



Asking for a Friend

PART 7: WHY WOULD GOD SEND PEOPLE TO HELL?

Sermon Notes

Text: Matthew 25:31-46

Intro:

“Of all the doctrines in Christianity, Hell is probably the most difficult to defend, the most burdensome to believe and the first to be abandoned.” ~Peter Kreeft

“There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove than this, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, specially, of our Lord’s own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and it has the support of reason.” ~C.S. Lewis

To understand our objections to Hell, we must first examine our cultural and experiential filters.

“The only thing I can say for sure is that hell is a separation from God” ~Billy Graham

“To enter heaven is to become more human than you ever succeeded in begin on earth; to enter hell, is to be banished from humanity.” ~C.S. Lewis

If your life is inextricably connected to the life of God, then how could you not live forever? But if your life gets permanently disconnected from the source of life, then how could you not shrivel up and die?

“I willingly believe that the damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; that the doors of hell are locked on the inside” ~C.S. Lewis

What did Jesus say about Hell?

John 3:16; Matthew 25:31-46

What is Hell like?

1. Eternal punishment (v. 46) - speaks of duration
2. Fire (v. 41) - speaks of disintegration
3. Exclusion/Banishment (v. 41) - speaks of loss of relationship

“My suggesting is that it is possible for human beings to continue down this road, to refuse all whisperings of good news, all glimmers of true light, all promptings to turn and go the other way, all signposts to the love of God, that after death they become at last, by their own effective choice, beings that once were human but now are not, creatures that have ceased to bear the divine image at all. With the death of that body in which they inhabited God’s good world, in which the flickering flame of goodness had not been completely snuffed out, they pass simultaneously not only beyond hope, but also beyond pity” ~N.T. Wright

“What is hell then? It is God actively giving us up to what we have freely chosen – to go our own way. Hell is simply one’s freely chosen path going on forever. We wanted to get away from God, and God, in his infinite justice, sends us where we wanted to go” ~Tim Keller

Application for the Doctrine of Divine Judgement:

1. It is a sober reminder that how we treat people matters (v. 40)
2. It gets us off the hook as judges of the world
3. It should spur us to to evangelism

Conclusion:

“In the long run the answer to all those who object to the doctrine of hell, is itself a question: ‘What are you asking God to do?’ To wipe out their past sins and, at all costs, to give them a fresh start, smoothing every difficulty and offering miraculous help? But He has done so, on Calvary. To forgive them? They will be forgiven. To leave them alone? Alas, I am afraid that is what He does” ~C.S. Lewis

Life Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. What stood out to you about Sunday's message? Did you learn anything new or helpful?
2. When you think of Hell, what images and ideas typically come to mind? Where did those images come from?

Study & Discussion:

1. How do you *feel* about the doctrine of Hell? Is it hard for you to reconcile Hell with a God of love? Why or why not? Would you, like C.S. Lewis, remove the doctrine of Hell if you could?
2. Read Luke 6:19-31. The parable does not intend to provide a case study of the actual experience of Hell, but it teaches us some interesting lessons. What did you notice? What do you think of Abraham's response in v. 25? What point is Abraham trying to make in v. 29-31? What are the implications of this parable to those who are rich?
3. Consider the 3 points of application for the doctrine of divine judgement (see notes). Have you considered these in relation to Hell before? Which of these will impact you the most?

Prayer:

- Pray for opportunities to answer questions people have about your faith.

Other Requests

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