What Does the Bible Say About Hell?

I do not mean to condemn or judge anyone through the topic discussed in this blog post. I am simply expressing my understanding of what the Bible says about hell, and I believe that people should be warned about it. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, this topic and various biblical passages related to it will be discussed.

About the pain

What does the Bible say about hell? How should we consider it in the light of Scripture?

In the times in which we are living, this topic has become somewhat taboo, if we can call it that. There are individuals, groups, and even churches that do not truly believe in hell or speak much about it.

My personal opinion is that, obviously, we do not have to talk about it all the time or mention it every time we share the message of the gospel with someone. Nevertheless, we need to remain conscious of the fact that this place exists, and our motives for doing what we do should include an awareness of its reality. If God saves us, then we need to understand what He is saving us from. It is not only from a wrong lifestyle but from something far more serious and terrible—and that is hell.

Sheol, Gehenna, and Hades are also mentioned in the Bible, and there have often been discussions about which of these terms refers to final punishment and which refers to the place where the dead await judgment. What is clear, however, is that this is mentioned repeatedly throughout Scripture. Jesus Himself spoke about it.

Let's first look at some verses.

> **18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. **19** For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; **21** because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Romans 8:18–22)

Here in this passage from Romans, we see how creation was subjected to futility. It also says that one day it will be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Let's keep this in mind and move on to the following passage:

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4)

Here we see what heaven will be like: there will be no more pain or suffering.

Let's now look at another passage:

"Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,
And the sound of your stringed instruments;
The maggot is spread under you,
And worms cover you.'" (Isaiah 14:11)

Here, we find a description of Sheol, which is the place where the dead reside. In its immediate context, this is directed at the king of Babylon, but at the same time, it can also be understood as referring to Lucifer, as this chapter in Isaiah speaks about the judgment that will come upon him. We see that the term used here is *Sheol*, and some of the imagery resembles descriptions of judgment found elsewhere in Scripture. In particular, worms are mentioned.

Worms are also mentioned in Mark 9:44: "where

'Their worm does not die
And the fire is not quenched.'"

What comes to mind when we think of a worm? I usually think of decay—of something putrefying or rotten. We need to understand that all of this is a consequence of the corruption that has entered our world.

What I mean is that, before man's fall into sin, everything was perfect. Along with complete justice and the perfect relationship between God and man, there was also the consequence of this perfect harmony: nature bore the signs of eternity. Nothing was dying, withering, or rotting. Everything was perfect and free from corruption. That was God's design for how everything was meant to function. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were perfect. They were strong and always healthy. They never grew tired. Nothing was aging or growing old, and nothing was subject to death.

What happened then? A law was broken. The man and the woman sinned by disobeying God. Many things went out of order at that moment. Corruption, as mentioned in Romans 8:21, entered the world and affected everything. Everything began to die.

Therefore, when it comes to the decay and putrefaction of things, we can say that these are consequences of sin. Sin has infected all of us; we are born with it. Sin brings separation between us and God, and this separation brings all these consequences.

As we saw in the verse from the book of Revelation that speaks about heaven, this corruption will no longer exist. There will be no pain and no tears there.

If heaven is this way, hell will be the complete opposite and will be full of corruption. The mention of a worm—and particularly a worm that never dies—can be understood as referring to the flesh of the people there decomposing, because this is what happens when worms appear. Their flesh will decompose, but the process will never come to an end. It will continue eternally.

Here in this life, things decompose and eventually disappear because this life is only a passage. It comes to an end. But there, whether in heaven or hell, our existence will be eternal.

I am speaking about flesh rotting because there are many passages and verses indicating that we will have bodies there. To form a clearer picture and try to imagine how this could be, we can think about how some of our cells regenerate after we are injured. Even if it takes a long time, the wound eventually heals. There, they will probably regenerate much more quickly because we are speaking about an eternal existence. Time will not exist there, at least not as we know it now. In hell, the bodies of those who are there will be consumed, but not completely, as they will probably continue regenerating even while being harmed by everything they experience there.

I am not saying all this to scare anyone, and I don't think that the main reason someone comes to Christ is because of their knowledge of hell. The main reason someone comes to Christ is because of His love. This is what happened to me, at least. However, we need to know this love in our hearts. Sometimes, though, we also need to recognize things that are facts. If we do not believe in something and reject it, that does not mean it does not exist. According to Scripture, God's desire for us is to save us, but sadly, not everyone will accept His salvation.

I don't know how directly this relates to the topic, but there are some interesting facts to consider. In another passage describing that place, brimstone, also known as sulfur, is mentioned:

"…the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

Did you know that this element, known as sulfur, is naturally present in our bodies? It is also found in organic substances, and when these substances decay, they can release compounds containing sulfur.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul speaks about the heavenly body that will be given to those who go to heaven. However, there are also passages about hell that describe those who are there as having bodies. We must not think that everything will be only spiritual and invisible. God's work in us is spiritual, but what happens in the spiritual also manifests afterward in the material world. We will certainly not remain as spirits floating around after death.

Yes, our soul departs from our body when we die, but it does not remain simply wandering somewhere. Any spiritual or ghostly manifestations that people claim to have seen should not be understood as people who have died, but as other spiritual powers seeking to distract us and manipulate our minds, often appearing in different forms.

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both **soul** and **body** in hell." (Matthew 10:28, emphasis added)

We can also see descriptions involving the body in other passages, such as: "…there will be weeping and gnashing of **teeth**" (Matthew 8:12, emphasis added), 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, emphasis added).

All this tells us that there will also be physical pain. Many times, people think that those who are there will be tormented and separated from God only in a spiritual way. They relate this to the fact that people are already separated from God in this life and assume that it will be the same there.

According to Scripture, however, it will not be this way. If there will be no tears or pain in heaven, then hell will be the opposite. There will be pain, tears, and affliction, and we cannot truly imagine how great that suffering will be.

"The wages of sin is death." This is its consequence. And with it come pain, affliction, and everything else. What happens is that here in this life, we experience the consequences of sin, which lead to death, only in part. This gives us the opportunity to accept Him and to live without these consequences becoming too heavy and unbearable for us. We were supposed to pay the full price for sin already in this life because this is what justice requires. But if we had to bear the full consequences of sin now, the pain and affliction would be too great for us to endure, and we would not be able to live properly or have the opportunity to accept Him.

It would be too much for us, and He knows it. This is what separation from God brings: pain and affliction. When a child is born, the first thing it does is cry. It enters this world through pain and with a cry. What happens is that, as we said, we experience pain and the consequences of sin only in part. After Adam and Eve sinned, they were not completely abandoned by God. They were separated from His glory, but His grace was still covering them in a way. This is shown when God made clothes for them. He covered them by His grace and did not leave them completely naked and abandoned. They still fell short of His glory, but what He did was give them an opportunity. This is what He offers people today through His grace—an opportunity to accept Him.

We were meant to be part of Him; apart from Him, we are incomplete. That is why people will feel this way when they are entirely separated from Him.

What I am trying to say is that we are not completely separated from Him now. We fall short of His glory, as Romans 3:23 says, but He is still sustaining us and giving us life and strength each day so that we can carry on. He does all this so that we can have the opportunity to accept Him and live with Him forever. Just imagine if we had to experience pain now that never ended. No one would be able to think or reason properly.

If today, for example, you feel a certain physical pain, after a while it may come to an end or at least become less intense. Even an ordinary person who does not know God, when afflicted by something, may find a way to forget it for a while and feel well for some time.

All this is possible because God's presence fills everything, and He sustains every person, not allowing pain and affliction to become more than that person can bear. It happens this way so that a person can still experience good things and live this life with the ability to seek God and His kingdom. The pain a person experiences in this life can make him think, reflect, and realize his condition. However, when it does not become more than he can bear, it is because of the grace given to him. I am speaking about the common grace given to every person so that each one may have an opportunity to repent.

What I am saying is that we were supposed to experience the full consequences of sin and separation from God, which include pain and affliction in their complete form. However, because of His grace, He is still giving us a chance, and we experience this pain and affliction only in part—perhaps just enough for us to become aware of our sinful condition.

The truth is that He does not want us to perish but wants to help us. Many times, people perish because they continue going in that direction. The time in which we are living now is often called a time of grace. The Bible calls it "the acceptable time" and "the day of salvation."

The problem is that many people take life for granted and still dare to blaspheme God or rebel against Him, even though every expression of grace that we experience in this life comes from Him. If a person continually remains in this kind of attitude, he certainly does not know God. Nevertheless, God makes His sun rise upon everyone.

> **24** God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. **25** Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. **26** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, **27** so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; **28** for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' (Acts 17:24-28)

Here in this passage, we clearly see that God created everything and that in Him we live and move. He made us and placed us on the face of this earth with the purpose of seeking Him.

Pain is a consequence of sin, but most people do not experience it with the same intensity continuously. The same is true of affliction. People may be sad for a while, but afterward they may feel well again and even become joyful. I am not speaking only about Christians, but about any ordinary person who does not have Christ in his life. The life that such a person has is nothing other than a demonstration of God's grace. It is a gift from God so that the person may have the opportunity to know Him in this life rather than immediately face the judgment he deserves. This is like a period of time given to all of us—a time of grace. When we speak about life and its purpose, this is it. If anyone has ever asked himself what the purpose of life is, it is to know God and glorify Him. This is what we were born for and what we exist for: to belong to Him and to be connected with our Creator.

We often do not realize this. We think that life has been given to us simply to enjoy it and pursue as much fun and pleasure as possible. Obviously, God included pleasure when He created us, but life is not entirely about pleasure, and we must not abuse it as often as we do.

About the diseases

Looking at diseases as well, we can conclude that in heaven there will be no more disease and that the diseases we may have now are caused by sin. This does not necessarily mean that they are caused by sins we have personally committed, but by the sin that already dwells within us—the sin we inherited from our ancestors, Adam and Eve. We are born with it. Disease is a consequence of our corrupted bodies being affected by sin. There is no disease in God. Jesus even healed people of their diseases.

"Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5)

"that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

"He Himself took our infirmities
And bore *our* sicknesses." (Matthew 8:17)

In Him and from Him come health and true well-being. Before Adam's downfall, there was no disease or fatigue, and in heaven there will be none either. As doctors and scientists explain, the pain we feel is often like an alarm, warning us that something may be wrong somewhere in our bodies. When someone feels pain because of an illness, it usually indicates that something in the body is not functioning as it should.

The question now is: can a godly man or woman become ill? Of course they can. Someone can even pass away from a disease such as cancer or another serious illness. This does not mean that the person was not spiritual or blessed. Disease is a consequence of sin, but even a true Christian and believer who walks righteously with God can become ill because he is still living in a body corrupted by sin. Therefore, **the first case** a believer—or any other person—may suffer from a disease is original sin and the consequences of the fallen condition in which humanity already lives.

The second case in which a spiritual person might have a disease is because he is being attacked by Satan. As we already know from Scripture, Satan attacked Job (Job 2:4–7), and Paul spoke about a thorn in his flesh, which he called "a messenger of Satan" (2 Corinthians 12:7). The purpose of these attacks was to test and discourage those people, but God knows how to turn trials, diseases, and difficult situations into something good.

The third case in which a believer might become sick is because he has sinned. Scripture also tells us something about this (1 Corinthians 11:29–30).

People sometimes teach that a godly person must always be well, in perfect health, and prosperous, but according to Scripture, it is not always this way. Therefore, we can conclude that a Christian can also become ill.

On the other hand, we also see that some people who do not care at all about God live in great well-being and appear to remain healthy and well for much of their lives (Psalm 73:2–9).

But in general, we see that corruption, weakness, disease, and affliction are consequences of the separation from God caused by sin. While we are on this earth, we will have to face them in one way or another. Therefore, when you experience pain or illness, remember the sin we have inherited and that the pain and corruption existing in this world are consequences of sin.

Remember also that sin can be forgiven only through the blood of Jesus, who gave Himself for you.

About the Gift of Life

As we said before, well-being and health come from Him. The reason someone can now experience well-being or joy, or simply feel fine, is that all these things come from God.

We must not understand this in the wrong way. Even people who do not care about God or seek Him still experience well-being and health because His grace allows them to do so. All this is given so that they may have the opportunity to seek Him and repent. Instead of making us face the full judgment for our sins now, God still shows us grace so that we can have the opportunity to accept Him. According to justice, we deserve to pay the full penalty for our sins, but instead, He allows us to experience only part of sin's consequences in this life while giving us time to turn to Him.

This is what happens in this life. Just imagine if we had to experience fully, right now, all the pain and affliction produced by separation from Him. We were meant to be with Him, and that is why, apart from Him, there is such an imbalance and everything goes wrong.

Nevertheless, He does not let us pay for all of this now. This is like a time of grace given to us. Life itself is a time of grace. If we had to experience complete separation from Him at this moment, we would not be able to accept Him, live normally, or even survive. But He has not completely abandoned us. His grace is still with us. I am not speaking about His glory or the grace that saves, but about the time of grace given to us in this life. It is a kind of grace that does not allow people to experience complete separation from Him now, together with all the consequences caused by sin.

Let us look at some verses from Ecclesiastes:

> 9 What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? 10 I have seen the God-given task
> with which the sons of men are to be occupied. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its
> time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that
> God does from beginning to end.
>
> 12 I know that nothing *is* better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, 13 and
> also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—**it *is* the gift of
> God.** (Ecclesiastes 3:9–13, emphasis added)
>
> 18 Here is what I have seen: *It is* good and fitting *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the
> good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives
> him; for it *is* his heritage. 19 As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and
> given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—**this *is* the gift of
> God.** (Ecclesiastes 5:18–19, emphasis added)

Through these verses, we see that the ability of a person to rejoice in the fruit of his labor is a gift from God. The book of Ecclesiastes is not contradictory, as some might claim. It clearly explains

the meaning of life. It repeats many times that everything is vanity. It is vanity because the most important and essential thing for a person in this life is to know God. Here we see that God is the One who gives joy to people. We can obviously understand this as speaking about a believer, but it also appears to speak about every person in general.

If someone today can experience simple joy or pleasure in something, or have certain passions and feelings, it is because God has placed within us the capacity to experience these things. It is part of the gift of life. It is by His power that we are able to feel them. Yet we often take this for granted; we do not appreciate it and misuse it.

We can experience the good things of this life because we are not yet completely separated from Him, and we do not yet experience pain and affliction in their complete form, but only in part. We still experience them because this is what the inheritance of sin has brought into our lives. Nevertheless, God is still sustaining us. We are obviously separated from full fellowship with His holiness because of sin, but He sustains us in this life, and we breathe because of Him. That is why I am saying that we are not completely separated from Him now. All this is with the sole purpose of giving us the opportunity to know Him.

He allows us to experience enough pain and affliction for us to somehow recognize our fragility and our sin. It is better to recognize them now in this way than later, when it may be too late. He does all things for our good. We cannot judge Him for the ways in which He works because, believe me, He knows best what is good and what is not. We would not be able to bear at this moment all the affliction caused by sin and separation from Him, and He knows it. This life is a grace and an opportunity given to us by Him. We can laugh and cry; we can feel love, be loved, and experience passion because of Him. He created us and our bodies perfectly.

Scientists explain that some of the good feelings we experience are connected to the release of endorphins in our bodies. Even so, they still do not fully understand how the human brain works. But God already knows all of this. He knows about the endorphins our bodies release because He is their Creator. In hell, our bodies may be so affected and overtaken by corruption that they will no longer produce endorphins or respond to them in the same way. This would (will) be part of the complete separation from God that will be experienced there.

Notice something here. What I am saying is that God is involved in everything, and He knows perfectly how we and our bodies work, both chemically and medically. He is their Creator. That is why I support the idea, which we also find in Scripture, that we will have bodies wherever we go—whether to heaven or hell. These will not be the bodies we have now, but the other ones that will be given to us. We were designed to have bodies. After death, our souls depart from our present bodies, but afterward, at the resurrection, we will each have some kind of a body—something through which we will be able to touch and feel.

We cannot know exactly how everything will be, and it will certainly not be the same as what we are used to now. Nevertheless, looking at what Scripture says, we can be certain that there will be some kind of bodily existence.

Our bodies are not a mistake or something meant for us to have only in this life. In a certain sense, we are now between two worlds, if we can call them that: the present world, which is corrupted, and the glorious world that is to come.

"For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise You, **for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;**
Marvelous are Your works,
And *that* my soul knows very well." (Psalm 139:13–14, emphasis added)

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. God created us and gave us these perfectly designed bodies, which work with a precision greater than that of the best machines human beings can create. The ultimate reason our bodies become ill, weak, or tired is the corruption brought by sin.

Sin causes separation from God, and disease and bodily malfunctions exist because of this separation, which we experience only in part now. The same applies to what we experience within our souls on a spiritual level.

Verse 14 of Psalm 139 ends with the phrase, "Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well." It is within the soul that God wants to work. He created our bodies, and for those who belong to Christ, the body is the temple of His Holy Spirit. However, **our soul** is where He wants to work and establish a relationship with us. Our soul is lost and needs to be saved. We were created by Him, and we are made up of soul, spirit, and body. We are living souls, we have a spirit that gives life to us, and we have a body through which we express ourselves and act according to what is within us.

The seal

The Bible speaks about a seal that God wants to place upon us. He puts this seal in our hearts through His Spirit. In this way, He creates a relationship with us, and we belong to Him. This is the relationship of love that He wants to have with us. Those who believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked by His love.

"who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." (2 Corinthians 1:22)

"In Him you also *trusted,* after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," (Ephesians 1:13)

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30)

"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Timothy 2:19)

These Bible verses speak about the seal God places upon those who believe in Him. He wants to create a connection with our spirit and soul. This is also important for those who place greater importance on bodily healing and physical miracles. These miracles can occur, but they would

mean nothing without God's holy work in our hearts. Jesus' purpose in performing physical healings and miracles was also to reach people's hearts because this is what needs to be saved—our soul.

There will be a day when God will not look at whether you and I have been members of a church or have spent time with Christians in a Christian environment—which is also important—but at whether we have this seal in our hearts. This is the testimony that we know Him and that He knows us.

> 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will
> not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you
> begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will
> answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say,
> 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell
> you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'
> 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob
> and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. (Luke 13:24-28)

We can clearly see that this passage speaks about people who ate and drank in His presence and were also taught by Him. In the same way, someone today can be in a Christian environment and hear God's Word, but as we see, that is not enough, even though it is important.

About His grace and opportunity for us

So, we can see that He created us with a purpose, and this purpose is to know Him. He wants to have a relationship with us. All the energy and well-being given to us in this life, as well as life itself, are given for no other purpose than for us to know Him. Obviously, when we know Him, we receive greater strength and joy. However, the common joy and strength given to people in this life are a testimony to God's mercy and to the opportunity He wants to give us.

There is a parable that speaks about this grace. We are not talking about saving grace, but about the common grace of life that everyone receives. The one that people often take for granted, even though they should not.

> 1 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood
> Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you
> suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they
> suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4 Or
> those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were
> worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no; but unless you
> repent you will all likewise perish."
>
> 6 He also spoke this parable: "A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he
> came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look,

for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' [8] But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize *it.* [9] And if it bears fruit, *well.* But if not, after that you can cut it down.' " (Luke 13:1–9)

This is the parable of the barren fig tree. We can compare ourselves to this fig tree, and the same can be said of all humanity because here we are speaking about the universal opportunity given to people. Even though the tree was not bearing fruit, it was still given another opportunity. Yes, we can see that one aspect of this parable speaks about the nation of Israel, but in general, it can also be applied to all people. This is the time of grace given to us in the form of this life.

We need to understand something: God is perfectly just and cannot tolerate sin or injustice. **The reason He bears patiently with us now is because of the sacrifice Jesus made for us.** Jesus can be seen as the keeper of the vineyard who asks for an additional opportunity to be given to the tree. This is why God bears patiently with us and with all humanity now. This is why He does not bring final judgment upon every sin immediately—which He would be just in doing—but waits patiently and gives us the opportunity to repent.

This is why He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good. He pours out His goodness upon everyone so that they may have this opportunity. We deserve to pay for our sins, but we would not be able to bear their full consequences now. This is why we are alive and able to live our lives.

Why, then, were the people who lived before the time of Jesus also alive and given an opportunity? Because His sacrifice had already been predetermined before the foundation of the world. That is why God also showed mercy to the people who lived before Jesus' time and gave them the opportunity to live and repent. In His heart, He had already determined to make this sacrifice. He knew that it would happen.

The life given to us is a grace, but it often happens that many people do not acknowledge this opportunity and misuse it.

If we look at the beginning of the parable, we will see that it actually speaks about people who lost their lives because they were killed by Pilate:

"There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." (Luke 13:1)

Then, two verses later, He tells them:

"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3)

We can see from these verses that, besides the primary meaning of the parable of the barren fig tree, which is the mercy and opportunity given to men, Jesus told them this parable—and it also applies to us—to let them know that if they were alive, it was because of the mercy of God. Life is often taken for granted, and people misuse it. Sometimes, people even willingly bring it to an end and, in this way, reject the opportunity and the plan God has for their lives.

We are speaking about separation. In hell, that separation will be complete, and it will be because God cannot tolerate sin. It is against His nature. By His very nature, if we can say so, He cannot have communion with sin.

We are speaking about complete separation in hell, but to be more precise, we are talking about complete separation from **His grace and favorable presence**. God is obviously everywhere, and He fills everything. No one can escape His sight, and He is present even in Sheol, as Psalm 139:8 says, but His grace will not be experienced there.

Sometimes, God does not need to punish us for something we have done. Obviously, there will be a judgment, and everyone will receive according to what he has done. However, besides the judgment a person will receive for his deeds, the worst punishment in hell will be separation from God.

Sometimes, God does not need to bring anything upon a person to punish him; it is enough for Him to remove His protecting hand from that person. Romans 1:24–25 says that God gave certain people over to their passions and desires. This is what He often does as a form of judgment—or punishment, if we can call it that.

"Therefore God also **gave them up** to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 1:24–25, emphasis added)

Sin itself, without God's intervention, is destructive. This is what He did according to these verses: He simply left them to their own desires and passions. This also shows that we do not have to do much in order to sin. Sin is already within us. We have inherited it from Adam and Eve and are born with it. We are the ones who allow it to develop and willingly follow it, and that is why we will be judged for our own sinful deeds, intentions, and thoughts. But we can also say that there is so much sin within us and around us that no one can escape its power through his own strength. We need another kind of strength and grace, found only in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23)

About His love

As we said before, God gave those people up to their own desires and passions. He left them to follow their own way, but in hell, this separation will be forever.

God obviously does not want us to believe in Him or turn to Him only because of fear, but because we accept His love. We cannot, of course, leave aside the reality of hell, but at the same time, we see a loving Father who made a sacrifice to save us from that place—a place to which He sends people in judgment because He cannot tolerate sin. This is His nature, and He cannot go against it.

At the same time, He is displeased when He sees someone going to that place. He was willing to suffer so that people would not have to go there. However, there is an order and a way things

need to be, and He cannot simply change that because it is part of His all-powerful and perfect nature that fills everything. That is His justice.

But we should be glad that He provided a way through which His love could be shown to us. We can enter into this love and receive this promise only by believing in Him. Whoever believes in Him shall not perish.

It is in His Son, through whom His love was shown, that we have to believe. True believers and Christians love God because they believe in and experience His love. He loved them first. Today, they serve their Master willingly, not only because they fear hell. At the same time, they are conscious that hell exists and want to spread the message of His love to as many people as possible so that they may also have an opportunity.

Recently, I realized that I do not love people as much as I thought I did. Yes, I try to be kind, but to how many people do I actually give the good news? To how many of them do I say that Jesus died for them? It is not only a question of whether I tell them about hell, but also of whether I tell them that someone died to save them and speak to them about His love.

This is our task as believers if we know that hell is real: not just to frighten someone with what would happen, but to show people God's love through our lives and tell them that He is real and willing to save them if they believe.

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