

*Open the Door
to an Abundant Life*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 7

ETERNAL REALITIES

Chapter 2 12

GOD INHABITS HIS PEOPLE

Chapter 3 15

BRING ETERNITY INTO TIME

CONCLUSION 22

INTRODUCTION

We preach for one reason: to stir the hearts of men and women everywhere to see the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every heart needs to know that the Word of God is still quick and powerful, and that the efficacious Blood of the Lamb is still working today, cleansing and covering us.

The purpose of every message is to save souls, as the Word of God with the Holy Spirit draws those who do not know Christ. For Christians, it is that we would fall more in love with Jesus as we recognize that He has set us free forever, having delivered us from sin and death and the bondage of hell.

The abundant life of Christ is for us to enjoy. This life is beautiful—uninhibited by the fear of death and the weight of sin. Satan, however, would lead people to believe that as believers, we are the inhibited ones. Hell contends that *we* are the ones burdened with inhibitions, missing

out on the fun times this world has to offer.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As this booklet will show, Satan wants to keep people from living in the reality of Christ's life. The devil wants to drag souls to hell, luring them into his inhibited habitation of unending pain, want, and loneliness.

God desires that we would discover our unlimited potential in His habitation, the kingdom of heaven. His purpose is to establish us as kings and priests in His family. Our part is to go through the Door (John 10:7-9) into abundant life to experience absolute liberation in our spirit, soul, and body.

Chapter One
ETERNAL REALITIES

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

“Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations” (Isaiah 14:9).

Every person who has ever lived is unique. Not one of us has shared exactly the same disposition, opportunities, or experiences. So much goes on in a life, good and bad, but those things do not determine where we will spend eternity. Your destiny is determined by your response when Christ knocks on the door of your heart.

Picture a mother with her newborn baby in her arms. She smiles at the child as she places her in the crib. That woman is experiencing full-

ness; she has given birth to a child she reproduced. She is so happy and the child is so beautiful. When you consider it, it is hard to reconcile that scene with hell.

Consider a father playing on the front lawn with his son: he is so happy and the boy is so happy, and the daily pressures of life have become abstract. It is difficult to reconcile that scene with hell.

On the other hand, consider someone who has lived in terrible sin. He may have hurt many people in his life, yet he is forgiven, cleansed, and purified, and he is now living for Christ. He received the gift of grace and mercy when he opened the door to abundant life.

For some people, it is hard to accept that the sinner is on his way to heaven where he will live a beautiful life with Christ forever. It is even more difficult to reconcile the fact that someone who lives well, yet who rejects Jesus Christ, is going to hell (Luke 18:10-14)—but every moment of every day it happens.

Hell Rises Up to Meet Them

The Bible tells us that every time an unsaved person dies, hell is stirred up—moved to meet him (Isaiah 14:9). It is not the sort of welcome

people generally think of. There will be wailing and cursing and gnashing of teeth. Torment, guilt, and remorse will go on forever. Imagine the loneliness and the darkness that will overwhelm people who go there. They rejected the love of the Master; they never opened their heart's door to the life Christ was waiting to give them.

Oh, hell is full of souls. It is not empty, the way we think of a dark and lonely place. It is inhabited. But this habitation is totally inhibiting. There is no fellowship in hell. There is fire, yet utter darkness inhibits any opportunity for association. People who go there have only their consciousness of memories and unsatisfied desires to torment them.

No one in hell sits down with his family and enjoys a meal. All the jokes about meeting old friends there, having parties and wild times in hell, are forgotten. Why? Because in hell there is only anguish that never ends. People there will have the same lusts they had during their lifetime, but their desire just goes on and on without satisfaction.

Can you imagine what it might be like to inhabit a place where you are inhibited by the bondage of sin forever? Many of us have lived

in deep sin. We have had a taste of the misery that it caused us. I can remember getting so angry and resentful, living in sin and not liking it but not knowing there was a way out. Imagine being presented with a remedy and not taking it.

Unending Pain

Some of us have watched people with terminal illnesses deal with excruciating pain day after day. One dear woman in one of my first churches survived ten long years with cancer before God finally brought her home to heaven. She had days of tears, but I can always remember her victorious spirit. When death came for her, God received her into glory.

For the unsaved, however, death comes and the pain goes on. Their pain will never go away. Suddenly, they are in eternity with every evil soul who never received the Savior.

What is worse is that now there is no hope; there is no way out of their habitation in eternity. Memories of the times Jesus gave them to receive Him and be saved will keep popping up. Indeed, memory is one the chief torments of hell. Those in the fire always remember and can never forget. "Their worm dieth not" (Mark

9:44-48)—their conscience burns and is never quenched.

Who goes to hell? Only those who refuse to receive Christ. People do not go to hell because of their sins. All have sinned because we are all sinners. Jesus, however, bled and died so that no one would have to go to hell. By grace through faith, whosoever will can come, accept the love of Christ, and receive Him into his heart. To as many as receive Him He gives power to become the sons of God (John 1:12).

Chapter Two

GOD INHABITS HIS PEOPLE

Christians are people who have come to God and received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Advocate. We have allowed the love of God and the grace of God to work out a different kind of life for us. We live differently, act differently, and look differently. We present ourselves as believers who are followed continually by the grace of God. We know how to grow and how to enter into God's life. We have the uninhibited life of the Lord Jesus.

I am deeply blessed when I see people from various backgrounds praying and worshipping in our church. We worship Him because we love Him. It blesses me to know that people gather and pray every morning. We lift up requests to heaven and spend time praying and praising God. It is a great blessing because these people mean it. The intensity of their time before the Lord is beautiful.

God inhabits the praises of His people. This is an uninhibited habitation. It is free and glorious because it represents a release by the Holy Spirit. People raise their hands and come together in an exchange of the Word of God. With these things, we reveal our love for the Master and it is always a joy to see. We receive the grace of God and share Christ with each other because of what He has done in our hearts.

Show People the Real Jesus

I recall one service when we gave an invitation for salvation and seven adults raised their hands immediately. Three of them were what we would call “hippies.” After the service, I found out that these young people had been going to a church that preached against everything that they were doing—and some of the things they were doing were very wrong. But that other place never communicated the love of God to them. They came to our church and heard a message on the saving grace of Jesus Christ. They heard about the love that sent the Son of Man to the Cross to save humanity.

“This is the Jesus we wanted to meet,” one man said. “The other Jesus we heard about wasn’t someone we wanted to meet. But this Jesus, this

One from the Bible, Him we want, so we raised our hands to be saved.”

These young people walked through the open door to the abundant life of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ loves you. He loves you enough to say that He will never, no *never*, no never leave or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). That is the Jesus of the Bible. That same Jesus makes it possible that you will never again have to fear going to hell.

He died on the Cross for me and for you. All who accept Him as their Savior can walk through that door into abundant life.

Chapter Three

BRING ETERNITY INTO TIME

“And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

“And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

“And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (2 Kings 6:15-17).

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

“And 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” (Luke 16:22-24).

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).

If God would pull back the curtains that hide our eyes from heaven and hell today, I am sure our attitudes would change in an instant. We would make sure that we were in church for every service. We would find a way to get there under any circumstance, by the grace of God. Seeing what awaits us and considering those who are lost would prompt us to give beyond our tithes and offerings to reach others. We would pray like we never prayed before, saying, “Father, our Father, we are praying for souls. Please save them.”

If we could pull back the curtains and see the reality of heaven and hell, our lives would take on tremendous new dimensions. Our experience would contain a new reality, a new love, and a new joy. We would no longer live in condemnation, but live in the abundant activity of

God's divinity through the grace and compassion of God.

We have love, we have grace, and we have the Body of Christ. We have the Word of God and a tremendous opportunity to live abundantly in Christ. We have the opportunity to be among the greatest messengers in the entire universe.

Pulling Them Out of the Fire

I remember the story of an 18-year-old boy who stopped at a burning house in Norway, Maine. He went inside, carried out two children first, and then helped the mother and the father find their way to safety. Four people were saved because this boy stopped. It was a freezing night. The family was snug in their beds, unaware of the danger around them. None of those people would be alive today if not for this boy. Today, that family and that man are very close friends. There is a friendship because these people owe their physical lives to him.

Think of what great friends we have in those whom we lead to Christ. We show them the way to be saved from hell. We reveal the grace of God with the Gospel. What abundant opportunities there are for us to save people from the

fire! Imagine what a difference we can make in someone's life by communicating love, grace, and life. We need only remember what a difference that made in our own lives.

Think of it: By leading people to Christ, we keep people from a multitude of sins—now and for all eternity.

Scenes in Heaven

Imagine some of the scenes we will see in heaven. Oh, the magnitude of the eternal significance of communication between those who witnessed and those who received their witness and were saved! Those who shared Jesus will rejoice with those they helped save from hell.

Just imagine the beauty of those eternal exchanges.

Is it any wonder that the angels of heaven rejoice when one soul gets saved (Luke 15:7, 10)? I can almost hear them saying to each other, "Look! That one is not going to hell. Thank you, Lord. These will not go to hell."

For this reason, God calls soul winning the greatest business in the world. It is a remarkable thing for the Body of Christ to have a worldwide vision through Jesus Christ. We do not want the lost to be cast into hell. We want them to hear

about the love of God through the Gospel of grace and the message of deliverance. We want them to open the door to an abundant life.

Over the years, our Bible college has raised up hundreds who go out with the message of God's love. Some will take it to places where no written language exists. Yet, God will provide a way to bring His grace to their understanding. Hundreds will be saved and transformed because they were willing to go.

Years and Years and Years of Joy

Consider what awaits people in eternity. First, think of hell and all the indescribably awful things that will go on there. But then, think of heaven and the joy that will go on for billions and billions of years.

I was thinking of how great it will be to march down those golden streets. We will live in a city with no darkness, no sin, no sickness, no defeat, and no death.

Beyond all this, heaven is where we will meet Jesus Christ and see His nail-scarred hands and His glorified body. There we will gather to praise God, to sing and shout of His victory. Billions of years into eternity, we will still be serving God.

Imagine a place with no resentment, no bitterness and no arguing. This is the way it will be forever and ever. We will simply experience the fullness of joy beyond anything we have ever seen on earth.

Heaven will reveal unlimited, uninhibited beauty, royalty, majesty, and power. God's divinity in perfection will be before us, around us, in us, and through us.

What's more, it will never end.

With this understanding of our destiny, it is so important for us to be filled with the Spirit because we have so much in Jesus Christ. We have it all by grace through faith, not of works. The law does not judge us, because we live in mercy. When we fail, we repent and rebound. We come to Him just as we are, and we are not condemned in legalism. Grace saves us, and grace has forgiven us.

We can experience the "eternal is" of God right now. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8) We can be set free from depression and condemnation and from agony. Things that threaten our emotions do not have to affect us. All we have to do is open that door to abundant life. We can enter into heaven on earth just by thinking with God.

Starting this moment, we can be free people, cleansed and forgiven forever. The guilt and condemnation will go away. We know our future, therefore we can live as kings and priests today.

The Holy Spirit is precious to us. We can make Jesus Christ visible in our lives that many can come to the knowledge of the truth. Jesus stands at the door and knocks. Whoever opens that door receives the abundant life He has promised (Revelation 3:20).

CONCLUSION

The compassion and love of God can define our purpose and give us an eternal value system. Some of us planned to live our lives in certain ways. Why not invest your life in souls? Why not invest time in going to Bible college, the highest form of education? Why not invest it in people by living according to faith and preparing for a life of ministry? Invest your life in Jesus. Become a pastor. Be a foreign missionary. Be a sound businessperson who supports the work of God by giving.

Heaven is real. Hell is real. Invest in the Master's ministry and redeem the time. Enjoy the abundant life He has for you.

Dear Lord, we need help with our ministries for all the different people we encounter. We go to the alcoholics; we go to the addicts. But we also go to the 'up-and-outers' and the businessmen so consumed by success that they cannot see their need for God.

God help us to experience your abundant life in

every way. Give us a burden to serve You in a specific calling. Give us Your compassion and constrain us with Your love. Don't let us be passive. Keep us divinely motivated through Your Word. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.