

OLD-TIME RELIGION
12 Fervent, Soul-Winning Sermons

By

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CHAPTER THREE

WHO CARES IF A SINNER GOES TO HELL?

(Sermon preached Sunday night, February 10, 1946, Central Baptist Church, Chicago. Stenographically reported for The Sword of the Lord).

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die . . . ?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

" . . . him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

"I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27, 28).

I have taken so many texts tonight to give you some idea of the persistence of the call of GOD and the longing of the heart of GOD for the salvation of lost men everywhere. Throughout the Bible, beginning the very day that man sinned until the last chapter of Revelation, the call of GOD rings to a lost world as He pleads with men, as He calls, as He warns, as He invites lost

men to return to GOD and be saved from their sins.

From the day that Adam and Eve sinned, GOD has been seeking those who are lost. It is GOD who makes the first move in the salvation of every soul that is ever saved. For we are told in the Scripture that **"there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one"** (Romans 3:11,12).

Thank GOD for a loving, for a compassionate, for a seeking GOD! When JESUS came He announced everywhere, **"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"** (Luke 19:10).

Some people think that GOD is too good to send a person to Hell. My friend, GOD is good.

But if anyone of you goes to Hell, it will not be GOD's fault.

You

- will go to Hell in spite of all GOD can do.
- will go to Hell over the love of GOD,
- will go to Hell the pleadings of GOD,
- will go to Hell the warnings of GOD,
- will go to Hell the wooing of the Holy Spirit.
- will go to Hell over the Word of GOD.
- will go to Hell over the cross of Calvary.
- will go to Hell over the pleadings of friends and loved ones,
- will go to Hell the preaching of the Gospel,
- will go to Hell the prayers of mother and father,
- will go to Hell the ministry of the church of the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Yes, GOD has done everything that is possible for a loving GOD to do, to keep men out of Hell. But if they will not repent of their sins, if they will not heed the call of GOD, then there is nothing left for GOD to do but to send them, with their sins, to Hell.

Yes, GOD is good or He would never have given us JESUS.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Many times unsaved people feel that nobody cares

- when they are neglected, sometimes by the people of GOD.
- when they are beaten down by Satan;
- when they become discouraged and many times broken by sin, and nobody has sought them out,

they sometimes feel as David felt when he said, "**I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul**" (Psalm 142:4).

But if there is an unsaved person here tonight, I say to you that there are many more people who care than you realize. Oh, if we who are saved could look on the records of Heaven and see how many people prayed for us before we were saved!

If we could just know among the people of GOD how many there are who care! Hands went up all over this congregation awhile ago, saying, "Somebody is on my heart."

I. GOD the Father Cares Who Goes to Hell

But above all of that, I want you to see tonight some others who care, and I put at the head of the list GOD the Father.

Listen to the words of Peter: "**The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**" (II Peter 3:9).

Hear the call of GOD even in the Garden of Eden. Read how the first sinning parents hid themselves behind the trees in the garden and how GOD comes down from Heaven and walks through the garden, calling, '**Adam! Adam! where art thou?**'

Look through the pages of the Old Testament - to say nothing of the New - and you will be astounded at how many times you hear the call of GOD to a lost world. Someone has said the invitation and the plea and the call of GOD to a lost world occurs more than nineteen hundred times in the pages of this blessed Book.

What does it mean? It means that GOD is not willing that any should go to Hell.

"**As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.**" Then He said, "**Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?**" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Again we hear Him saying, "**All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people**" (Romans 10:21). And again, "**Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else**" (Isaiah 45:22). Listen again, "**Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon**" (Isaiah 55:7). And again, "**Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness**" (Isaiah 55:1,2).

Oh, how the heart of the heavenly Father yearns over a lost world! How He pleads! How He draws! How He calls! Yes, GOD cares. And none of the redeemed of GOD will ever know how much GOD cares until we are Home with Him one day.

II. The Holy Spirit Cares

Then listen to another call. The Holy Spirit, the blessed third Person of the Trinity, cares. "**And the Spirit and the bride say, Come**" - the last invitation in the Bible. JESUS is speaking to the Apostle John and He seems to be saying, "Before you close the book, John, let us make one more call, and in this last call, we are going to put everything in it. Let the Holy Spirit say, Come, for that is His business in the world."

JESUS said, "**When he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment**" (John 16:8). In the mercy, in the grace, in the infinite wisdom and plan of GOD, He sent the Holy Spirit into the world, and the Spirit's primary purpose is to convict the world of sin and to call sinners unto repentance.

Let me stop here long enough to say this: When JESUS made that promise of the Holy Spirit and stated His mission of convicting the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, He preceded that statement by saying, 'When the Spirit is come unto you [the people of GOD] then He will do this work in a lost world and in the hearts of sinners.' It scares me when I read that statement, for it means that in order for the Holy Spirit to do that indispensable work of convicting a lost world, in order for the Holy Spirit to woo and draw a lost world to GOD, first He must have a channel through which He can work. And that channel is the redeemed of GOD when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. JESUS said in John 6:44, "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.**"

That drawing power is the Holy Spirit. But oh, as children of GOD, think of the responsibility that rests upon me and upon you, that He cannot draw except as He has channels through which to work when He has come upon us! But the Holy Spirit is here. He is calling. He is knocking at the door of lost souls. He is wooing, pleading. In every way that the Holy Spirit can approach a heart, He does it.

Many of us have had this experience. When we are in sin or wandering away from GOD, we wake suddenly in the wee hours of the night. We don't know why. We cannot go back to sleep. And in the stillness of the night we begin to think. We begin to ask ourselves the question, "What is it all about? Where am I going from here? What about my relationship to GOD?" And maybe we try to dismiss it from our minds, but it keeps hammering away at our hearts. What is it? It is the blessed Holy Spirit reaching for a soul.

Or maybe you have sat by a Mother's bedside as she went out to be with GOD. A wayward son or daughter was there, and Mother looked up through those dimming eyes to say, "Son, meet Mother in Heaven," or "Daughter, meet Mother in Heaven." Oh, how it gripped your heart! What was it? The Holy Spirit knocking, knocking at your heart's door.

Maybe you sat in a service such as this. The preacher was preaching or the people were singing.

Something got hold of your heart. The still small voice said, "I ought to get right with GOD. I ought to quit the way I have been going. I ought to turn away from this." Something grappled at your heartstrings that day. The Holy Spirit, oh, how He cares! He is not willing that any should perish, but He is doing His utmost, with every means that He can lay His hand on, to try to stop that soul in its downward plunge and turn those feet in the Heavenward way.

III. GOD's Son Cares

Then there is the Son of GOD. Listen: "**Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**" If you read the account of the three years' ministry of our Lord and read the words which fell from His lips, as recorded in the four Gospels, you could never doubt how JESUS cares.

Look at Him as He sits on the curb of Jacob's well one day, tired and hungry. A broken, wretched, filthy, degraded sinner woman comes that way, and so anxious is the Lord to reach that soul with salvation that He forgets all about His physical appetite and the fatigue of His tired body. And when His disciples return with the food they bought at a nearby village and offer Him to eat, He tells them He is not hungry. They are astonished because they knew how hungry He was before they left, and so tired that He could not walk up to the village with them. They say, "**Master, eat.**" JESUS answers, "**I have meat to eat that ye know not of.**" He went after a soul with such earnestness, with such love, with such compassion that in the intensity of that hour He lost His hunger for food.

Look at Him again in the early morning in the temple when the Pharisees drag a poor unfortunate woman out to expose her in her shame, in her sin. JESUS stoops down and writes on the ground with His finger. After awhile when her accusers are all gone, JESUS looks at her and says, "**Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?**" She answers, "**No man, Lord.**" Then JESUS says, "**Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**" Man said, "Stone her"; JESUS said, "Save her."

Yes, so much does the Lord care that He left Heaven's glory, emptied Himself and became of no reputation, took upon Himself the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Yes, He went all the way to Calvary and there shed the last drop of His Blood; there dipped His soul in Hell; there made His soul an offering for sin, that many might be saved. So great was His love, so much did He care that even in the midst of His agony He could look down from the cross upon those who were crucifying Him and those who were railing at Him and mocking and jeering Him and pray for them, "**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do**" (Luke 23:34).

Yes, so much was His concern that He could forget all about His own suffering to answer the heartbroken cry of a dying thief on the cross by His side and to say to that poor soul, "**To day shalt thou be with me in paradise**" (Luke 23:43).

Oh, my friends, if you go to Hell, you will go over the greatest love this world has ever known; you go to Hell in spite of the greatest effort that has ever been made in this universe, relative to anything GOD had anything to do with; that is, GOD's effort through JESUS CHRIST to reach a

lost world.

IV. The Lost in Hell Care

Then not only do GOD the Father, GOD the Holy Spirit, and GOD the blessed Son care, but listen, did you know the lost in Hell care? You may be surprised to hear me say this, but when JESUS told that story of the rich man in Hell, JESUS told us about his cry for mercy. And when he was informed that he was beyond reach of mercy, now his next cry was, "**I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: For I have five brothers; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.**"

Abraham said, "**They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.**"

But this man was not satisfied with that: '**Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, [and told them about Hell, surely] they will repent. [Won't you let Lazarus go and tell them to repent of their sins and not to come to this place?]**' (Luke 16:28-30).

If the lost in Hell could speak tonight while I am preaching, I think they would be saying, "Preacher, stop them some way! Preacher, warn them somehow! Preacher, tell them not to come to this place!" Yes, my friends, every soul in Hell tonight is interested in the salvation of the lost upon the earth.

V. The Saved in Glory Care

But more than that; the saved in Glory care. Listen to JESUS' precious words: "**Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.**"

Down in Arkansas we used to sing a song, "*There is joy among the angels.*" But you know we sing a lot of songs that are unscriptural and we do not realize it. We sing, "*Will there be any stars in my crown?*" How many of you ever sang that song? Did you know that that is one of the most unscriptural and misleading songs ever written? Bless your heart; the Bible does not say anything about stars in anybody's crown. In fact, there will be mighty few people who will have even a crown. Not all the saved will wear a crown.

We sing, "*We shall wear a crown in the new Jerusalem.*" But you read your Bible and you will see that is not scriptural. This song, "*There is joy among the angels,*" is very unscriptural also. JESUS did not say anything about joy among angels, but He said, "**There is joy in the presence of the angels.**"

Now I am sure that the angels, in a measure, do rejoice, but the angels do not know how to rejoice when a sinner is saved because they have never been lost.

They do not know what it is to be lost. The angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who are saved, and their dealings are with saved people. But there is a crowd yonder in Glory who know what it means to be lost and know how to rejoice when a sinner comes home to GOD. They are the redeemed of GOD who have trod the way before us, who have been saved

and have gone on to Glory. You say, "Do they know what is going on down here on the earth?" With all my heart I believe that they do. If that isn't so, what did Paul mean in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews in that opening verse? After he has called the roll of the heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter, starting with Abel, he comes clear across the centuries, telling how they by faith stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, how they lived and fought and suffered; then he said, "**Seeing we also are compassed about** [or completely surrounded] **with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us**" (Hebrews 12:1).

The whole figure is of a Roman arena and we who are here now are down here on the race course. And the race set out before us means the marked-out path into which the runner is to stay or be disqualified. The Roman arena was a complete circle with the course down in the middle. And in the grandstands, all around it, tier upon tier, were the spectators.

Paul said that we are completely surrounded by a veritable cloud of spectators - those who have gone before, and they are looking down upon us. Do you know, that makes the business of serving the Lord the most romantic thing in all the world to me. I tell you the greatest thing in this world, when I preach the Gospel and stand in this pulpit, or when I plead with a sinner to give his heart to CHRIST, is to be conscious that I am linked up with the plan of the ages and I have just taken up where those who ran the race before me laid down, and they are looking down upon me as I continue in the task they laid down.

I used to be number four man in the relay race, the hardest place on the team. Why? Because if number one fails, it throws number two and number three behind and that throws number four behind. If number two fails to make up what number one lost, then number three is handicapped and number four has to make up for all three in front of him. Each man makes the race around the course and passes an article that he holds in his hand to the next; the next man grabs it and away he goes.

One day somebody laid down a task he had been doing for GOD. Somebody finished the course and I have taken it up, and I am making another lap in the race. Now Paul said, 'They are looking down upon us. All around us, like a cloud, they are looking down upon us.' Oh, what an incentive for us to do our dead level best for GOD!

On the tenth day of December my mother went home to Heaven. How she loved to hear her boy preach! Naturally she thought I was the greatest preacher in the world. She would get up from her sickbed any time to hear me preach. For the last ten years of her life she was sick so much of the time, but when I was in reach of her, she never missed a sermon that I preached. Now I think every time I get in the pulpit to preach, she hears every word. Oh, that thought thrills me through and through! The saints of the ages are looking down upon us. There is joy in the presence of the angels of GOD when a sinner is saved.

You know, that crowd of spectators are not only looking down upon us, but they are pulling for us!

I used to play football. There was my college crowd out yonder in the grandstand, and they

would yell, "We want a touchdown! We want a touchdown!" Oh brother, it would just thrill you from your toes to the top of your head as they yelled for their team, as they pulled for us out yonder. That made you do your dead level best, giving every ounce of energy you had.

And when I think how that crowd is pulling for us, how interested they are in the salvation of sinners, I tell you, the greatest thing in this world is to be a Christian. The most glorious thing on earth is to have a part in GOD's business. No wonder David said, "**I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness**" (Psalm 84:10). Brother, there is no little job for GOD. There is no little job in the service of the Lord. It is the biggest thing that anybody ever put his hands to.

One day when I was in my study, a man knocked at my door. I bade him come in. Nervously he asked me for help. That was in the days of the depression. "This is the first time in my life I have ever had to ask for help," he said. I think I am a pretty good judge of people. I think I can tell when a person is on the level. Immediately I felt this man was sincere. I reached in my pocket, and I helped him. I gave him what he asked. When he started out I said, "I am doing this for you in the name of JESUS, my Lord."

That man stopped dead still, turned around, looked at me, and he said, "That is the first time anybody ever said anything like that to me in my life."

Tears were welling up in his eyes. And I asked, "Are you a Christian?"

Then the tears began streaming down his face. "No, sir."

But you never saw anybody in your life that wanted to be any more than I do." He said, "Five years ago my precious mother died and as I sat by her bedside and held her hand, the last words she said were, 'Jake, promise me that you will meet me in Heaven.' I promised her that I would. Preacher, for five years I have been doing everything I know to be saved. I have mourned over my sins; I have prayed, cried and begged GOD to save me. I have done everything I know, but somehow it seems I can't be saved."

I said, "Listen, fellow, GOD sent you here today to answer that mother's prayer. Sit down here and I can tell you how to be saved."

He sat down. I took my Bible and showed him the simple, beautiful plan of salvation in JESUS CHRIST.

"Now," I said, "get down on your knees and let's pray." I got down beside him, put my arm around him; he slipped his arm around me, and in just a few minutes he began to pray aloud. I waited until he had finished praying, then I prayed. And there on our knees he confessed his sins to GOD. I said, "Tell the Lord you will trust Him and that you will receive by faith His promise that to **'as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.'**"

He said, "Lord JESUS, the best I know how, I am receiving you by faith."

When he said that, he threw both arms around me and said, "Oh, preacher, it is done! I am saved!"

When he started out, he turned around, took me by the hand and said, "Listen, preacher, I may never see you again in this world, and I don't know how to thank you for what you have done for me. But I want to tell you something; when you get to Heaven my old mother up there will know how to thank you!"

I said, "Fellow, did you know that right now your mother is leading the shouting in Glory?"

Yes, there is joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents. He is not willing that any should perish.

Listen! If you are lost today, let me remind you again, GOD is calling you with all of the heart of a loving GOD. The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, is seeking, calling, knocking, wooing, convicting, and trying to lead you into salvation in JESUS CHRIST. The blessed Son of GOD who died on Calvary's cross is still standing over a lost world with outstretched arms as He did over Jerusalem, and many times I think I can all but see the tears again raining down His blessed cheeks as He says to a lost world, **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**

VI. The Devil Alone Wants You to Go to Hell

The lost in Hell are saying to lost souls here, "Don't come to this place." The saved in Glory are pulling for your salvation tonight.

The truth of the matter is, there is but one being in the universe that wants you to go to Hell and that is the Devil. And if you go to Hell it will be because you listened to him, turned down all these others, and ignored all these other calls and all these other pleas from loving hearts in Heaven and on earth. You will go to Hell in spite of all that they all can do. Oh, my friend, don't listen to the Devil! Don't go to Hell!

Yonder in Little Rock one morning a man sat on the back pew in the church. He had been coming to the services for a long time. I knew he was under conviction and I knew that he wanted to be saved. So that morning when he failed to respond to the call, I went back at the close of the service, took him by the hand and I said, "Jerry, why didn't you come this morning?"

He stood there trembling. "Brother Hankins, I don't know. I can't describe to you what goes on inside of me when you make the call. It seems my heart will just pound out of my bosom. I want to come. It seems something pulls me so that I just must come. Then when I start, it seems as if a heavy hand grabs me and just holds me in my tracks."

"Well, Jerry, don't you know what that is?"

He said, "What is it?"

"That pull at your heart's string so that that heart of yours almost pounds out of your bosom, that something that grapples with your heart until you can hardly resist running down the aisle - that is GOD trying to draw you by the Holy Spirit, through the Gospel and the prayers of GOD's people, unto salvation. Do you know what the heavy hand is, Jerry?"

He said, "I guess it is the Devil."

I said, "Jerry, you don't have to guess. When that conflict is taking place in your soul, it is the battle of one of the greatest forces in the universe for that soul of yours. The Devil knows that the minute you break loose and turn to CHRIST you are lost to him forever and he is not going to give you up until he has to. The trouble with you, Jerry, is that you have been listening to the Devil instead of listening to CHRIST."

He looked up at me, reached over, took me by the hand and said, "Brother Hankins, I have listened to the Devil for the last time. I am coming to JESUS!"

My friend, if you go to Hell, it will be because you listened to the Devil. He is the only one in the universe that wants you to go to Hell.

Surely you care if you yourself go to Hell. Won't you repent of your sins and trust CHRIST to save you? He says, "**Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely**" (Revelation 22:17). He says, "**Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out**" (John 6:37). Will you come trusting Him?

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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