

The Value of Your Soul – Do not gamble with your soul

Jesus said that your soul is worth more than the rest of the world put together. He asked “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Similarly in Matthew 16:26 Jesus asked the same question: “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

It is impossible for us to grasp what is meant by “the whole world”. For this is not only the physical world or the geographical world. It includes the business world, the scientific world, the intellectual world and the world of power and fame. Jesus said that the soul is worth more than all the world.

Why is your soul so valuable?

First, the value of your soul is measured by its eternal quality. It will never die. You are going to live forever either in Heaven or in hell. Your body will die, but your soul, the part of you that is made in the image of God will never die. Your soul – your spirit – will live forever. We will go into detail between the commonality and differences of soul and spirit at the end. For now we will focus on the value of your soul.

Many people have knowledge and understanding but they don't have wisdom. The Bible says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” (Proverbs 9:10). A great British historian said some years ago, “Man by his knowledge has brought himself to total annihilation.” Knowledge without God and without wisdom is very dangerous. That's one of the problems in the world today. We have accumulated a lot of knowledge, we have a lot of learning, but the Bible says you can be “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Timothy 3:7). We lack the wisdom to use our knowledge.

Your soul is that part of you that has judgment. It makes decisions – moral decisions – about what is good and what is bad. Your soul also involves your will. Your will chooses or rejects things that are brought before it. Your soul is that part of you that has emotion, like love, hate and fear. It has memory – the mental capacity of storing up knowledge of ideas and events. There is something deep inside us that is beyond science – medical science – to understand. The Bible calls it soul or spirit (more explanation later).

We tend to put all of our emphasis on the physical body with its pleasures and its physical appetites. But the soul also has appetites. The soul longs for God. Deep down inside every person's heart is a cry for something, but he does not quite know what it is.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NASB) "God has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end."

Amplified Bible (AMP) "God has made everything beautiful and appropriate in its time. He has also planted eternity (a sense of divine purpose) in the human heart (a mysterious longing which nothing under the sun can satisfy, except God) – yet man cannot find out (comprehend, grasp) what God has done (His overall plan) from the beginning to the end."

Second, the value of your soul is measured by the devil's interest in it. Jesus believed in the existence of devil. He said the devil is the prince of this world or the ruler of the world. (John 14:30). He is the god of this age. The devil is greatly at work in our world, and he is after our souls.

God created a perfect world. Man is the crown jewel of His creation. He and man were friends. God never meant that there would be suffering and war and death. But Satan came. He was a mighty angel, possibly the greatest of all of God's created beings and he decided to rebel against God.

When God created the earth, He put humans in charge of the earth, and He gave us freedom of choice. God said to man: "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die surely." (Genesis 2:16-17). God was testing man.

But the devil told man, "God does not mean what He says. You are not going to die. If you eat of the fruit of that tree, you shall be as great as God." (Genesis 3:4-6). So Eve ate the fruit first, and then Adam, her husband, ate it too. And that was the first rebellion by people against God. God had to keep His word for He would not be a just God. He had said, "If you eat the fruit of that tree, you will suffer and die." Man ate of the tree, and since then he has been suffering and dying.

But God had a plan – a marvelous plan of salvation. God said, "In spite of their rebellion, I am going to save the human race. I am going to send my Son to earth." And every step of the way, the devil tried to kill God's Son, started when He was a baby. Finally when God's Son was on the cross, it looked as if the devil had won a great victory. But instead, the devil lost his greatest battle. When Jesus dies, the devil suffered a mighty defeat, because on the third day, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. The Bible says Jesus has "the keys of Hades and Death". (Revelation 1:18). Christ is alive, and He is coming back to this earth again! (we will talk about God's marvelous plan of salvation later)

God is building His Kingdom on earth, but the devil is also building his. Even though Satan is a defeated foe, he is still working hard to deceive

anyone and everyone to follow him. In the Gospel according to Matthew 13:19, Jesus said, “When anyone hears the Word (of God) of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one (the devil) comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. Jesus pictured Satan as an enemy battling and bidding for the souls of people.

Third, the value of your soul is measured by God’ concern for saving your soul. God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9). “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners (His enemies) Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). God sees your soul as the most valuable thing in the world – so valuable that He sent His only Son to the cross to suffer the most cruel form of death and die, so that your soul may be saved. And if you were the only person in the whole universe, Christ would have died for you.

Fourth, the value of your soul is measured by the severity of its loss. It is terrible when a person loses his health, or his wealth, or his friends, or his family members, or worse still, his character. But what about the loss of a soul?

As fallen, sinful human beings, the nature of God is a difficult concept to us to grasp. That was the reason we need to spend time to learn the Attributes of God to gain better understanding of the nature of God. (we will do that later). Human beings tend to or prefer to see God as a kind, merciful Being whose love for us overrides and overshadow all His other attributes. Of course, God is loving, kind and merciful, but He is first and foremost a holy, righteous and just God. So Holy is He that He cannot tolerate sin. He is a God whose anger burns against the wicked and disobedient (Isaiah 5:25; Hosea 8:5; Zechariah 10:3).

He is not only a loving God – He is love itself! But the Bible also tells us He hates all manner of sin (Proverbs 6:16-19). And while He is merciful, there is limit to His mercy. “Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.” (Isaiah 55:6-7)

Humanity is corrupted by sin, and that sin is always directly against God Himself. When King David sinned by committing adultery with Bethsheba and having her husband Uriah murdered, he responded with an interesting prayer “Against you, You alone, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight.” (Psalm 51:4). Since David had sinned against Bethsheba and Uriah, how could he claim to have only sinned against God? David understood that all sin is ultimately against God. God is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, eternal and infinite (Psalm 90:2) “From everlasting to everlasting you are God!”

As a result, all sin require an eternal punishment. God’s holy, perfect, and infinite character has been offended by our sin. Although to our finite mind our sin is limited in time, but to God – who is outside of time – the sin He hates goes on and on. Our sin is eternal before Him and must be eternally punished in order to satisfy His Holiness and His justice.

No one understands this better than someone already in hell. A perfect example is the story of the rich man and Lazarus as told by Jesus Himself in Luke chapter 16. Both the rich man and poor Lazarus died, and the rich man went to hell while Lazarus went to paradise. Only Jesus Christ could have told such a story. The rich man was aware that his sins were committed during his life time. But interestingly, he never says “How did I end up here?” That question is never asked in hell. He does not say “Did I really deserve this eternal hell? Don’t you think this

is a little extreme? He only asks that someone go to his brothers who are still alive and warn them against their destination.

Like the rich man, every sinner in hell has a full realization that he deserves to be there. Each sinner in hell has a fully informed, acutely aware, and sensitive conscience which, in hell, becomes his own tormentor. This is the experience of torture in hell – a person fully aware of his or her sin with relentlessly, accusing conscience, without relief even for a moment. The guilt of sin will produce shame, regret and everlasting self-hatred.

The rich man knew that eternal punishment for a lifetime of sins – unrepented sins – willful sins – is justified and deserved. He was fully convinced that God is loving, merciful but holy, righteous and just. That is why he never protested or questioned being in hell.

The realities of eternal damnation, eternal hell, and eternal punishment are frightening and disturbing. But it is good that we might, indeed, be terrified. While this may sound grim, there is good news. John 3:16 and 2 Peter 3:9 tells us God loves us and wants us to be saved from the eternal hell. But because God is also just and righteous and holy, He cannot allow our sins to go unpunished. Someone has to pay for it. In His great mercy and love and grace, God provided His own payment for our sin. He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to come to earth, to live a sinless life, and to pay the penalty for our sins by dying on the cross for us.

Jesus' death on the cross was an infinite death because He is the infinite God/man, paying our infinite sin debt, so that we would not have to pay in hell for eternity. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

If we confess our sin and place our faith in Jesus Christ, asking for God's forgiveness based on Christ's sacrifice, we are saved, forgiven, cleansed,

and promised an eternal home in heaven and spend eternity in God's presence. God loved us so much that He provided the means for our salvation, but if we reject His gift of eternal life, we will face the eternal consequence of that decision, alone.

Many people ask or question "Why should this horrible doctrine of hell, which seems irrelevant to us in this modern scientific age, be brought to our attention?-

First, we should shun hell because of God's warning concerning it. God does not waste time in idle chatter. He makes every word counts and we do well to heed His tender, loving warnings.

John 17:17 Jesus said "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy Word is truth"

Psalms 119:89 "Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven."

Psalms 119:160 "The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting."

2 Peter 2:4 "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; 2:5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. 2:9 The LORD knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."

Second, we should shun hell because of God's estimate and Christ's estimate of it. Jesus it "everlasting punishment". He called it "outer darkness" where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 25:46; Matthew 22:13; Matthew 8:12)

He – Jesus – called it “a furnace of fire”, “A place prepared for the devil and his angels”. Jesus called it a place “Where their worm die not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Jesus told us that hell is a place where we have consciousness and the use of our faculties. In the story of Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31), Christ said the rich man lifted up his eyes – he had vision. He was in agony – being in torment. He had the faculty of speech; he cried and said “Father Abraham, have mercy on me.” (Luke 16:24). He had memories, he said “I have five brothers...please testify to them, lest they come to this place of torment.” (Luke 16:28). These are Jesus’ word, not mine. No one should attempt to explain them away.

Jesus told us to flee from hell, to pluck out an sinful offending eye, if need be. “It is better” He said “for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having both eyes to be carried into hell fire.” (Mark 9:47)

Jesus used every descriptive word at His command to warn people to flee the wrath of God that will fall upon sinner who reject God’s plan of Salvation.

Third, we should shun hell because of what it cost God to save us from it. Heaven would not have sacrificed her Royal Prince, God would not have given His only Son and Jesus Christ would not have willingly died on the cross, if the penalty facing mankind had been a light one. God so loved us that He gave His only Son to come to earth to die in our place on the cross in order to save us from the judgment of our sin.

Finally, we should shun hell because God did not create man for hell. Hell was created primarily for the devil and all his fallen angels. But you insist on rejecting Christ and God’s marvelous plan of Salvation then you are destined to spend eternity with the devil and his angels.

According to Billy Graham, “Essentially and basically hell is separation from God and all His goodness. It is “the second death”, which is described as banishment from the presence of God and all this is joyous, good, righteous and happy.”

Dr. R.C. Sproul writes “A breath of relief is usually heard when someone declares “Hell is a symbol for separation from God.” To be separated from God for eternity is no great threat to the impenitent person (atheists). The ungodly want nothing more than to be separated from God. Their problem in hell will not be separation from God; it will be the presence of God that will torment them. In hell, God will be present in the fullness of His Divine wrath. He will be there to exercise His just perfect punishment of the damned. They will know Him as an all-consuming fire. (R.C. Sproul, Essential Truths of the Christian Faith p. 286). Yes, hell is separation from the love, mercy, and grace of God but the full weight of God’s wrath, anger and justice will be poured out on the sinners as all-consuming fire forever and ever.

The consequence of rejecting God’s marvelous plan of salvation – Hell!

Salvation belongs to God alone. Yet the most unpopular subject to talk about is the consequence of rejecting this marvelous plan of salvation which is hell. We cannot ignore it, even though it makes people uncomfortable. But in our modern churches, the doctrine of hell is not only unpopular, it is almost forgotten. Because it has not been taught, few people seem to believe in hell anymore. Yet as I read the New Testament, I find again and again direct references to this subject, and most of them are made by our LORD Jesus Christ Himself. Perhaps because some people associate hell with a kind of outmoded theology in which the devil is pictured as a fire-engine-red creature, with a fork, tail, split hoofs and horns, we cannot imagine anyone taking the subject

seriously. But the same Bible that tells us about the Love of God and the beauties of Heaven also tells us about the judgment of Hell.

There is only one person who was ever qualified to speak authoritatively of the future life, and that is our LORD Jesus Christ. Read in the New Testament some of the statements that Christ make about this place called hell.

Matthew 10:28 “And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him (God) who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Matthew 25:41 “Then He will also say to those of His left, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Matthew 5:22 “Whoever shall say to his brother “Raca – empty head” shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say “you fool” shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.”

There are many similar utterances which fell from the lips of our LORD in which He emphasized the fact that people should avoid hell at all cost.

No one can read the Bible without recognizing that “the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23). No one can read the Bible casually without realizing that there is a day of reckoning and judgment coming. No one can read the Bible without recognizing that God is holy and just. Sin and evil and wickedness need to be punished in a place call hell.

We fashion our earthly hells out of greed, passions, envy, anger, selfishness, pride and many other sins that flood into our lives. This world and our lives are filled with plenty of material for the fabrication of a hell on earth, and many of us have made one from which we cannot extricate ourselves.

However, the Bible indicates not only that there can be hell of our own making on earth, but that there is an eternal hell in the future, toward which everyone who reject Christ's salvation is going.

We will summarize Jesus's teaching related to hell with five words: Reality, Rebellion, Regret, Relentlessness and Reconciliation.

(1) Reality – Jesus taught that hell is a real place where majority of the human beings will spend eternity.

Matthew 23:23 “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell?”

Mark 9:43 “And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,” ⁴⁴ where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” 9:47 “And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of god with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell.”

In Jesus' teaching, hell is not figurative or symbolic, like most of the liberal theologians try to tell us. It is a real place in which real torment take place (fire). Jesus portrayed what hell is like with vivid imagery such as fire and darkness.

Matthew 8:10 “When Jesus heard the faith of the Centurion, He marveled and said to those who were following. “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. ¹¹ And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; ¹² but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

(2) Rebellion – According to Jesus, hell is a place for those who reject God, reject the perfect plan of salvation, rebelling against His

Kingship, and refusing His grace and His mercy. Jesus' parables consistently portray people rejecting God's invitation to fellowship, and the only alternative to eternal fellowship with God is an eternity separation from God in hell (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24)

Sin is direct rebellion against the Almighty God, and hell is the just punishment for sin (Matthew 5:22). The devil and his minions are the original rebels against God and they will suffer eternally in hell, which has been prepared for them by God. (Matthew 25:41)

(3)Regret – Jesus does not portray hell as a pleasant place or even a neutral place or state. To the contrary, it is a place of torment.

Mark 9:43 “And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands to go into hell; into the unquenchable fire.⁴⁴ (where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched)⁴⁵ “And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame; than having your two feet, to be cast into hell.⁴⁶ (where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched)⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell.⁴⁸ where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.⁴⁹ For everyone will be salted with fire.”

As the dark place outside of God's Kingdom of light, hell is full of pain, torment and regret. “There will be constant weeping gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; Luke 13:28). Below are some things to consider taken from a commentary on hell:

1. The remorse and the despair in seeing the righteous, the godly, whom they have despised in earth, now clothed with immortality and living in all the bliss of God. (All of this list will be constant

reminders because those in hell can see the godly in heaven – Luke 16)

2. An abhorrence of the very evil that has damned their soul and put them in torment forever.
 3. An eternal desire for the good and righteous that would have freed them from torment, but now unreachable.
 4. Memories of lost opportunities in life that could have caused them to be with the redeemed and be saved. Memories flooding their minds about all the times they rejected Christ when appeals were made to them for salvation by the Holy Spirit.
 5. Intense regret over all the deeds that were committed that can never be recalled or cleansed from their souls.
 6. An absolute hopelessness of escape from eternal misery or an alleviation from the least degree of suffering.
 7. An eternal separation from the loved ones or from the redeemed which they can actually see beyond an impassable gulf between heaven and hell which they see from their own position in hell.
 8. An intense grief and regret over their own bad example in life that has caused friends, family members and even their own children to be damned.
 9. An ever deepening remorse for not listening to the Word of God and for not spending their time, talent, and finances to propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ so many others could escape hell's torment.
 10. A constant presence of fire and brimstone where there is an eternal gnashing of teeth.
- (4) Relentlessness – Based on Jesus' teaching, hell is not temporary, but eternal. Those who suffer in hell will suffer and torment forever. Mark 9:48 "the fire never goes out." Matthew 25:41 "Then He (God) will also say to those on His left. "Depart from Me,

accused ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.” 25:46 “And these (accursed ones) will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Luke 16:19-31 There is no exit from hell, and no respite from it or comfort in it.

(5)Reconciliation – Thank God and praise His Holy Name, there is one way to escape hell before entering it. God offers us reconciliation with Him, so that we never have to experience hell. (we will study the PLAN of Salvation of God in more detail later). That reconciliation was made possible through a great sacrificial price – the shed-blood, the death and resurrection of His son – Jesus Christ. Jesus is the One who warned us about hell and is the Only One who saves us from hell. Through faith in Jesus Christ, anyone can be reconciled to God, apart from personal merit or virtue (works). Jesus gives the promise “Very truly I tell you, **whoever hears my word and believe Him (God the Father) who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but crossed over from death to life.**” (John 5:24)

Please do not be fooled by the devil’s ideas about hell. He is using prominent theologian, preacher, Christians to spread his diluted ideas of hell. He knows he is going there and wants to take as many with him as he can. He is forever, and hell is a very terrible place. If you were bothered by all I said about hell, ask yourself a couple of question:

- (1)Doesn’t true love warn someone when their house is on fire, is it any less loving to warn some one about the eternal state of those who reject Jesus’ Kingship?
- (2)When was the last time you actually heard a powerful message about a warning of hell?

Our LORD Jesus spoke more on hell than He did on heaven. What are you doing with your soul? Are you gambling with your soul, taking a chance with it?

I am asking you to make sure of your relationship with Jesus Christ. Christ demands more than just church going, more than just baptism, more than just being good and nice. He demands your total surrender – the surrender of your mind, your heart, your body, your soul, every part of you – to the LORDSHIP of CHRIST. If you have a doubt in your heart that you have totally surrendered to Christ, do it now. Make sure your salvation is secured in Christ.

Repent of your sins. Confess your sins, acknowledge them and turn from them. Receive Jesus Christ into your heart by faith, making a total commitment to Him, and to Him alone.

Sinner's Prayer

“Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sin.

I want to turn from my sin. Please forgive me.

I believe Jesus Christ Your Son.

I believe He died on the cross for my sin and You raised Him to life.

I want Him to come into my heart and take control of my life.

I want to trust Jesus as my Savior and follow Him as my LORD from this day forward.

In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.”

First, confess your sin and turn away from it.

Second, receive Jesus Christ as your LORD and Savior, putting your faith in Him alone to save you. Do that right now.