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Audio series by David H. McKinley are available through the Prestonwood Bookstore. Listen online at [www.prestonwood.org](http://www.prestonwood.org).



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# The Truth About What Lies Beneath

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Sermon Transcript  
Prestonwood Baptist Church

DAVID H. MCKINLEY

## The Truth About What Lies Beneath

Luke 16:19-31

On a hot July Sunday morning in Enfield, Connecticut, a 37-year-old preacher turned the worn pages of his Bible to the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy and read a brief portion of Scripture.

*...in due time their foot will slip...* (Deuteronomy 32:35a NIV)

This passage makes reference to the nation of Israel. God repeatedly displayed His grace and mercy through provisions for His people, but they would not respond, obey, or listen due the hardness of their hearts.

In dramatic oratory, the Connecticut preacher proclaimed the coming judgment of God,

“There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell’s wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor anything to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up. ... There are the black clouds of God’s wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you.”

The message ignited a movement that spread throughout the colonies and ultimately etched the preacher’s name into the pages of American history. The pastor? Jonathan Edwards. The day? July 8, 1741. The sermon? *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.

If you heard Jonathan Edwards’ monologue in a movie preview, you might think, “*That’s not a movie I want to see.*” However, in 1741, God used this message to spark the Great Awakening as well as fuel the beginnings of the American Revolution.

death to life. Let Jesus know of your desire to experience the life only He can give.

- Thank God for His goodness and love made possible through the work of Jesus Christ for you.

### **Once you have prayed and asked Jesus to be your Savior, what should you do now?**

- Tell another Christian about your decision—someone who has also asked Jesus to be their Savior. It may be a friend, a family member or a minister.
- Spend some time every day talking to God. In your own words, tell God about everything on your mind. Remember, your experience is not new to Him. He loves you, and He will walk this journey with you. He understands everything that affects your life.
- Learn more about Jesus: What did He say? What instructions did He give? The Bible is divided into two sections: Old Testament and New Testament. Start by reading the New Testament and, in particular, the fourth book in the New Testament, John (sometimes referred to as the Gospel of John). You can locate the page number from the table of contents. There are several translations of the Bible, and an assistant at one of the Christian bookstores can help you find a translation that is easily readable.
- Find a church where the Bible is clearly explained, and people like you give thanks to God for what He has done for them. You are always welcome at Prestonwood. However, if you prefer, we can recommend a church for you to consider closer to your home in the Dallas/Fort Worth area or anywhere in the United States. The support of other Christians will be important to you in the days ahead. You may contact us at 972-820-5000, or e-mail [info@prestonwood.org](mailto:info@prestonwood.org).

If your answer is *No*, you *can* know for certain you are going to heaven when you die.

Blaise Pascal once wrote, “There is a God-shaped vacuum inside everyone only God can fill.”

**We are all disconnected from God.** Sin is a universal virus that has separated every one of us from God’s plan and purpose for our lives. The Bible says, *...there is none righteous...for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:10, 23). We are born under the bondage and influence of sin. We can’t make excuses, blame others, or escape the reality of sin and its consequence in each of our lives.

**God has provided a safe and sure connection for us.** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ* (Romans 6:23). We cannot reconnect ourselves to God by our own strength. Our good deeds and best efforts all fall short of His standard. But while we are weak, the good news is, *There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus lived a sinless life. He became our substitute through His death on the cross. He conquered the power of sin and death through His resurrection. He provides a bridge of life—a life connection—for life today and life eternal.

**You can experience this life connection today!** *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved...for whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved* (Romans 10:9, 13). Come to God—just as you are—and confess your need for and desire to experience the life Jesus gives. Jesus said, *I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly* (John 10:10). How?

**Talk to God in prayer:**

- Admit (confess) that you are a sinner, disconnected from God, and in need of His grace and forgiveness.
- Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Savior, confessing He is God’s Son, died on the cross for your sin, and was resurrected from

Although a popular message in 1741, God’s judgment and wrath are not preferred topics today. Some congregations might be offended by the manner of Jonathan Edwards, classifying him as a “fire and brimstone” preacher—too abrasive, too intrusive, too confrontational. Preachers many times prefer to present the softer side of God—a more palatable message of grace, love and mercy. Don’t misunderstand. I thank God for His grace and love and mercy. I thank God for the wonder of all He has done for me. I can never overstate or overemphasize the wonder of God’s love, but neither can I ignore, understate, or sacrifice the true presentation of Scripture on the character of God simply because it may feel uncomfortable or, at times, embarrassing. It is not the preacher’s job to rescue God from a bad image—a makeover that caters to the comfort zones of people. The character of God (His judgment and wrath as well as His love and mercy) is a timeless message and one that cannot be dismissed as irrelevant today.

There are all kinds of spirituality acceptable in today’s world. In Hollywood, the vogue religion is Scientology. Sometimes it appears that people accept Christianity as being just one option on the list—as long as it leans to the softer side, the easier edge, the more palatable presentation. However, if Christianity is stripped of the offensiveness found in its theology, then it becomes nothing more than another form of spirituality. According to a study by George Barna, 64 percent of all Americans believe they are going to heaven, but less than one percent believe they would go to hell.

One of the things I thank God for more than anything else is that we have a pastor who stands behind this pulpit week after week and boldly proclaims that you must receive Jesus Christ and the message of the cross to be saved. Thank God for a church and a pulpit like that! How vital it is that we affirm that message again and again!

Over 50 years ago, Reinhold Niebuhr, a noted theologian, said, “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.”

I would submit to you that we are living in that that kind of world today: a God without wrath and no identification to sin or a cross.

“The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the conscience of millions.” —A.W. Tozer

“The doctrine of hell is not just some dusty, theological holdover from the unenlightened Middle Ages. It has significant social consequences. Without ultimate justice, people’s sense of moral obligation dissolves, and social bonds are broken. People who have no fear of God soon have no fear of man, and no respect of human laws and authority.”  
—Chuck Colson

We cannot separate our belief system and our value system; they are inseparably entwined together. For example, people who believe in material values, purchase possessions. The sensualists give themselves to pleasure and indulgence—those experiences that provide relief, non-constraints and non-guilt. And it is certainly true of the terrorists who leave death, destruction and fear in their wake.

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught on the subject of wrath, judgment and hell.

*There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.* —Luke 16:19

If this man were living today, he would be a regular customer at Neiman Marcus. He had every ability to buy what he wanted, dress in the most fashionable suits, and dine in the finest restaurants. Bottom line? This man would have fit in very well in North Dallas. He “fared sumptuously.”

*But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and*

artwork seemed out of place—poor in quality and appeal. Simply titled, *My Beloved Son*, the painting was by a local artist whose name had long ago been forgotten. The critics determined the painting was not worth their notice and moved quickly past to view other artwork by renowned artists.

The auctioneer assembled everyone together and asked the attorney to begin the auction by reading the directives of the will. The attorney read, “The first painting to be auctioned is the portrait, *My Beloved Son*.”

The painting was found and brought to the forefront as the auctioneer announced, “Bids are now open.” An uncomfortable silence filled the room. The auctioneer searched for a signal or some indication of interest. Finally an old man, a servant, lifted his hand and made a bid of one pound for the portrait. The old man had been a property tenant of the Baron and had known the Baron and his son. If nothing else, the portrait would serve as a memory of the life he had shared with this Baron.

“Going once, going twice, going three times. Sold to the man at the back!” After a polite applause from the impatient crowd, the auctioneer again yielded the floor to the attorney. Adjusting his glasses and finding the next paragraph, the attorney read the next directive of the will, “Baron Fitzgerald writes, ‘Whoever purchases the portrait of my son receives the entire collection. The auction is over!’” Everyone stood in amazement as the old man held the portrait in his arms. Likewise, our world is astounded at the thought that God would make a way of salvation for us—only one way. What is it?

*But as many as receive Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.*  
—John 1:12

Today, you do not have to fear what lies beneath if you are willing to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Do you fear death? If you were to die right now, do you know you would go to heaven?

The Apostle Paul said,

*...we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. —2 Corinthians 5:9-11*

This verse doesn't mean that we are going to stand before God in order to determine whether we go to heaven or hell. That is based on faith in Jesus Christ. However, we must keep the fear of God ever before our eyes.

Bill Bright died two years ago this July. Bill was a wonderful Christian, godly man who led many to the kingdom. On many occasions, I heard Bill Bright speak about Baron Fitzgerald, a wealthy Englishman who had a valuable treasure—his only son. This good man loved his son more than anything in the world. It was said that on several occasions, the Baron was known to slip away in the middle of the day to spend time playing games with his son at preschool. The Baron, his wife and the son enjoyed a wonderful life together.

As the son entered his teen years, Baron Fitzgerald's wife became ill. After a few months she died, leaving the Baron heartbroken as he thought of the joy and happiness they had shared as a family. The Baron absorbed his life even more in the son, knowing the son would grow up without a mother. But two years later, his son contracted a horrible disease and also died.

After his son's death, the grieving Baron devoted his energy and wealth to collecting one of the finest and most valuable art collections in the world. In his will, he gave explicit instructions concerning the distribution of his estate—a public auction.

When Baron Fitzgerald died, news spread quickly among eager art enthusiasts. When the day of the auction arrived, museum curators and collectors gathered to inspect the masterpieces. One piece of

*licked his sores. 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. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

*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." 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. 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."*

*Then he said, "I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment." Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." 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."*

—Luke 16:20-31

This is a parable told by Jesus. Jesus often used parables, pictures and earthly stories with heavenly meanings that would give illustration of things He wanted to teach. I do not want to assume that because a story is a parable that it is absolutely fictional. Jesus was not giving us some fictional idea of the future; He was giving us a glimpse into eternity through the scrim of the future. In a very personal way, He was showing His listeners the truth about what lies beyond, above and beneath.

In this message, I would like for us to answer two questions: (1) What does Scripture teach on the subject of *The Truth About What Lies Beneath*; and (2) What are the implications of that truth in our lives? Now, let's begin!

## **SUMMARIZE THE SCRIPTURE'S TEACHING ON HELL**

Earlier, we read Jesus' words from a passage in Luke, but I want to go back a few pages and break into the middle of a story Jesus tells in Matthew.

### ***Hell is a prepared place.***

*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..." —Matthew 25:41*

Scripture teaches us that hell is a prepared place for the devil and his angels. This truth is important because hell is in contrast to the place prepared for those who believe in Jesus as their Savior. Jesus said,

*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you...that where I am, there you may be also. —John 14:1-3*

One of Jesus' disciples asked, "...how can we know the way?" (John 14:5b).

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." —John 14:6*

Heaven is a great place God has prepared for those who believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hell is a place that was prepared for Satan and his angels.

### ***Hell is a place of eternal torment and judgment.***

*Then He will say..., "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels..." —Matthew 25:41*

and rich people go. Rich and poor people go to heaven by the grace of God, and rich and poor people go to hell because they do not receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

One of the lessons we learn about possessions is that we need to take our possessions and do something with them that matter. God doesn't tell us not to be rich. He tells us not to be haughty with riches.

*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in the uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

—1 Timothy 6:17-19

Do something eternal with what God has given you. Invest in the kingdom of God. Do not trivialize the issue of giving. Don't put off obedience in this area of your life. The reality of the hereafter should have everything to do with the values you have in the here and now.

### ***S = Share Christ with those you love.***

You probably know someone who has never known or confessed Jesus. It may be a mother or father, sister or brother, friend, co-worker, spouse or child. Maybe you have shared with them before and they rejected Christ or were unwilling to make a commitment at the time. Let me encourage you to share again, and pray passionately and tearfully that those you love will come to know and receive Jesus Christ. Be concerned about the things that break the heart of God.

### ***K = Keep the fear of God ever before your eyes.***

The reality of who God really is and what He is like is not something you trivialize; it is something that makes you sober and reverent, living in the fear of God.

Jesus is saying you have two choices before you. You have the option of keeping your life connected to a world that will eventually fade away, OR you can give up a self-directed life on earth and *risk* your future by placing your total dependance upon God. Either choice has eternal consequences: heaven or hell. What will you *risk*? How do you R-I-S-K for God?

### ***R = Respond to the Light.***

You must respond to the message of Christ. Have you heard the message of Christ? Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior? That is one of the most important implications of this message. The Bible says there will come a day when the gulf will be fixed, and it will be too late to shift your opinion concerning Christ.

Opinions are shifted every day in Washington D.C.; positions and platforms are altered. However, according to the Bible, there will be no shifting on the other side of eternity. Have you responded to the Light you have today? People often ask, “What about other people who don’t receive Christ? What about people who have never heard about Christ?” If you are asking the same questions, let me answer them this way. You need to worry about what you have done with the message you have heard about Christ. You need to respond to the Light you have heard about today!

*...Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts... —Hebrews 4:7b*

### ***I = Invest in the Kingdom.***

So much of what we worry about and invest our time in are things that are not going to last or matter. Let me correct any misunderstanding you may have about the passage we have studied. The Bible does not teach that if you are rich, you are going to hell, and if you are poor you are going to heaven. That should be a great encouragement and comfort to us as Americans. As a nation, we are perceived as richer than most of the world simply by where we live and what we have. But the message here has nothing to do with where poor people go

*The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

—Revelation 20:10

If you have ever wondered where “fire and brimstone” are mentioned in the Bible, the Scripture is in Revelation! It is interesting to know that “fire and brimstone” do not refer to a sermon or a preacher; the words refer to a place of eternal torment and judgment.

### ***Satan seeks to destroy and devour God’s human creation in order that he may hold them captive in this eternal terror.***

There is a great conflict over mankind. While God, in His grace and mercy sent His Son, Jesus, to come to this earth, we have an enemy who seeks to destroy us.

*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.*

—John 10:10a

Satan is a destroyer, and he looks for every possible way to bring destruction to your life, your family, your friends and your future. Satan seeks to destroy everything that would be of value in your life and bring glory to God. Satan is ever working to destroy us.

*...your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. —1 Peter 5:8b*

Hell is a place prepared for the devil and his angels, a place of eternal torment and judgment. However, the devil is working now on planet earth to try to devour and destroy God’s human creations that he may take them captive with him to hell.

## ***The cross is the only bridge of hope from hell to heaven.***

Let's read again the words of Jesus:

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. —John 3:14-18*

The cross is the only bridge we have between hell and heaven. We are already condemned in our sin from birth. What do you have to do to be lost? Nothing! What do you have to do to go to hell? Again, nothing! All humanity is caught in sin. We are under the judgment of God. But thanks be to God, He did not leave us in that place! In His grace and mercy, God sent His Son—His One and Only Son—to come and die on the cross for our sins.

Have you ever played Monopoly? If you have, then you know what happens: roll the dice, move the game piece, use “play” money, count your assets. Then it happens! You land on “Chance” and select a card that says, “Go directly to jail! Do not pass Go; do not collect \$200.” But for the savvy player, there is that wonderful moment when you tug at the corner of a card kept hidden from view— “Get out of jail free!” With all due respect and without trivializing the Word of God, John 3:16 is our get-out-of-hell free card.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. —John 3:16*

There is a wonderful hope in the cross of Jesus Christ!

You can almost hear the man pleading, “Please, please, please send someone to speak to my brothers. Please send someone; send Lazarus; send him from the dead so that they will know that there is a hereafter, that there's an eternity. I don't want them to come to this place of misery. I don't want them to taste this judgment.” But what did Abraham say? “No! The gulf is fixed. Let them listen to Moses and the prophets. They will not even receive if one comes back from the dead.”

There is One who *did* come back from the dead. Jesus Christ rose from the dead that we might have the testimony of life in Christ, that we may remove the fear of hell and of an eternity apart from God. Yet, even though Scripture's picture of hell is great and grave, many have heard the message of Christ and rejected it.

*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, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

—Matthew 13:41-42

So what is our responsibility in response to what we know about hell?

## **RECOGNIZE OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN LIGHT OF THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT LIES BENEATH**

Jesus said,

*If any of you wants to be my follower...you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will find true life. And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul in the process? Is anything worth more than your soul? If a person is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, I, the Son of Man, will be ashamed of that person when I return in the glory of my Father with the holy angels. —Mark 8:34-38 (NLT)*

## **Memory of remorse**

*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.” —Luke 16:25*

Don't you know the rich man rehearsed what his life had been like: the clothes, the food, the excesses? He had the finest wines and the best the world had to offer. This man had so much during his lifetime, he probably had a camel with two humps rather than one. You know, kind of an ancient version of the H-2. Yet, his memory certainly must have been amplified as he remembered his life on earth without God: self-absorbed, self-made, self-confident, self-sufficient. The clothes didn't matter anymore. The food didn't matter anymore. He was left with only the memory of remorse.

## **Eternal isolation**

*And besides all this... there is a great gulf fixed... —Luke 16:26a*

Hell provides people with what they have asked for all their lives—complete and absolute independence from God. This man finally got what he wanted! He's free...free from God, free from responsibility, free from moral standards. But now in his independence, the man is living in an eternity of isolation.

## **Misery of judgment**

*Then he said, “I beg you therefore, father [Abraham], that you would send him [Lazarus] to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.” Abraham said to him, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” And he said, “No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” 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.” —Luke 16:27-31*

## **ANALYZE THE FEAR FACTOR OF HELL**

When I watch television in the evening, I cannot surf channels without coming across the popular show, *Fear Factor*. Six people (three men, three women) engage in fearful situations whereby they are taken to the absolute limits to prove who can face off with their fears. Over the course of a 50-minute show, these men and women compete to win a prize of \$50,000. What do they have to do? Sometimes they lay in a coffin while rats are poured on top of them. Other times they eat repulsive things: crunchy bugs, oversized insects, entrails of animals. A more appropriate title for the program would have been *Extreme Gross-Out!* The premise of the show is that rewards are achieved for dismissing and facing fears.

There is one fear factor you better not face and dismiss. The reward of facing off wrongly on the subject of hell is to ultimately face the reality of hell in your life.

## **Three Ways Most People Dismiss Hell**

### **Rationalism**

*But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves. For the truth about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship Him as God or even give Him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. The result was that their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they became utter fools instead. —Romans 1:18-23 (NLT)*

People throughout history have tried to use reason and rationalism to dismiss and disprove God. If people can release themselves from the knowledge of God, then they think they can be released from

any sense of judgment. The Bible tells us that people, because they do not want God, have despised God. There is no fear of God and many deny the existence of God.

“Disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. I can hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for, if so, the plain language of the text seems to show that men who do not believe—and this would include my father, brother and almost all my best friends—will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine.” —Charles Darwin

Does that give you some idea why Charles Darwin felt that evolution was so important? If the first part of Genesis can be extracted along with the reality of God, then this rationalism nullifies the need to stand before God and His judgment. However, the Bible tells us differently.

### **Ridicule**

What do I mean by *ridicule*? People love to think of Satan as being some guy who walks around in an extra-tight red spandex suit with horns and his photo on the label of a can of deviled ham. It is trivializing Satan without taking him seriously. Whenever people come to the place where they can laugh at Satan, then there is a sense of simply dismissing him because he is no longer a serious threat.

### **Religion**

Have you ever thought of religion as being one of the ways people dismiss hell? Here's what happens. People say there is a God. He is a God of love and would never do anything as horrifying as sending someone to hell. Our world loves to hear that—religious pluralism where God loves everybody and everyone is going to the same place.

### **What will hell be like?**

You don't have to wonder what hell will be like. Jesus tells us in His own words!

### **Agony of fire**

Jesus said the man cried out to 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.* —Luke 16:24

There is not an option left open to the man in our story. You cannot air condition hell. Hell is real, and the Lord Jesus Christ gave the warning even as He has given us the provision. There is the agony of fire in hell: burning and burning and burning.

This week on television, many of you saw the news reports of the horrific fire that occurred in Fort Worth. The intensity of the flames literally seemed to reach the sky. We are thankful there was no loss of life, but the Bible tells us that in hell, there is an agony of fire.

### **Intensity of thirst**

*...send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue...* —Luke 16:24

This man probably passed Lazarus on any given day as Lazarus begged at his gate. The Bible tells us that the dogs would come and lick Lazarus' sores (Luke 16:21b). The rich man would have never thought of touching that “vile piece of human flesh” here on earth or help Lazarus in his poverty.

And yet in hell, the man pleaded for just one drop of water from Lazarus to cool his tongue. What intensity of thirst! What desperation! Yes, hell is a place where thirst can never be quenched.