

November 12, 2022
Heaven: Week 7

The Big Takeaway to this entire series has been far more than Information, it's CHOICE.

Through scripture, we're given a pretty good picture of Heaven.

And then we discovered that there's even MORE description of Hell.

In the 3 parables of *Luke 15*...

- The Lost Sheep
- The Lost Coin
- The Lost Son

They all give us this TRUTH, the only PARTY there will be in eternity is in Heaven, and it happens when a soul that is lost, repents, and receives Christ!

Yet Billy Joel has falsely echoed the sentiments of millions in his song, "Only the Good Die Young" where he declares...

"And they say there's a heaven for those who will wait. Some say it's better, but I say it ain't. I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints. The sinners are much more fun."

The illusion will always bear that fact, but let me tell you the Truth.
They were having FUN while Noah was building the ARK...

But for 120 years they were presented with a daily CHOICE. Believe what God says, or enjoy the party?

If you want to dig deeper into this study, I'd encourage you to read the Gospel of Luke 12-15 where Jesus addresses this topic in many profound ways.

It begins this way: Repent or Perish!

Jesus was questioned about the certain methods by which people were ushered into eternity. Many of the methods seemed UNFAIR.

What Jesus directed the listener too was this...

No level of goodness will Promote you to Heaven, NOR will it Protect you from Hell!

The only remedy is Repentance, and the only road, the only gate to Heaven, is Narrow.

Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV) records it this way... "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 the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Luke 13:24 (NKJV)

“Strive to enter in at the narrow(strait) gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

Key Words:

- Narrow/Strait
- Strive

But maybe the most unsettling of the entire dialogue is when Jesus references the same calamity that came upon those in the days of Noah!

Luke 13:25 (NIV)

Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ “But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’

Luke 13:26-28 (NIV)

“Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you(one sided), and you taught in our streets.’ “But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’ “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth...”

You can ARGUE about the reality of Heaven & Hell.

You can DENY the reality of Heaven & Hell.

You can Hold Off/Wait for a more convenient time/Attend one last party...

But ETERNITY is always JUST ONE BREATH AWAY!

Let me help some of you with your CHOICE today:

- If I’m WRONG and you’re RIGHT... There is nothing after this life, heaven is a Myth, you’ll just rot into the ground. OR, eternity will be one big party where you’ll hang out with your friends whether in hell or some other place of eternity? THEN THERE IS NO HARM, NO FOUL.
- But if I’m RIGHT, and you’re WRONG... There is a literal Heaven and a literal Hell. There is someone to judge our Choice. There is a place of Paradise, and there is a place of Pain & Suffering for all eternity. And there is an Owner who gets up and SHUTS THE DOOR, which no man can open... All that will be heard is the weeping and gnashing of teeth...

They’ll be nobody happy about that, believe me when I say that.

Am I trying to scare you into Heaven? For some of you... Yes! To Others... Jude 1:23-

- Be merciful to those who doubt
- Save others by snatching them from the fire
- To others show mercy, mixed with fear

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Pastor Jim said, “The Big Takeaway to this entire series has been far more than Information, it’s CHOICE.” What is your Big Take Away, and how do you understand that CHOICE will affect your eternal destiny?
2. We may always struggle with WHY people die, and HOW people die... but do you believe no level of goodness will Promote you to Heaven, NOR will it Protect you from Hell? Why?
3. What made sense to you about the Narrow Road & Narrowing Gate? What challenged you that we are to Strive (agonize) about being on the right road?
4. In reading Jude v.23, how bold should we be about presenting the truth of heaven and hell to someone? Do you agree with... Be merciful to those who doubt; save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. Discuss.