

and the thought of him
going from one fire
into another.

Start

I went back to my hotel room that night.
I sat on the toilet, and I cried.

Convulsively.

I cried.

I said,
"God, I don't understand."
And he said, "That's not your problem."
And I said,

"Well it kinda is."

And he said, "Why?"
And I said, "Because I'm a pastor."
And he said, "Oh you're a pastor, what does *that* mean?"
And he said,

"No,

no, it's not your problem because you haven't made it your problem,
you haven't gone over there and done anything,
you're just sittin' on the toilet."

And I said, "You're right. I am. Just sittin' on the toilet."

And he said, "What are you gonna do?"

And I said, "Well after I'm done here on the toilet,

I'm gonna brush my teeth,

and then I'll go to bed."

And he said, "Why."

And I said — I said...

And he said,

"Why."

And I said, "Because you have already done so much."

And he said,

"Exactly."

And he said that he's saved us, he's taken care of us,

he said, "Why don't you listen when I tell you that?"

And he said, "You think the Devil is a little man with horns."

He said, "You think that?"

An' I said, "I don't know."

An' he said, "You really think that?"

Do you really really really think that?"

And I said, "No,
not really."

And he said,
"There is no little man.

There is only you
and your fellow man.

You wanna see Satan — ?
there's your Satan.

You wanna see Hell,
you look around."

And he said, "There is no Hell.

And there is no reason to tell people
that they're going to Hell.

Because they *are* in Hell.

They are already there.

You gotta take them out of the Hell they're already in.

That boy," the Lord tells me — he says,

"That boy, he is standing next to me right now.

And anyone who tells you otherwise

lies."

I know

you *all* have a powerful urge to communicate.

I know it. I see it. Your urge

to communicate God's love,

to bring people into this church,

to help them,

to save them

to make their lives better,

and their afterlives

everlasting.

You have that powerful urge to communicate.

But you are failing

because the distance between

you
and everyone else
is
insurmountable.

But I'm here to tell you,

the distance

is you.

It's me.

It's all of us.

We put the distance there.
When we shun our neighbors,
when we judge our friends,
when we look down at people
from other places
and other religions,
we create

an insurmountable distance
where there is no distance at all.

Where are we today?
Where are we
today?
I say

we are no longer a congregation that believes in Hell.
A radical change: we are no longer a congregation that says, "My way is the only way."

We are no longer

that kind of church.

(End of sermon.)

(PASTOR nods to music director...)

(Organ plays. If there's a band, then the whole band plays.)

Stop