



In Matthew 25 we read of the last parables that Jesus taught to His disciples just before the Last Supper and prior to Him being arrested and then crucified. These were all parables concerning the end times and telling us how we can enter into a true salvation.

Jesus was sharing these parables with His disciples so that they would hear what He was saying and be ready for when He would soon be leaving them. Actually, these parables are very much needed for the true believer today and really, they are for everyone to hear in this hour that we are in.

In Matthew 25:1-13, He tells them of the “Parable of the Ten Virgins” – five had “oil” for their “lamps” and five did not. The “lamps” were referring to the individual spirit of every person and the “oil” was referring to the Holy Spirit who brings the work of salvation into a believers life. He states that only five had the “oil.” In other words, Jesus was stating that only five of the “virgins” were “saved” and five were not.

At the conclusion of that parable Jesus states in verse 13, *“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes.”* Jesus was telling His disciples to be ready for His return. Would they be ready... will we be ready, for when He does return? Are we watching for His return?

Jesus then continues on in this time of teaching by telling them another parable which we refer to as, the “Parable of Talents.” In this parable, Jesus was referring to "His goods." This meant those things that He possessed and owned within Himself. He was referring to those "goods" that are found within His lifestyle, such as love, mercy, gentleness, goodness, kindness, peace, faithfulness, long suffering, self control, etc. We refer to them as the “Fruit of the Holy Spirit.”

We know the parable: One person that was given five talents gained another five. The one that had been given two talents brought forth another two. The one who had been given one talent went and buried it and did nothing. That one talent was taken from him and given to the one who gained five more talents from what he was given. More importantly was that the man who hid the one talent was *“thrown into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* Wow!!!

The last parable we read of in Matthew 25 is really an inside “look” at what will actually take place in the “end times” concerning the true believer in Jesus and those who do not believe in Jesus. He refers to the true believers as “sheep” and the unbelievers as “goats.”

Jesus describes what the attitude of heart of the true believer (the sheep) should be. It should be to desire to help others to come to know Jesus by their giving heart and lifestyles of being a true child of God. The “goats” are those who are not of Him. He goes on to say the “King,” referring to the Father, will ask to give account of what we have done. Hmmm.....

He finishes this “parable” by stating in verses 45-46, *“Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: **but** the righteous into life eternal.”*

These last three parables that Jesus gives His disciples are all referring to the attitude of heart that the true believer and follower of Jesus must truly have and truly live by. We see that He tells His own disciples, and us today, what it really means to be one of His “sheep,” one of His disciples - a true born again child of God.

So what does it mean to really be a true disciple of Jesus. I should really ask or say, “What does it truly mean to be a “child of God,” that “new creation” that is now in Christ. According to the words of Jesus, there must be a lifestyle of truly loving and serving others, not just ourselves. Unfortunately, in these days we have made following Jesus all about us. I do see, however, a very subtle shift in that way of thinking taking place these days in those who are truly children of the Most High God. God is “doing something.”

However, we must take note in this hour that there is a very strong move that is also going on that is negating the fact that there is still a place called “hell.” Many churches and leaders are neglecting this aspect as found within the scriptures, the Word of God. Some are actually trying to tell us that “hell” no longer exists and that there is no such thing as the devil and his forces of darkness.

Yes, there is a move of God happening, but the devil is pushing back even harder against the truth. The enemy does not want us to really know that he is still there. The enemy has a plan to try to take us all away from the love and goodness of our God – if we let him.

We must always look to our God and to Jesus who is “the Way the Truth and the Life.” I should really say that He is the ONLY Way, the ONLY Truth and the ONLY Way to Eternal Life. Even so, we must always remember and never forget that there is a place called “hell” (“Gehenna” or “Hades” in the Greek and “Sheol” in the Hebrew) – a place of torment. Many feel that we should not speak of or teach on the wages of sin-which is death. They feel that we should no longer speak of “hell.”

I agree that as a child of God, I should no longer think or dwell on the sinful ways that lead to hell. However, I must always be mindful that there will always be a place that will hold the devil and all those that follow after him. As of now, it is a place called “hell.” However, in the end, that place will be destroyed and satan and all those that follow after him and his ways will be thrown into “the Lake of Fire” for ever and ever and ever – eternally tormented. (Revelation 20:10)

Some of us may feel that God is so good that He would never let that happen. To that, we must realize that God doesn’t send anyone to hell. Rather, it is a choice by every individual. Each person, whether they believe it or not, has a choice to either follow after the ways of God or the ways of the wicked one – the devil.

There are two Biblical principles that clearly declare and state that “eternity in hell” is a just punishment for sin. Remember, the only sin that this world is now held accountable for concerning salvation is the denying of Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior and Lord. It is that simple. However, there is still access to sin and its behavior by every individual. Hmmm.....

The Bible declares that all sin is ultimately against God. All sin is opposite of the character and nature of God. The Bible is clear as it states that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That is why we needed Jesus to be that perfect sacrifice for all the sin in the world. The scriptures are so very clear in this simple and most basic truth:

- Romans 6:23 - *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
- Romans 3:23 - *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...”*
- Romans 5:12 - *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..”*

Yes, we have all sinned and we all may continue to mess up. However, through Jesus, we now have a born again spirit that can come boldly before the Father's "thrown room of grace," confess our sin, turn from it and know that our God is faithful and just to forgive us. He will remember our sin no more.

The idea that we cease sinning after death and therefore we are "okay" before God is a fallacy and it is not taught in the Bible. Are those who go to hell suddenly sinless and perfect? Absolutely not. Those who are now "hardhearted" on this earth will be eternally "hardhearted." There will be "*weeping and gnashing of teeth*" in hell (Matthew 25:30) ... but there will be no repentance. Sinners who are in hell will be given over to their own nature; they will be "sin-infected," evil, immoral, and depraved beings for all of eternity. And they will be subject to torment and fire forever and ever. There is no way out!!!

We know that at the end of the millennial rule and reign of Jesus that the devil will be released for a short period of time. All those that were in Gehenna/Hades/hell will be taken out of Gehenna/Hades/hell and they will all be placed into the "Lake of Fire" forever. Why? Because of their sinful natures which are totally opposite of the ways and character of the Living God.

God has made man to be eternal because we are the only one of God's creation that has a spirit. That is how He created Adam. Yes, God created Man with one great distinction above all the other things He created. He gave man a "spirit." It was like God's own Spirit. However, man sinned. Man's spirit was dead to God but now we are alive to God through Jesus Christ who has saved us. Thank you Jesus!!!

We must always remember that "unsaved" people do not only sin for 70, 80, 90, or 100 years. They sin forever, and are sinners, for eternity. Their sin is that they are eternally angry and hateful towards the Living God and all those who are with Him. This was, is and forever will be the sin of Lucifer and his forces of darkness. They simply hate God and are forever against Him. Even though they were told what the affects of their disobedience of God would be – they still chose not to believe God. They rejected Him and disobeyed Him. They made there "own bed" and they will forever lie in it.

If a person wants to be separated from God for eternity, God will grant that desire. Believers are those **who say to God**, "Your will be done." Unbelievers are those to whom **God says**, "Your will be done." The will of the unsaved is to reject salvation through Jesus Christ. They willingly choose to remain in sin. God will heed that decision, and unfortunately, its consequences, for eternity. It is not the will of God that chose this for those people but rather it was their own choice to not accept the Living God.

Hell is the ultimate punishment for sin. However, we must remember that all sin was taken upon the cross by Jesus. The Bible is very clear on this fact – that Jesus took the punishment for all sin for all men when He took that cross. We must realize and grasp the fact that when Jesus took that cross it was only because He wanted to do that. He died on that cross for no other reason than to take our place and receive the punishment for all of mankind's sin.

Now, because of what Jesus did 2000 years ago, the only sin that everyone is now held accountable for concerning salvation is the denying of Jesus as the One who died for their sins. Jesus then rose from the grave, out of hell, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father. He is waiting to return to this earth to rule and reign for 1000 years. You simply need to believe in that simple truth to be saved from hell.

St. Augustine cautions against following the example of those who, “while not slighting the authority of the sacred Scriptures... nevertheless **interpret them wrongly** and suppose that what is to happen will not be what the Scriptures speak of, but **what they themselves would like to happen**” (City of God 21.27). What Augustine is saying is that men will read the scriptures but unfortunately they will “interpret” those scriptures to what they would like for them to say, not for what they are truly telling the world and everyone in it. Hmmm.....

This is imperative for all believers to truly grasp and get a hold of. We must take the scriptures for what they are **truly** saying and telling us. Not what we think or would like for them to be telling us. There is a tremendous difference. We must be led in understanding those scriptures by and in the Holy Spirit. That is why the Holy Spirit was truly given to the believers on the day of Pentecost - to help us in understanding God's truth, not our own understanding of God's truth!!!

Let's face it, no one likes to talk about or even think about “hell.” Even the non-believer does not want to really talk about hell. It is easier to just say it doesn't exist and that God does not exist. They say that only because they are either being lied to by themselves, the enemy or they simple just choose to deny what God is trying to tell them. We know that God desires no one to perish but that all would come to the saving knowledge of Jesus. (2Peter 3:9).

As a believer, we know that God is an all loving God. That is who He is. However, we must never forget, and many people do forget, that God is a “holy” God. He is first and foremost a “holy and righteous God.” He cannot tolerate sin. Sin is totally opposite of God and anything that is “holy.”

The Father sent the Son of God, Jesus, to die and free us from the bondage of the affects and results of sin. When Jesus was on that cross, He took all our sin upon Him. The Father had to turn away from Jesus at that moment. That is why Jesus cried out, *“My God, My God. Why have you forsaken me.”* (Matthew 27:46)

We must remember that the Bible is very clear. The affects of sin in a persons life is bondage and the affects of that sin will be experienced while we are here on this earth. However, the greater aspect of sin is the actual result of sin – **separation from God, not just here on this earth, but for eternity.**

We must remember that there are actually two parts to our salvation. The first part was that Jesus died for all of our sins. He did this by taking all of man’s sins upon Himself when He took the cross and died. Jesus then took the punishment for sin – hell. That allowed man’s sin to be taken away from them and they would now be able to have a relationship with their God while they lived on this earth.

However, there was another aspect to what Jesus did. After three days, He rose again from the grave. He ascended into Heaven. Jesus offered to the Father the sacrifice, or gifts, that were to be presented to the Father. When Jesus did this, He opened the doorway to eternal life for all those who would accept and believe in all that He did. Jesus died for us but we must remember that He rose again. He took the punishment for all our sin... but... He also was the first to be resurrected. Jesus was the second “Adam” who set us free from the sin of the first Adam. (1Corinthians 15:14,45) 1Corinthians 15:47 tell us. *“The first man is of the earth, earthy (Adam): the second man (Jesus) is the Lord from heaven.”*

In John 1:1-18, John clearly refers to Jesus as the Word because He is the actual Son of God. In declaring that the eternal Word took on flesh and dwelt among us, John identifies Jesus as “the only Son from the Father.” However, by Jesus dying for all of our sin and then rising from the dead - He became the first child of God begotten of the Father. He was the first of many (you and me) who would believe in all that He did and become children of God.

As we read Revelation 20:10, 14-15 it tells, *“And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever... then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

As we can see, it tells us that “Death,” Lucifer and all his forces of darkness, and “Hades” which is the place of fire and torment, as well as all the unbelievers and followers of the devil and all his ways who were in Hades/ hell, will be thrown into that Lake of Fire. That is their ultimate and final destination.

In Mark 9:45-48, Jesus makes it very clear that in that place of hell there is “*undying worm and unquenchable fire.*” Jesus tells us that it is better for you to enter eternal life with one hand than to go into the “unquenchable fire” with two hands. He stresses this point by saying that if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, “*where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.*”

Jesus was not actually telling anyone to tie a stone around their neck and jump into the sea. He was not literally telling anyone to cut off their hand or cut off their foot or to take out their eye. He was trying to emphasize His point – that you do not really want to end up in that place of torment.

So the real question is, “Do you fully believe and are you totally persuaded that Jesus is the only means of salvation and eternal life?” Since Jesus died for all our sin, the only “sin” that will affect our eternal destiny is the denying or accepting of all that Jesus did – He died on the cross for all our sin AND He rose from the dead to give us eternal life with the Father, Himself and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

We are to believe that truth **and** we are to live it out all the days that we are on this earth. We are to tell others about that Good News of salvation that only comes in and through Jesus. **And...** we need to let the world know that they need to accept Him today!!! Why? ... because Jesus is coming back!!! He is coming back real soon!!!