

Hell is a Choice

After hitting rock bottom, he decided to come back home and beg his father to take him in as a hired servant (Luke 15.17-19). How did the father respond to his son's return? In this parable, Jesus says that *"his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him"* (Luke 15.20).

This is not the reaction of a father who wanted to punish his son. It says that *"when he was still a great way off, his father saw him"* (Luke 15.20). The implication is that the father was waiting for him. Perhaps he was standing there, looking down the road, waiting and hoping that his son would come home. This is the reaction of a father who loved his son. And remember that this father represented how God feels about us.

This son was lost because he chose to leave his father. He chose to live a life of sin. His father was always waiting and ready to accept him back. But he had to choose to come home.

Third, the Holy Spirit Himself tells us that Hell is a choice. In Acts 2.4, we learn that the words of Peter and the other apostles were actually the words of the Holy Spirit. So when you read the epistles written by these inspired men, you are reading the word given to them by the Holy Spirit. In 2 Peter, it was the Holy Spirit who guided the hand of the apostle Peter to write these words: *"The Lord...is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet. 3.9). This same Holy Spirit directed the apostle Paul to write that God *"desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2.4).

Over and over again, the revealed word of God tells us that God does not want us to be lost and has done everything within His power to save us. He begs and pleads through the words of His apostles to *"be reconciled to God"* (2 Cor. 5.20). But the one thing He will not do is make the choice for us. Three times in the first chapter of Romans, the Holy Spirit says that *"God gave them up"* (Rom. 1.24,26,28). It translates the Greek word "paradidomai." Literally, it means to surrender to the side. The idea is that when individuals make their own choices, God may beg and plead for them to choose life. But ultimately, when they choose sin and death, He gives them over to their own choices.

How can a loving God send anyone to an eternal Hell? The Bible makes it clear that anyone who spends eternity in Hell is not there because of God's choice. They chose to be there (Isa. 59.2). CLP

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"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"
-Mark 16.15

May 3, 2026

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:00 PM

Unity in Diversity

Did you know that Jesus taught that there is to be unity in diversity? Jesus never taught that denominations, though they teach different doctrines, should be united unto the banner of Christ. But He did teach that even though we as individuals are different, we must be united.

As Jesus prayed to the Father, five times in three verses Jesus expressed the desire for his disciples to be one (John 17.21-23). If you think that such a request is impossible to achieve, think about the twelve disciples Jesus chose. He chose a tax collector (Matthew), a known terrorist (Simon), and an impetuous leader (Peter). These were twelve men from different backgrounds, different educations, and different occupations. And often their differences caused conflict among them (Matt. 20.20-24). But Jesus still expected them to work together as one.

So how can we, as people who are so different, be unified? It always begins with attitude (Eph. 4.1-3). If we are not willing to put on an attitude of lowliness and gentleness, we will never be unified (Eph. 4.2). If we are not willing to be slow to the point of anger (longsuffering) and be more tolerant of one another, we will never be able to work together (Eph. 4.2).

Unity and peace isn't just something that happens. The Holy Spirit refers to our *"endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph. 4.3). Endeavor refers to putting forth great effort. We must be unified. So let us never forget that though we are different, we are all one in Christ (Gal. 3.28). CLP

THE LOVE OF GOD ON DISPLAY

ROMANS 5:8

INTRODUCTION:

1. **Romans 5.8:** *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us”*
2. Consider the physical and emotional suffering of Jesus.

I. THE ARREST

- A. The physical suffering of Jesus.
 1. **Luke 22.44:** *“His sweat...like great drops of blood”*
 2. A physical response to stress called hematidrosis.
- B. The emotional suffering of Jesus.
 1. **Matthew 26.38:** He felt heaviness.
 2. **Matthew 26.38:** He felt loneliness.
 3. **Matthew 26.47-50:** He felt betrayed.

II. THE TRIAL

- A. The physical suffering of Jesus.
 1. **Matthew 26.67-68:** *“spat in His face and beat Him”*
 2. This was not a trial. (Matt. 27.24)
- B. The emotional suffering of Jesus.
 1. **Matthew 26.69-74:** Denied by Peter.
 2. **Matthew 27.20,21:** Rejected in favor of a murderer.

III. THE SCOURGING

- A. The physical suffering of Jesus.
 1. **Matthew 27.26:** *“and when he had scourged Jesus”*
 2. **Isaiah 53.5:** *“...by His stripes, we are healed”*
- B. The emotional suffering of Jesus.
 1. **Matthew 27.27-29:** They humiliated Him.
 2. **Matthew 27.30:** They mocked Him.

IV. THE CRUCIFIXION

- A. The physical suffering of Jesus.
 1. **Luke 23.33:** *“there they crucified Him”*
 2. **John 19.28:** Consider the extent of his suffering.
- B. The emotional suffering of Jesus.
 1. **John 19.25-27:** His feelings for His mother.
 2. **Matthew 27.46:** He felt forsaken by His Father.

CONCLUSION: Galatians 2.20: *“I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

Hell is a Choice

The impact of our decisions is no more clear than when measured by eternity. The world, both secular and religious, insists that either Hell does not exist or that it is a place reserved only for the worst of the worst. It is difficult for many to accept that even those who are *“liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death”* (Rev. 21.8). After all, love is the defining character of our Creator. Everything God does, He does out of love (1 John 4.8). How do we reconcile the love of God with the existence of an eternal Hell? Simple. The Bible places our eternal destination clearly in the choices we make. Those who will spend eternity in Hell have chosen to be there.

First, God Himself tells us that Hell is a choice. Consider what God had to say to the children of Israel. The first generation of Israel never entered the land of promise but died in the wilderness. In Hebrews 3, they are described as people who *“rebelled,” “sinned,” “did not obey,”* and had *“unbelief”* (Heb. 3.16-19). Now addressing the second generation of Israelites, with the land of promise before them, God said, *“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live”* (Deut. 30.19).

Later, when Judah turned away from God and faced the threat of Babylon, it was God who said, *“I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?”* (Ezek. 33.11). The first generation of Israel failed to enter the promised land because of their own choices. The nation of Judah went into Babylonian captivity because of their own choices. God did not want this for them. He pleaded for them to change. It was not a failure of God’s love. It was because people made the wrong choices.

Second, Jesus Himself tells us that Hell is a choice. While we can see this in many different places, let’s consider the teachings of Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son. If you study the context, Jesus is addressing the arrogant and self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. These were individuals who looked down on the sinners and tax collectors and complained that Jesus *“receives sinners and eats with them”* (Luke 15.1-3). So Jesus teaches three parables to show how God feels about the lost.

In the third of these parables, you read about a young man who chose to leave home (Luke 15.11-13). His father did not kick him out. He chose to leave. He *“wasted his possessions with prodigal living”* (Luke 15.13). He found himself in need, and yet *“no one gave him anything”* (Luke 15.16).

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