

Unshakable The reality of hell

So why are we going to talk about hell today? Because if we don't Except the reality of hell, we will never appreciate the glory of the gospel and the goodness of Jesus.

So, the first thing that comes to mind when the subject of hell is brought up is, hell, fire, and brimstone! I remember the first time I heard about hell. It was at my dad's church and brother Ed, "the Pastor," spoke on it. Normally I would spend my time during brother Ed's sermons drawing in the song books and counting how many tiles were in the ceiling. But this Sunday was different because he was talking about a place where you are tormented forever and that had my attention because I was an unruly kid. Needless to say I had bad dreams for weeks.

So again, why are we talking about hell? It's the same big thought as two weeks ago when I said, what you believe about eternity determines how you live today.

There are some statistics about hell I wanna share with you this morning. 74% of Americans believe in heaven but only four out of 10 people believe if you die not knowing Christ as Savior you will go to hell. If you ask people who is going to hell only 1/2 of a percent say they are going to hell when they die. In other words, most people believe that hell is for the really really really bad people. God would not do that to me because I am a good person.

So, here is the truth, remember we are no more spiritual than we are biblical.

Turn with me to ***Matthew 7:13-14 this is Jesus talking. "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."***

If I were the devil my strategy would be to convince you that hell isn't real and if it is let's not take it too seriously and we would believe that most people would not be going there. If I could convince you of that then you would live however you want, you would justify your sin, you would reject Christ and you would live with

no real fear of God! You would idolize Comfort, reject sacrificial living, avoid persecution and would not likely share your faith! Does that sound familiar? This also raises a very good question. If God is so good, why does hell exist? That is a very fair question that deserves an answer. So, let's get into it.

Here are two reasons why Scripture teaches that hell exists.

1. Hell exists for God to deal righteously with Satan.

We need to understand that the devil is the embodiment of all evil. Behind every addiction is our spiritual enemy. Behind abuse, fear, pain, and shame is the devil. He is called in scripture the destroyer, the deceiver, the dragon, the dark angel, he is your enemy, the tempter, the wicked one, the father of all lies. Hell exists to deal righteously with the devil.

John said this in ***Revelation 20:10*** ***“And The devil, who deceives them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”*** So, the first reason hell exist is for God to deal righteously with Satan.

2. The second reason hell exists is to deal righteously with unbelievers.

OK this is just a disclaimer before we go any further, this is where things get hard! A lot of people would say this doesn't seem fair. “My neighbor isn't a Christian, but they are good people and you can't send good people to hell.” They watch my dog while I'm on vacation and water my plants when I'm out of town they are good people.

But here's the problem, people today want to remake God into their own image to justify their own lifestyles. We make a God that understands and remakes himself and re-writes new standards and adjust his word according to the times. But here's what we have to understand, listen closely, it is impossible for God to be holy and without being just as well.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 ***“He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be punished with everlasting***

destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.”

Let me just say this, this is not fun to talk about or to hear but if we don't except the reality of hell, we will never appreciate the glory of the gospel in the goodness of Jesus.

So, let's look at a glimpse of hell.

Jesus is telling a story as to what hell might be like in ***Luke 16:19-24*** ***“There was a rich man who is dressed in purple and fine linen and lives in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar name Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died, and the angel carried him to Abrahams side.***

The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So, he called to him, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.”

There are a few things that stick out here that I want to pull out of the story for you. Number one, this rich guy was extremely crazy Rich. The scripture said that he was dressed in purple and fine Linen. Purple was set aside for royalty and very rich people because purple was rare and very expensive. Also, scholars suggest that if you sold one item made from linen you could eat off of the profits for one year.

Last week we saw that to a Christian, to be absent from the body is to be present with the lord. To those who are without Christ, to be absent of the body is the beginning of suffering. Hell is described as a place of fire and torment where there is a weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Also, it's interesting to note that Lazarus was longing to eat from what fell from the Rich man's table. Back in those days, whatever fell from a rich person's plate was gathered up by the servants and given to the local baggers as charity.

There are a few lessons to take from the story.

1. The first is, the rich man was fully conscious and aware. He knew what was happening to him and where he was.
2. The rich man's eternal destination was irrevocably fixed.
3. He knew that his suffering was just. He complained about the pain but he never complained about injustice.
4. He begged and pleaded for someone to help his brothers know Jesus.

Revelation 14:10-11 says, "He, too, Will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."

If we could for a moment stand in the presence of God, we would see the depth of our wickedness. We are not inherently good people. We are bent and born into sin. We have to recognize how holy and just God is. Remember he cannot be Holy without being judged and because he is just, he must punish wrongdoing

OK so here comes the good news, God is also love which is who he is. Listen to these verses as if you are hearing them for the very first time:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that who so ever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 5:8-9 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

what did Jesus's death do? The answer, it paid the price for our sin and by satisfying God's justice.

God loves you so intensely that the Bible says that if one of the sheep get away, he will leave the 99 and run after you because you are worth it.