

sermon study summary

Why Believe Series Part 11

June 1 / 2, 2024

Why Would a Loving God Send People to Hell?

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Jesus clearly taught that Hell is a literal reality. In fact, He said more about hell than He did about heaven or about love. The God of the Bible hates hell and hates people going there! “The Lord is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). “God our Savior...wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Hell was not part of God’s original creation. Hell was something God was forced to make because first Lucifer (the devil) and his fallen angels and then the people He created chose to rebel against God.

In the same way a JUST SOCIETY requires jails to deal with injustice, so a JUST GOD requires hell for those who live in rebellion against Him.

1. Hell is a real, literal place.
2. Hell is separation from God.
3. Hell is separation from others. There is no community in hell.

4. Hell is a place of anguish. Matthew 8:12 says in hell “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” People who have stubbornly resisted God all their lives will be full of regret and will gnash their teeth at themselves for ignoring or rejecting God.

5. HELL IS ETERNAL. The Bible uses such terms as eternal fire (Matthew 18:8), eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:2) and eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). The Bible also describes hell as a lake of fire or a place of unquenchable fire. We know eternal punishment is not annihilation because the same Greek word for ‘eternal’ is used to describe both heaven and hell.

6. Hell is a place of utter heartbreak. Hell is the last place you will want to end up.

How can a loving God send anyone to hell?

1. **God’s justice** requires it. God can’t turn a blind eye to evil and injustice. We are wired up with God’s sense of justice, and something inside of us says evil doers must pay for their crimes. That sense of justice raging inside of us comes from God. God is loving and merciful. But He is also just, holy, and morally perfect, which means He cannot turn his back on sin or injustice.

His justice demands that our sins be paid for. And so God did an amazing thing. He sent His son Jesus to die on the cross in our place to pay for our sins. That’s grace!

If we by faith accept God’s offer of grace and forgiveness and totally surrender to Him as our Lord and King, the trajectory of our eternity will change from hell to heaven. On the other hand, if we continue to ignore or defiantly reject God, then God’s perfect justice has no choice. We will spend eternity apart from God in hell.

2. **God’s love** requires it. God wants us to love Him freely from the heart, so He gives us the freedom to love Him back or to ignore or reject Him. Those who choose to reject Him will have to suffer the consequences of the decisions they make.

God doesn’t send anyone to hell, rather people send themselves to hell. They get exactly what they want: a life without God in it. Hell is the logical consequence of a life lived separated from God. It is a place where God is silent and leaves them alone. People are consigned to hell because they defy their Maker and want to be at the center of the universe.

The important question today is what will YOU do with Jesus?

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Where's a place you would never want to go? Why?
2. Have you ever had a moment of pure desperation? Describe what it felt like.

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read *2 Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 8:12; 18:8 and 25:46; Hebrews 6:2; Jude 1:7; Revelation 20:14*. Describe hell.
4. Read *Hebrews 9:27 and Matthew 22:1-3; 25:31-46*. What happens after death? Can a holy God allow unholy people into his kingdom to live with him? Explain.
5. What part do God's justice and love and my free will play in whether I go to heaven or hell?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

6. We are to talk to others about hell with a broken heart and a spirit of genuine humility. As a group, who in your spheres of influence can you talk to about hell? What would that conversation look like?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

How have you come to terms with heaven and hell? Where do you stand? What do you feel when thinking of these places?

Heaven and hell remind you of life after death. Are you in loving relationship with Jesus? Who of your family and friends need to know our Saviour Jesus Christ?

Read 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Timothy 2:4. Reflect on how God is patiently waiting for us.

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 8:12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 18:8 If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

Matthew 22:1-3 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

[Matthew 25:31-46](#)

2 Thessalonians 1:9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might

1 Timothy 2:4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Hebrews 6:2 instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Hebrews 9:27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Jude 1:7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Revelation 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, David McMillin, Mark Eckstein, and Jorel Quemuel