trying to tell you? In His Father's love and attempt to save us from hell, He's got burn marks on His hands and His feet. It is so that we do not get burnt that He went through hell.

Scripture actually records that Jesus, after He died, went to hell. He was in hell for 3 days and then, He took those in Paradise (those days, what we read as 'Abraham's bosom' were in the other part of hell called 'paradise' where the righteous souls went), from captivity into Heaven. So, Paradise is empty today. People believe that the Garden of Eden was actually transformed to Paradise. The other name given was 'Abraham's Bosom'. That is where Lazarus went. The rich man is on the other side (hell).

The enemy had power over death; Jesus broke the power of death on the Cross. He has the keys now because *He has taken the captivity captive*. That is what is mentioned in the *Book of Ephesians* that *'He took the captivity captive'*. Those people were captive with the enemy. He could not torture them but he had power over death. Death is broken; Jesus goes and takes them all to Heaven. So, today, if a righteous person dies and goes to Heaven, he does not go to Paradise. That is why when Stephen dies, he says, *"I see the Heaven open."* But when the thief on the other side of Jesus, when he believes in Jesus, Jesus tells him that, *"You shall be with Me, today, in Paradise."* He does not say, *"You shall be with Me in Heaven."* He is taken to Paradise and then, taken to Heaven 3 days later.

You need to study Scripture carefully to see that these are real places which Jesus talked about. But what God is asking us today is – what are we doing about it? If this is real and if this is where humanity is headed towards, what is that moves us?

It is interesting that somebody did a study on the prayers of Christians. He found 90% of people's prayers are for the needs of the self, 9% are the needs of loved ones and friends, 1% are for the salvation of souls. The *Book of Jeremiah* actually talks about where God says, *"I am amazed! The harvest is over; the season is over but where are the people?"* Do you know why God is amazed? Because God knows that prayer works but wonders why people are not praying for the salvation of others.

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God knows that healing, deliverance and salvation is found in His House but wonders why people are not inviting others to Church. Thus, He is amazed. That is what they are saying, "The harvest is over but we are still in prison." The question God is asking us today is: apart from going to hell, do you want to take somebody else along with you?

What I want to tell the Church today is – maybe you are here today in Church and you are saved; but some point in time, maybe, you were responsible for leading a person into sin. You got out of it and you walked free but what about the other person? Maybe, when you were not in the Lord, you got along with a few friends and invited everybody to drink. They started off with you. You found the Lord, you stopped drinking and you walked away but they are drunkards today. You can list categories of where others have fallen because of us. We are safe in the house of the Lord but God is asking us, "Do you hear those cries?" Because the rich man could see Lazarus. I do not know if this will happen but will God show us, one day, "You are seated with Me today but do you know what happened those set of people over there, your classmates? They would have found Me but they did not get a chance. You know why? Because you led them into this. Then, you forget them once you were on the safe shore." Have you forgotten them? Don't tell me that there is nobody here who is not responsible for another brother or another man or woman or boy or girl falling. What about them? What are we doing about them? Because His heart is about people. I know we pray; I know miracles happen but the more you get to know God, you will realize – there is one thing up over every other need of ours that is at the top of His list – God cries for people! He has done all that can be done. The Gospel has been preached; His Son came and died; salvation is available through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. If you want to try through your works, God says, "You will end up at the wrong place because you will be judged for your sins. But if you come through My Son, then He takes care of your sins and I consider you righteous." But what are we doing about it? That is what God is saying. Some people need to repent and enter into the Kingdom of God. Some in the kingdom need to repent because they have put themselves first and their lives first and not the heart of the Father.

There is a strange person in the Bible called Ittai. I'm not sure how many of you remember of reading about a person called Ittai. When David ran away because of his son's rebellion, Ittai also followed him. Ittai was not a Jew but he was loyal to king David. King David said, "Go back to your place. Why are you following me? There is no future in following me. I have lost my throne, lost my kingdom; you also might get killed along with me. So, just leave me." Ittai replies something. He says, "Where you go, I go. If you die, I die along with you. My life is with you." Do we understand the heartbeat of the Father? If you are born-again and are in the Kingdom, please understand that His heart beats for people and not for things. Because if you read the same chapter, *Luke 16*, where we read about Lazarus, you need to see the order which God puts over there. Jesus was first speaking about money and He was saying, "*No one can serve two masters. Either you will serve Me or you will serve money.*" Everything that you are looking for in this life is associated with money. I pray and I say that success and prosperity in life should come without us seeking for it but only because we are seeking for God. Jesus said, "If you seek after these things, you are serving that and one day, that will judge you." Immediately, after that, He talks about the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man had riches; riches were given and we were meant to be stewards of the riches. The rich man went to hell, not because he was rich; but because of the wrong stewardship of his riches. Lazarus went to Heaven not because he was poor for there is nothing great about poverty either; but because he listened to the Word.

Today, God is asking us something; we have been hearing the Word for such a long time and Heaven is very serious. We talk about the days, 777, we see the signs and the days and we know that the end is here. Everything around is almost set in place for the end to come. If the end comes, which side will we be caught on? If we are on the right side, will we look at His face? Scripture also says that many who are on the ride side and make it to Heaven will be so ashamed to look at His face. They know that they just made it escaping through the flames. "The flames of hell stung your hair but it did not burn your flesh. You just made it," Scripture talks about that. "Many," Scripture says, "will just make it there."

There are two books that I would ask you to read; one is a secular book and the other is written by somebody who is a believer. One is written by Dr. Rollings; He was a cardiologist, one of the top cardiologists in the US. He was an internal medical cardio vascular surgeon. The other is someone called Mary Baxter. Mary Baxter has written a book called 'The Divine Revelation of Hell'. She was taken in the spirit by the Lord, was shown the whole hell and told, "You write back, so that my children can get saved." Dr. Rollings is a cardio vascular surgeon who works in the Emergency Department where people come at the last breath and are dying. This man, who was an atheist, believed because he saw; not tens or hundreds; but thousands of cases and in one particular case, he says that a man was 'clinically dead'. This is the term used in medicine. The man was resuscitated back to life. There was sheer agony on the man's face and he was screaming. He



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said, "I am burning! I am in hell. Help me!" This man said, "What the heck is happening over there?" He said, "Just pray, doctor! Help me out of it!" The doctor said, "Shut up! I don't know what you are talking about. Pray? What is happening to you?" The man said, "Don't you see it? I am in hell! I am burning". The nurses sitting over there said, "Why don't you just pray for him? He is a patient. Why don't you pray?" He had gone to Church when he was young. He did not believe anymore. So he thought, "If the patient needs that," he said, "okay. Believe in the Son of God, Jesus. Repeat after me. Believe in the Son of God, Jesus." And he says, "The fear went; the eyes became normal." He came back and said, "Thank you, doctor. You saved me." In the hundreds and hundreds of cases of near death experiences, he says, "Both sides are there – those who made it to Heaven and came back; and many who had an experience of hell and were terrified after their experience." Because of that experience, that man started to believe. He is not fully a believer still today, if I am right, but he says, "I am not sure about Heaven but I am absolutely sure about hell." Because he said, "I have seen it on my table. Day after day, I have seen people who have gone and just come back. They scream in agony and fear that there is such a real place." And it is from such a real place that Jesus came to save us.

Salvation is so simple. God says, "Repent and believe." I am not giving an altar call today but I thought, today, the Lord is saying, "Not yet." As you go back home, think about it. There is a real place. Don't let anyone fool you saying that there is no such place. There is a real place called 'Heaven' and there is a real place called 'hell'. When you get back tonight and you start praying, start praying for the salvation of those whom you know that do not know Jesus first. Amen? This should be done over and above anything else. Because if you read *The Divine Revelation of Hell*, you will not wish even for your worst enemy to end up over there. There is a special place, according to that book, reserved in hell for people in ministry who fooled their congregation. They got under pressure of the secular world and watered down God's Word. Many of their congregation ended up there as well. These priests and pastors have ended up in a much worse place. There are worse places in hell also. There are categories. They have ended up in those places because God said, "You knew and you didn't believe." Hell is real. This is supposed to be a very positive message and not negative. It's not negative at all because He spoke more about hell than He spoke about Heaven. "*Eye hasn't seen, nor ear heard what God has prepared for those He loves.*" (1 Corinthians 2:9) But God has written very clearly about what is there for those who do not love God.

Will you start praying from today? Will you start praying seriously for your friends? Young guys? You need to pray for your friends. For who else will, if you don't? And if you don't pray, how will they get saved? And how will they get saved if you don't call them to Church? You don't worry about them. Call them. They will come. They will sit; they will laugh but eventually, they will get saved.

I got saved because one young guy, when I was in college, followed me. He wouldn't let go of me. We used to hide in the corridor and under the wash basin from that fellow saying, "That guy is coming. He would preach the Gospel to you. Hide from him." He always walked around with his Bible. And you know, when he was coming, people would hide. When there's a sound of doors being locked, everyone knew Verghese Nainan is walking down the corridor. But one day, at God's appointed time, he came and knocked on my door in the hostel. It was 11 in the night. I opened and there he stood. By God's grace, my room had only one door and the window had bars. I couldn't escape. So, he said, "Can I come in?" I said, "Please." "James, I want to share something with you." I stood there, stiff. "Can we sit?" I said, "Sit." Then, he explained to me all of this. I didn't understand anything. Then, he said one thing, "Will you pray with me?" Like a very good Catholic, I said, "Of course, I will." "Come," he said, "kneel down with me and repeat after me." I didn't know what I was getting myself into. I repeated after him, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart," and here I stand today. You know why? Because that guy did not let go of me. It is as simple as that. I repeat, "Lord, I don't understand everything he says but Lord, I repent. Lord, come into my heart." And my life changed.

But it didn't stop there. The next day, he came and said, "You accepted Jesus yesterday. There is a Bible study today. Why don't you come?" You couldn't escape because yesterday, you accepted. So, I went for the Bible study. One week later, they said, "You have attended the Bible study for one week. So, tomorrow, you preach." And the only portion in the Bible I knew was from *John 3:3* – Jesus and Nicodemus. So, my first sermon in 1984 was from *John 3* and I've been preaching for the past 23 years after that. I've never stopped.

I am telling you; you need to go after your guys. Don't let go. They will say all kinds of things but if you know there's a real place called 'hell', you wouldn't want anybody to go over there. You wouldn't let go of people. You would keep following them. You will go through a lot of shame and a lot of rejection but you are willing to take it for His sake. There are times

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when we just sat there outside of the corridor of houses in the army, just like an orderly because the husband who believes would invite us and the wife doesn't want to let you in because she says, "We are Hindus." And you are just sitting over there. I can hear the husband, who has believed, say, "Is that Pastor James who has come?" She says, "Nahin (no)." And you would refuse to go; you would sit there for 30 minutes, 45 minutes and you will like, "Why the heck should I sit over here? Let me go." But you sit there because you can't go. Then, one hour later, when this lady realized that this man won't go, she said, "Come in." Then, you go there, you sit with that man, share the Gospel and he receives it. I have heard of experiences of people who, every time when they opened the gate, the people inside locked their doors. And then, they would look through the place in the curtain, laugh at them and refuse to open the door. But these people, because of the love of God, kept on going week after week and they kept on knocking. And one day, they finally say, "Okay." They opened the door and said, "You come in. What do you have to say?" And he talked about Jesus. And they received. It might have taken 6 weeks, 10 weeks, 6 months and in some cases, they didn't let you in.

I'm telling you, Heaven may not bring many people into the Kingdom of God but when you what hell is, you will say, "My God, I don't want anybody going over there." Because if you keep preaching about Heaven, that will not make you go share with somebody else. But if you really have an experience about what hell is really like, you will decide, "I better start evangelizing; I better start witnessing." This is because you never know when you will die. Every minute, 3000 people die on planet earth. Every minute. So, you can imagine, by the end of the day, how many have gone and we do not know how many have heard and how many were saved. And it is left to us.

I keep telling this two little ones, when they pray, pray for your friends. "Pray for your friends every day. Keep praying for your friends so that they get saved." They may not understand it. One day, as he was travelling in an auto, when he was in LKG (Lower Kindergarten), they were all going to school, his friend Sai asked him, "Andrew, when you become big, what are you going to be?" He said, "I'm going to be a Pastor." The other fellow said, "Oh, you're going to be a blaster?" Like the rockers. So, they thought he was going to be a blaster but it doesn't matter because soon, they will get to know what a Pastor is. And they will straight away tell their friends, "Better believe or you will be left behind." They will get into the auto and tell all their Hindu friends, "Believe in Jesus or you will be all left behind." Let them hear. They may get angry a bit but that's the truth. Truth makes people mad but better be mad than burn.

Our job is to just keep on saying it. Because, you know what? The Day is getting closer and closer. God says "*His Spirit is going to fall on all flesh before the end,*" and we need to get people in. Not because we are trying to increase the number of people in our religion or Church or anything; but because we don't want anybody to perish. And the Book of Peter says, "God doesn't want anybody to perish." That's His desire. And we are His hands and feet on planet earth. Shall we pray? Amen? Shall we be serious about this?

#### **Closing Prayer:**

*Father, we thank You; we praise You, God, because we are safe in Your house, O God. We are safe in Your house. But there are many outside, O God, who have not got into Your Kingdom because every Word in Your Book is true and it will come to pass. Noah waited 120 years but one day, judgment came and only eight people were saved. One day, judgement came in Sodom and Gomorrah. Only one person and his two daughters were saved. And You also said, 'One Day, judgment will come on earth'. You have entrusted that job into our hands. You have said, "Go to the ends of the nations, preach the Gospel, make disciples of all nations and then, the end will come." Father, I pray, today, that into the heart of each one of the children sitting in this room today, You will put that passion. You will put that heart, O God, to bring their families, to bring their friends in. Father, we can only speak but You are the One who convicts. It's Your work to change people. Our work is to testify but You cannot change unless we testify. So, I pray, Father, that You will give each one here the courage to testify, the courage to witness, so that, O God, they might bring the harvest into Your Kingdom. Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord. Thank You. And if there is still anybody in this room who doesn't know You, I pray, Father, Your Spirit will continue to speak to them. Continue to minister to them. Thank You, Lord. Thank You. And as Your children go into a new week, may Your presence go with them, empowering and strengthening them. Let there not be in any one of them the spirit of fear; but just the spirit of love and of a sound mind. And in love, Lord, let them share Your Word to others. Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord. Thank You. We praise You; we worship You, God. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*

#### **Benediction:**

*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and and with each one*

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*of us, Amen.*