

Sermon Study Guide

Pastor: Dr. Henry Schorr

Date: April 23/24'16

THE MAIN THING: *The Afterlife: A Look at Hell*

What will **you** do with Jesus? Hell is real. The cross of Christ is real. Will we take a big step around the cross and navigate to an eternity in hell apart from Christ, or will we embrace the cross and Christ to live an eternity in heaven with Him?

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. Were you ever called to the principal's office at school? What did you have to give account for?
2. What are some of the ideas/thoughts that you have heard about 'hell' and who will be there? What thoughts or feelings are triggered for you when you hear the word 'hell'?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. What verses stand out for you in confirming the reality of hell?
Matt 13:49-50; 25:31-46; Luke 12:4-5; Heb 9:27
2. Imagine you are in conversation with a person who questions hell's reality. Use the following verses to give them the Scriptural description of hell: Matt 8:12; 25:10-13; 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thess 1:9; Jude 7; Rev 9:6; 20:14
3. Why do God's perfect justice and love make hell a necessary place? How did God's plan satisfy His justice and still provide a way to eternity in His presence? Rom 3:23; 5:8; John 3:16; 1 John 1:9

4. Pastor Henry said, "God doesn't cast people into hell; people put themselves into hell. Hell is a logical consequence of a life lived separate from God..." Discuss these statements in light of Romans 1:21-28

**Also, refer to sermon for June 7/8, 2014.

PURSUE MISSION: *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community as you live out your calling.*

1. For Christ followers, what is God asking you to do about reaching those in your sphere of influence who are 'lost'?
2. If you are not following Christ, what will you do with the cross?
3. How can your group members support your growth?

**<http://www.cschurch.ca/sermons/why-believe/what-about-those-who-have-never-heard-about-jesus/>

NIV verses

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." 13:49-50 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ^{and} throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 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.

25:10-13, 31-46 "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!' " 12 "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.' " 13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. vv 31-46....

Mark 9:48

where "the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.'

Luke 12:4-5

"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. ⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 1:21-28

1:21-28...; 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

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

Hebrews 9:27

Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment 1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Jude 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 9:6

During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them... 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

Sermon Study Summary

Jesus spoke of two eternal destinies after we die. One speaks of indescribable joy and the other unspeakable loss. There are a great number of opinions of hell and the afterlife. We may hate natural disasters but that does not mean we ignore them or pretend they do not exist. Many, including Lee Strobel, was outraged at the 'automatic and unappealable sentence to an eternity of torture and torment'. We must understand that God hates hell and the thought of people going there too (1 Tim 2:4). Jesus taught that hell was a reality (Matt 25:31-46) where the selfish, disobedient people went (see also Matt 13:49; Luke 12:4-5). In fact, Jesus spoke more about hell than He did on heaven or love, and any other New Testament writer. With the heart of Christ, every true Christian should never delight in hell or the idea of anyone going there. While it is appealing to think that everyone would go to heaven, not everyone will. The fact is that barring the return of Christ we will all die. The Bible teaches that our existence does not end at the grave. We are not reincarnated or held in a purgatory. We die once. And after that we meet our maker and face His judgment (Heb 9:27). What does the Bible teach on what hell is like?

1. Hell is a real place. Like heaven, hell is in another dimension, and is often described using metaphorical language.
2. Hell is separation from God. 2 Thess 1:9; Rev 9:1. What makes heaven 'heaven' and hell 'hell' is the fact that God's presence will be there (heaven) or utterly absent (hell). All that heaven will be (perfect love, belonging, peace and rest) – hell will not be (loneliness, isolation, pride, selfishness and greed). In hell there will be no rest or relief from regret and resentment with no hope of return.
3. Hell is separation from others. Matt 25:11. It is not a big party filled with sinful delights yet many think this way. There is no community in hell but it is a place of aloneness, pride, arrogance, selfishness and mistrust – those qualities that create conflict and divide community. Heaven is likened to a wedding banquet and hell as those shut out from this joy, laughter and community.
4. Hell is a place of anguish. Matt 8:12. Weeping is what you do when you feel hopeless and sad. The gnashing of teeth is done when you are in emotional pain. You are either regretting your own actions or are angry, blaming or accusing God for what has happened to you.
5. Hell is eternal. Matt 18:8, 25:46; Heb 6:2; Jude 7, Rev 20:14. There is no annihilation or destruction when in hell. Look at the parables in Matthew 13, 22 and 25 and see that Jesus repeats the same Greek word for 'eternal' while speaking of heaven and hell. Be wary when looking at the imagery here to suggest flames mean a consuming fire. Hell is described both as a place of eternal fire and complete darkness. Literally speaking this cannot exist. Thus, in this context, hell is seen not as a place of torture through these metaphors, but as a place of judgment – the natural consequence of a life that has been lived in a certain direction.
6. Hell is a place of utter heartbreak. Many see hell as a beer commercial and endless party. They could not be more wrong. It is not a place of torture but the Bible clearly says that it is the last place anyone wants to end up at. Every figure of speech (eg. Burning flame) has a literal point (utter heartbreak). Hell affords no place of rest or relief from self-centeredness, self-loathing, resentment, misery or boredom. It is a loss of everything, judged as having no value (Gehenna). All purpose is gone and God's love and protection are removed.

How can a loving God send anyone to such a place? And what of children or those who have never heard of Jesus? Be assured that God will judge each person uniquely and fairly, and nobody is going to hell based on a lack of knowledge, understanding, low IQ or mental deficiency.

1. His justice requires it. God is just and when He sees evil and injustice in the world He cannot turn a blind eye to it. If God has placed inside each of us a sense of justice, how much more would a perfect and holy God have the same? Indeed, "If God were not angry at injustice and deception, that God would not be worthy of worship." (Miroslav Volf). His anger directed at injustice and sin flows from His love and delight with His creation. He promises to make all injustices right in His time and in His way. Thus we can all say that the murderers and those committing horrible crimes deserve hell. Why do we think God should ignore those which are in our perspective 'lesser sins'? Little sins contribute to larger evils. Regardless of how insignificant we may think a sin may be it can have huge implications. We have all sinned (Rom 3:23) and are guilty before God to be forever separated from God in hell. God does not wish us to be separated from Him but His justice demands it. So He sent His son Jesus to die on the cross in our place to pay for our sins (Romans 5:8). If we, by faith, accept God's offer of forgiveness and grace through Jesus and faithfully follow Him (John 3:16; 1 John 1:9), the trajectory of our eternity will change from hell to heaven. If we reject this offer, then God's perfect justice requires Him to leave us in our sin and lost condition and we will receive what we asked for – life without God.
2. His love requires it. God wants us to return His love freely from the heart. He gives us the freedom to love Him back or to reject Him and to suppress His truth and go our own way (Romans 1). God 'gave them over' (vs 24, 26, 28) means to hand over control and responsibility to the unrepentant. By their saying 'leave me alone' to God, in time He will leave them alone to go in the direction they want: hell. In the strictest sense God sends people to hell because it is the destination they have chosen all along, consciously or unconsciously. It is the logical consequence of a life lived separated from God – a place where God is silent and leaves them alone. They take a big step around the cross of Jesus to life life their own way. The issue is: What will you do with Jesus? What do you sense God is saying to you?