

"GOD'S BLOCKADES ON THE ROAD TO HELL"

2 Peter 3:9

From this verse I want to give you a brief message. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness. But is long-suffering to us - not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

It is not as it seems to be, that God is slow. But God is waiting for the good reason that he is not willing that any perish. And he is giving more time for sinners to repent.

The passage tells us that God does not want men to go to Hell. But God, as we would humanly speak, postpones his punishment. Even his promised punishment for sin. And he is doing this in order that men might return unto God. That they might repent and be saved.

The Bible reveals clearly that God does not want men to go to Hell.

Don't misunderstand me, the Bible teaches that there is a place called Hell for those who reject Christ. The Lord, himself, said that the man who rejects him will be cast into the lake of fire - where there is burning and knashing of teeth. That all Christ rejectors will be consumed one day in Hell. But the Bible teaches that God does not want men to go this way. Actually, God made this for the Devil and his angels. Matt. 25:46. Men deliberately followed the Devil down to Hell. Therefore, God cannot be blamed for this.

Our Text says that God is long-suffering. That he is anxious and concerned for men to be saved. In fact, it tells us that he has done everything possible to keep men out of Hell.

Look at the Old Testament -- the story of the flood. You will find that after God had seen the wickedness of men's hearts, he decided that the earth had to be destroyed by floods. Now he postponed the day of judgement by 120 years in order to send the preacher to persuade the people. He gave them an ark that they might see it - that they might be saved. Long-suffering, desiring men to be saved. That they might not be punished - the very judgement that he knew that they needed. So it is that God tries to keep men out of Hell. And I think there are some blockades on this road that he is trying to keep men out.

I want you to think with me now about some of these blockades. I probably could mention several - but lets take two or three that you might be familiar with.

I. THE BIBLE

You may not be reading the Bible. It may be covered with dust but it is God's blockade to keep you out of Hell. Every warning in the word of God concerning sin is God's effort to keep you out.

"Be not deceived - God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth - that shall he also reap. " God is trying to get you to see the folly of sin. The folly of doing without God - rejecting Christ.

Every promise in the Bible of salvation is an effort to keep you out. Isaiah said, come, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet - they shall be as white as snow.

Jesus said, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest. He makes clear the way of salvation in the Bible. Now this is God's blockade. If you go to Hell, you cannot blame God for going there. For you have gone over the Bible which is God's blockade between you and Hell.

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II. PREACHERS

Why does God call men to give up secular work and to dedicate their full time and talent to that of preaching the Gospel and trying to win men to Christ. It is in order that men might be saved. And I believe that this is a blockade between lost men and Hell.

That is the only reason that I am preaching the Gospel - it is to keep men out of Hell. If I wanted to do something just to please people, I'd get into something else. If I were doing it for the money, I wouldn't do it, any longer because I would get into something else that I believe my talents could produce money and a plenty of it. But I don't do it because of that. But because I want men not to go to Hell. I want to make it hard for them to go there. And that is why I preach on sin - and I preach on sin where I see it led of the Holy Spirit. And as a blockade for some of you and Hell today. God used preachers - he used Jonah until old Nineveh shifted from a riotous, sinful life to repented tears. He used Ezekiel, whose tears were turned to blood, as they heard the rumbling wheels of destruction coming. Jeremiah who wept over the sins of the people, was a blockade. Martin Luther was a blockade. Booth went to the poorer sections of London to practice and to preach the Gospel. Preachers have been used as a means to open people's eyes, as a means of opening their ears, to the voice of God. To enable men to have faith.

✓ III. THE CROSS

God saw that men were going to break his law and they were going to deserve Hell. And to keep them out, he would have to give the blood of his only begotten son. The son was willing to pay the price. And so he came into the world and became human flesh that he might suffer for our sins. That he might pay the penalty of sin. That he might keep us out of Hell. He gave his son to die for you. The Son wants you to stay out of Hell enough that he was willing to go to the Cross, that he might save you.

Jesus said "yes" to the cross in our behalf. He said yes to the scourge that cut his back. He said yes to the dirty spit on his face. To the beard that was plucked out. To the palms of the hands that beat his face to a pulp. To the crown of thorns, to the nails, to the cross. He said to death, on this cross. He was made a curse on our behalf. I wonder sometimes if we have the right attitudes in our hearts and are moved by the story of the cross. The story is told of the poem "Curfew Will Not Ring Tonight". The story is some thing like this.

One man had committed a murder in Cromwell's time and he was sentenced to be executed at sundown at the ringing of the curfew bell. The young man was engaged to be married. The woman who loved him, came to Cromwell and begged to spare his life. But the statesman said, I cannot spare him, he must die at sundown.

On the day of the execution, she begged him again. But he said, he must die tonight at the ringing of the curfew at sundown.

The young woman left - how could she save her lover. She rushed to the

church and went up into the belfry and got hold of the clapper of the bell. When the old sexton came to ring the bell - the curfew that meant death to her lover - she clung hard to the clapper and was beaten back and forth until her hands and body were beaten into a pulp. Then finally the deaf old sexton who couldn't hear the bell, but he was accustomed to ringing it, thought it was ringing and stopped and went back home. The young woman stumbled down and left the church. She ~~meant~~ the messengers coming from the scene of the would-be execution. She held up her bleeding hands and said, "I did it, because I loved him." They took her to Cromwell for punishment. He heard her story - he saw her bleeding body. With the tears pouring down his cheeks, "If you love him enough to give your life for him - then I'll spare him." Curfew will not ring tonight - your lover will live.

My friend, God saw that we had broken his holy law. The wages of sin is death. That we were plunging down to a Devil's Hell. The only way to save us, the Lord Jesus Christ, had to go up into the belfry of Calvary and there to die - that he might save us. He died for you and for me so that we can escape the penalty.

Why do people go to Hell over the love of God, and over the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. God help everyone listening to me - if you love God and if Christ loves you that much to die for you on the cross - won't you accept him. Will you today not cross that barrier and be saved this very moment.

Dr. Lee, once preaching in Australia, illustrated this thing with the torture of the crucifixion of Christ. When he had finished he said, some of you are no more moved than if you had seen a dead cat or dog, on the highway. After that service, he said, a young woman came. With tears on her cheeks, well sir, God sent you these thousands of miles to take a photograph of my heart.

And I plead guilty - oh, until this morning I had heard about the cross. I have read about the crucifixion and I've heard choirs sing about the cross - but until today, I have to plead guilty - it never moved my heart.

I want to ask you - when you heard about the cross, then cutting his back to shreds, crowning him with thorns, nailing him to the tree. Has it moved your heart. I am not sitting in judgement. But has it moved your heart? I am just asking you the question.

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IV. SALVATION

God has made the plan of salvation so simple, that though a man be very simple-minded - he can see and understand. This is a blockade between you and Hell. Even a child can understand the way to Heaven. And God hasn't placed salvation in the church, in baptism, nor in works - but he has placed it in simple trust in Jesus Christ - our Saviour, that anyone who would trust him. John 3:16. 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. How simple that is.

Whosoever believeth in him.

Titus 3:5,6 - Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost which he had shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. We are not saved by what we do. We are saved by the mercy of God. That makes salvation possible. For the worst of us, as well as for those not so bad.

Acts 16:30,31 - Sir, what must I do to be saved? The only direct question in the Bible. Somebody asked how to be saved.

What is God's answer - believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Not believe, and do this and that, and the other. But believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ. This is God's Word - it is very simple. A plain plan - it is a blockade to the road to Hell. It is so simple that you sitting there, if you are willing to look up to God and say, I believe in you, I trust you now. You will be saved this very moment.

Now the Bible says let the redeemed of the Lord say so. I mean for Jesus to be a topic of your conversation. Now you try to introduce some men and women -- do you know Jesus.

Abraham Lincoln said on one occasion when I left Springfield for Washington, I was not a Christian - he said. When I lost my boy, the big grief of my life, I was not a Christian.

But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of all of our slain soldiers, I became a Christian. And I can say to you that I do love Jesus.

It is just that simple. And if you love Jesus and if he has meant much to you - you'll want him and you'll mean much to others.

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT

I mention this last blockade today - in the 16th chapter of John, we are told the purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world - to convict men

of sin, of righteousness, and judgement. V. 7-11. The business of the Holy Spirit is to make you see that you are a sinner. And to bring you to the Lord Jesus Christ, to save you from sin. I'm sure as you listen to me today, you have felt the Holy Spirit as he has brought conviction to sin. He has pleaded with you to come to Christ - probably while I have been speaking - you have felt the still small voice saying, you ought to be saved today. You ought not to go on without Christ. You ought to be saved right now. This is God's blockade - trying to keep you out of Hell. The Spirit has come into the world that he might get between every man and Hell and persuade him to come to the Lord Jesus. And why not?

There's the story of an old prospector who went West to search for gold. To get rich and then to come back home to be married. He took only his dog with him. Out there he would dig up the gold in the day, and at night he would take it home and admire it. He would dream of the day when he would be back home - rich and married. One night the dog awakened him while he was sleeping - he looked all around and saw nothing. He scolded the dog and went back to bed. Soon he was awakened again - he cursed the dog, and he said if you wake me up again - I'll blow your brains out. A little later that night the dog awoke him again. The man got up, took out his gun, and killed the dog. He went back to bed. To awake again for the robber came in and took his money and killed him.

I say it very reverently, but the Holy Spirit is like that watch dog. To warn you of sin - of delay in being saved. And try to bring you to Christ. It is a serious thing to say no to him. Right now while he speaks to you - won't you come and be saved.

Can you see God's blockades on the road to Hell. God loves you and he wants

the hymn writer says - Softly and Tenderly - Jesus is calling. And you need to trust him and to be saved right now.