

April 23, 2023

I Got Questions: Week 2

There is an unwritten rule in churches, if you want people happy, and you want them coming back...

- Don't talk about Politics
- Don't talk about Money
- Don't talk about HELL

The good news is we're gonna save Politics and Money for another day, the bad news is we're actually going to talk about HELL!

The word Hell gets thrown around a lot today. Growing up in church, hearing about HELL was a weekly occurrence... not so much anymore.

What I want to do today is, through scripture, give you a biblical understanding of Hell.

There are 3 vested characters in the story of Hell: God, Satan, & You! Now if indeed Hell is real, with the horrible descriptions about what Hell is like, then this is how I see it.

- 1.) A loving God would want you to know about it so you could avoid it at all costs.
- 2.) And the Devil would try to convince you it's NOT real so you could live however you want.
- 3.) We have to decide who's telling the TRUTH!

Jesus talked about Hell more than anybody else, and almost more than anything else!

Here's what you'll notice... every time he talked about it, he wasn't trying to scare unbelievers away from Hell, he was actually using Hell to motivate those who were spiritual to act more spiritual.

It wasn't a fear tactic to scare people to Heaven, it was a motivating factor for people because Jesus didn't want anyone to go to Hell.

In fact, Jesus gave this illustration...

- If your Eye gets you in trouble, CUT it out.
- If your Tongue leads you to sin, CUT it out.

The POINT: It would be better to go into Heaven maimed, than into Hell fully intact!

So when Jesus talked about Hell, it wasn't like a dungeon in the basement of Heaven where the bad people go. No, it was actually much worse than that. It was a place cut off from everything good.

The BEST understanding of Hell is it's the absence of the Presence of God, which you might not think sounds so bad, but it's the worst place on Earth!

So that raises the question of, Why Hell? Why would God create a place called Hell?

I. Hell exists for God to righteously punish Satan

The problem is, our culture visualizes Satan as this harmless dude in a red suit with a pitchfork. We have to understand that Satan is the embodiment of everything evil.

A. Hell is the place for Punishment of SIN

Our culture doesn't like to use that word today. In fact, when it comes to sin, if we're gonna even acknowledge that sin exists, people tend to prefer a God that just looks the other way.

But the truth of the matter is, scripture says there is a standard. The standard is Holiness. And when we don't hit that standard, we SIN. And it is impossible for God to be Holy without also being Just.

II. The second reason is for God to righteously punish evil.

And that would be for those of us who have sinned and who are without Christ.

The Apostle Paul tells us that God will punish those who have not come to Him through Jesus Christ and do not obey the gospel. They will be punished by being shut out from the presence of God forever.

But if we don't accept the reality of Hell, we'll never appreciate the depth of God's goodness and His grace.

Luke 16- A Voice from Hell

And Jesus said there was a rich man. He was dressed in purple and fine linen and he lived in luxury every day.

Let's stop for a moment. I want you to acknowledge this guy was massive rich. We know he's massively rich because he was wearing purple and dressed in linen.

Verse 20 says at the gate of this rich guy was a beggar, a poor guy named Lazarus. But this guy was in bad shape. He's longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table.

Verse 22: They both die. The beggar is carried to Abraham's side by angels. The rich man goes to a place called Hades. Hades is known as the place of the dead or the place of punishment. The rich man finds himself in torment, in agony. He looked up and he saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. And so what did he do? He called

out. Father Abraham, have pity on me, please, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, because I'm in agony because of this fire.

The rich guy says, I beg you, Father, please, send Lazarus, send that beggar, send him back and tell my family, go to my family for I have five brothers and let him warn them so they also will not come to this place of torment. Would you please go tell everyone that doesn't know they don't want to come where I am.

This was a story that Jesus told and I'll show you four lessons from the other side.

- 1.) The rich man was fully conscious and aware.
- 2.) The rich man's eternity was irrevocably fixed.
- 3.) The rich man knew that his suffering was just.
- 4.) The rich man begged and pleaded for someone to help his brothers know Jesus.

III. What does this mean for YOU?!

We, in our purest essence, are not good. We've all sinned, every single one of us.

Who will you Believe and Trust in?

The Devils take: Don't worry about it. Live it up! It's going to be a party, all your friends will be there!

The Gospel's take: Understand the stakes. God loves you, but His Holiness and Justice MUST deal with our Sin. And without Christ in our life, we're a Sinner!

When you start to take eternity seriously, the presence of God in Heaven or the absence of God in Hell, it changes the way you live today because you don't just live for today, you live to glorify God forever.

The devil wants to take from you, steal from you, kill you, and destroy you. But Jesus came with something better. He came to give you the presence of God. He came to give you life to the full.

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS WEEK 2

- 1.) What was your view of Hell growing up?
- 2.) What do you think most people's view or your friends' view of Hell is? Why? What do they talk most about?
- 3.) What did you learn from the story in Luke 16? Comments, any struggles?
- 4.) Do you understand God's love and his justice, how they work equally for our good?
- 5.) Jesus' love gives confidence that this life is temporary, he made a way for it to be wonderfully eternal. Are you convinced in who to believe?