

VII. Eternity in Biblical Perspective
If I Should Die Before I Wake...
“Hell—the Future and Final State of the Wicked”
Selected Texts
Rev. Benny Parks
February 7, 2021 • Sunday Evening Sermon

Pastor Reeder has been bringing us through a series known as eternity in perspective informing us of the joys and happiness we will have because of our sure hope of heaven. In this study we move in a different direction where we will contemplate the horrors of hell. A friend said to me earlier that there will be some who will come to this service and then realize it will be on the subject of hell and then think ‘I knew I should have stayed home to watch the Super Bowl.’ Or they may have seen the subject matter listed in our weekly and said “Honey, maybe this is a good weekend to go see your Aunt Martha like you have been asking me to do.”

As I was preparing on this subject I remember the church signs that communicate something they don’t want to communicate like the one that says; ‘Sermon, what is hell like? Come here our preacher tonight.’ That’s not really what you want to communicate. That won’t be how you feel tonight but it’s understandable if you do because in this study we come to one of the most disturbing doctrines found in all the pages of God’s holy, inerrant and sacred Scriptures. So it’s an awful subject and it’s not fun to dwell on hell. Every commentator I read in some way or another said that we naturally shrink back in the contemplation of the horrible destiny of hell.

Michael Rogers writes of the subject of Divine hell and judgment in his book, What Happens After I Die, “this horrible subject is a topic unpleasant to anyone and abhorrent to millions.” That’s the case but it’s one of the most well-attested doctrines in all of Scripture. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke more about it than anyone in the New Testament with the most graphic and gruesome language imaginable. We must look at it as eternal followers and it hold eternal consequences and ramifications for anyone who has or will live in this world.

Interestingly, surveys over the past 30 years of Americans have consistently shown that over 70 percent of Americans believe in a literal hell and this is from a very secular society. The problem is that less than six percent of those people believe they are going to go there. While the majority of people believe in some kind of hell no one really thinks they deserve to be there. I hope that as we think Biblically about this subject and consider it that our sovereign and holy Lord has put before us as He has revealed in His Word, when we get to the end, we will say in humility as Paul wrote in Romans 3:4, let God be found true though every man be found a liar.

I want to look at four questions in this study as we focus on this difficult doctrine. The four questions are – what is hell like, does hell really last forever, why would a loving God create some place like hell, and then as Christians should we think of hell more often. I will bring out several passages of Scriptures throughout this study that you can look at more carefully later for they all are very important and need more careful study. Some of these I will only be able to make reference to in this study but there are great resources out there as you study these passages more fully as needed. If you have further questions after this study you can email hreeder@briarwood.org and if you want more resources you can email me at bparks@briarwood.org.

Just as heaven is more glorious than we can ever imagine, hell is more horrific than we could ever fathom. Just as death is not the end for the believer – the incredible new beginning,

death is not the end for an unbeliever, but it is a terrifying beginning. To help us understand succinctly, I want to look at questions 37 and 38 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

Q37: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

A: The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory;¹ and their bodies, being still united to Christ,² do rest in their graves till the resurrection.³

(1. Luke 23:43, Luke 16:23, Philippians 1:23, II Corinthians 5:6–8. 2. I Thessalonians 4:14. 3. Romans 8:23, I Thessalonians 4:14.)

Now let's think of the contrast of this from the shorter catechism. What loss do believers receive from Christ, the Righteous Judge at death? The souls of unbelievers at their death become ultimate in wickedness and it's because God's hand of common grace of restraint is completely gone from them and are immediately cast into hell and their bodies are kept in their graves as in prisons, as the larger catechism says, until the resurrection and judgment. So souls immediately go to heaven or they go to hell and one day at the judgment our bodies will be reunited with the souls. Now to question 38.

Q38: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A: At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory,¹ shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment,² and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God,³ to all eternity.⁴

(1. I Corinthians 15:42–43. 2. Matthew 25:33–34, Matthew 10:32. 3. Psalm 16:1, I Corinthians 2:9. 4. I Thessalonians 4:17.)

Now what loss do unbelievers receive at the resurrection? At the resurrection, unbelievers being raised up in dishonor by Jesus Christ as an offended Judge, shall be openly rejected and condemned in the day of judgment and become completely hopeless in the full experiencing of the holy, unmatched wrath of God to all eternity. It is a horrible thought but something that needs to be addressed so let's look at some of the passages on the state of the wicked and what happens to them after they die. All of this together kind of form a full view of the doctrine of hell.

At the death of an unbeliever, they immediately experience conscience torment. We see this in Luke 16:22–24 dealing with Lazarus and the rich man, which says, [22] *The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, [23] and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. [24] And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'* Here we see this conscious torment while the rich man is in the flame and he is in anguish.

There is also unquenchable fire and this is seen in Matthew 3, Revelation 20 and Mark 9:48. These all speak about being thrown into unquenchable fire, the lake of fire, tormented day and night forever and ever. Mark 9:47–48 says [47] *And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, [48] 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'* Here we see the idea of worms feeding off of burning flesh.

This is a terrible picture and all these passages represent the idea of continual torment for the person. Fire is not meant to be consuming something up where it doesn't exist any longer, but it is talking about the torment. My brother and I were talking about this recently and my

brother reminded me that burns are some of the most painful wounds to have and some of the longest lasting. This is the image we have of this awful reality, of this intense pain.

As we talk about the literal nature of hell, I want to point out some of the symbols of fire. Pastor Reeder asked me last week if I thought the fire from hell was literal and my response to him was ‘I don’t necessarily believe the fire is literal but I believe hell is a literal place that the unbeliever will suffer in.’ The idea is that the language tells us the reality is even worse than the language. D.A. Carson, a great theologian, in his book The Gagging of God in the chapter on the banishing of hell talks about this idea of metaphorical language. Carson says ‘Most interpreters recognize that there is a substantial metaphorical element in the Bible’s description of hell. This does not mean that hell itself is merely metaphorical. One must not infer from the fact that someone thinks many of the descriptions of hell are metaphorical and not literal. They must not come to the conclusion that hell itself is not literal. Hell is real.’

The language used here is to teach us of the horrors of hell. Similarly, the Bible gives us images of heaven to help us see the glories of heaven. I don’t necessarily believe that all the streets throughout heaven will all be paved with gold and gold only. Yet that images reminds me that the physicality of heaven will be more glorious than I can ever imagine and that is what we need to remember. The key principle here is that the realities are greater than the symbols. So in the case of heaven the realities are more remarkable than the symbols we’re given in Scripture. As it relates to hell, it means the reality is more gruesome than the symbols. Hell will literally be far more horrific than the images we see in the Bible.

The next thing we see about hell is this idea of outer darkness which we see in Matthew 8:12 which says *[12] while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* This reminds us of the total isolation and complete loss of the wonderful favor and fellowship with God and His favorable face. It is overwhelming hopelessness that the loss experiences. However, it doesn’t mean the absence of the presence of God, for God’s holy presence and His face turned aside will be felt by every person in hell.

Psalms 139:7–8 says *[7] Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? [8] If I ascend to heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there!* In Revelation 14 it has this idea of God’s presence, Christ’s presence and how it punishes the wicked even more. Revelation 14:10–11 talks of those who receive the image of the beast, meaning unbelievers and says *[10] he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. [11] And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.* This is a terrible place to be.

In the latter half of Matthew 8:12 we see the weeping and gnashing of teeth. The weeping here is not remorseful sadness or even someone thinking ‘I wished I had believed in Jesus while I was alive,’ no, this weeping is a never-ending hopelessness. The gnashing of teeth is constant hatred and anger for and towards God. It’s a temper tantrum that people will be having in hell. There is no sorrow and no regret in any of this but only a hardening of the heart, more and more with hatred toward God and everyone in heaven.

My favorite chapter in Jonathan Edwards’ book, Charity and Its Fruits, is the last chapter which is on heaven. He says heaven is a world of love but also in that chapter he talks about what hell is like and he says, ‘Heaven, a world of love without any hatred and yet the other is

hell, a world of hatred where there is no love. This is the world where God manifests His displeasure and wrath. In heaven He manifests His love. Everything in hell is hateful. There is not one solitary object there that is not odious and detestable, horrid and hateful. There are none in hell but what have been haters of God and so have procured His wrath and hatred on themselves and there they shall continue to hate Him forever. No love to God will ever be felt in hell but everyone there perfectly hates Him and so will continue to hate Him without any constraining from Him will express their hatred to Him, blaspheming and raging against Him while they gnaw their tongues for pain. They hate God, they hate Christ and the angels and the saints in heaven, not only that they hate one another. Those who in their wickedness on earth were companions together and had a sort of carnal friendship one with another, will in hell have no appearance of fellowship but perfect, continual and undisguised hatred will exist between them. As on earth, they promoted each other's sins so now in hell they will promote each other's punishment.'

It's a terrible thing and all of this will take place in the final state both with the soul and the body together. Matthew 5:29 says [29] *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.* John 5 talks about the resurrection of the just and the unjust so it's a physical part. These are horrible descriptions of a horrible place.

This leads us to ask, does hell really last forever? There are a number of passages that tell us it does and in Matthew 25 we see this in the concluding part of the story about the sheep and the goats. Matthew 25:46 says [46] *And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.* Some try to say that hell is not forever but heaven is, but in a parallel fashion here it's irresponsible and untenable because there are in parallel form. Here we see both eternal punishment and eternal life.

Revelation 20:10–15 says [10] *and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

[11] *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. [12] And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. [13] And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. [14] Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. [15] And **if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

Those whose name was not found in the book of life were thrown in the same place that the devil was thrown into and that's forever. We saw earlier in Revelation 14:11, [11] *And **the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.*** The problem is that it is irreversible – no repentance, no opportunity for change.

Hebrews 9:27 says [27] *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.* Luke 16:26 says [26] *And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.* So, we see there is a chasm between heaven and hell.

Kevin DeYoung in his book on the Heidelberg catechism, The Good News We Almost Forgot says, “The only thing more difficult than finding the truth is not losing it.” The truth of hell is something often on trial today with people and unfortunately many professing Christians. It’s easy to lose a doctrine, particularly like this.

The two main challenges to the doctrine of hell today are universalism which ultimately states that all people will be saved and annihilationism which is more of what professing Christians believe and that is that at some point (particularly right at death) that we will cease to exist or after a period of some punishment we’ll cease to exist. Concerning universalism the author of the wildly popular book The Shack, Paul Young suggested that hell may not be forever and that universalism is possible. His defenders said it was just a book of fiction and that he didn’t state clearly that he believed that but that the book was just to help us understand better the love of God.

Fast forward about ten years after Young wrote that book which is now only a few years ago and Paul Young has written his first non-fiction book titled Lies We Believe About God and in this he corrects views he believes are incorrect in the Christian church and one of them is hell. In the book he is asked if he really believes every one will be saved and that no one will be lost forever and he responds by saying ‘that’s exactly what I’m saying.’ So that is happening more and more today but concerning annihilationism there is an increased number of evangelicals that hold this view in one form or another. You can find people throughout Christian history that have believed in it but the Christian church as a whole and Christians as a whole have never believed in any form of annihilationism.

Why today? I think Michael Rogers in his book, What Happens After I Die and D. A. Carson’s book, about hell on trial answer that question well. Why is that people today are trying to jettison the doctrine of hell? Rogers says ‘It’s not because of improved Bible exegesis or interpretations’ which is what some of these people are saying. We found what the church has missed all these years. Rogers goes on to say ‘that produces the change in contemporary thinking against hell but it’s the spirit of the age and the focus of man-centeredness today. Carson said ‘it’s not because of new light from the Bible but because of new darkness in the culture.’ People don’t want to believe in this and as fallen humans we can’t put God to the test and judge Him.

I believe there are basically two reasons why we have problems with the doctrine of hell. First, is we misunderstand the nature of man. Secondly, I believe we misunderstand the nature of God. In Ephesians 2 we are told that all of us are born into this world by nature as children of wrath and it speaks to the extreme wickedness that has affected our whole self – mind, spirit, affections, will – everything is affected. We don’t come close to understanding the depth of our depravity and how it affects even our ability to think correctly, even as redeemed Christians.

I Corinthians 13:9–12 says [9] *For we know in part and we prophesy in part, [10] but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. [11] When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. [12] For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.* We’ll understand all of this perfectly when we’re in heaven, it’s troubling to us but it will all make sense.

Dealing with the second problem is that we’re not in a position to judge God so we should focus on Him and keep silent when troubling things come to us. We should say like Paul in Romans 11:33–36 which says [33] *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!* [34] *“For who has*

known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” [35] “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” [36] For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. This is who God is and so what makes hell so horrible is the truth that it lasts forever. There is no hope of getting out.

For many people, the existence of a place of eternal hell casts doubt with them on the fact that there is a loving God. So naturally in our minds we might think the next question would be, why would a loving God create a place like hell? I think one of the reasons we struggle with the idea of the love of God as it relates to hell, is that we have elevated the attribute of the love of God above all others. Certainly, it’s one of the highest ways we can think about God, His love. All of His attributes all go together and His love is never divorced from His holiness, justice, goodness and truth. The passages we have looked at remind us of why God would create a place like hell and allow it to exist. We don’t know all the reason because there are secret things that belong to the Lord our God but we can see hint in some of the following.

First it’s to vindicate the honor of His holy Name. We see this in Ezekiel 36. This isn’t a passage talking about hell but it does show why God punished rebellious Israel. Ezekiel 36:22–23 says [22] *Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. [23] And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.* God is jealous about His Name which represents all the ways He has revealed Himself to us, including all His attributes and His works, what He has done. To cast doubt on those, God will vindicate His holy Name forever and ever.

We see the second thing in the Hebrews 10 passage which is that He will eternally conquer all of His and our enemies. We also see this in I Corinthians 15 but Hebrews 10:12–13 says [12] *But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, [13] waiting from that time until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet.* I Corinthians 15:25 says [25] *For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.* The last enemy is death so He will eternally conquer all His and our enemies.

Thirdly, He is going to faithfully execute His righteous judgment and perfect justice. We see this in Acts 17:30–31 which says [30] *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, [31] because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.* We see His righteous judgment in Romans 2:5 which says [5] *But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*

When we think about God’s judgment and His justice, we need to understand something that is mentioned in the Heidelberg catechism which is the German catechism. God conquering His enemies gives us great comfort as a believer. Here is question 52 from the Heidelberg catechism. Q 52; What comfort is it to you that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead? Answer: In all my sorrow and persecution I lift up my head and eagerly await as judge from heaven the very same person who before has submitted Himself to the judgment of God for my sake, and has removed all the curse from me (Luke 21:28; Romans 8:22–25; Philippians 3:20–21; Titus 2:13–14). He will cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but He will take me and all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory (Matthew 25:31–46; I Thessalonians 4:16–17; II Thessalonians 1:6–10).

His judgment and Him defeating His enemies are a comfort to us because He is going to raise us up. Kevin DeYoung talks about this idea of God's judgment and the comfort it gives us in his book on the Heidelberg catechism and he says this; 'With all this talk about judgment we anticipate the question that is asked – isn't God merciful – and the answer the catechism gives is yes certainly God is merciful but He is also just and justice demands that sin committed against a supreme majesty must be punished with the supreme penalty of eternal punishment of body and soul. Many people look at that and think no, my God is a God of love but Divine love without Divine wrath is meaningless for when we minimize God's justice we do not exalt His mercy, we undermine it. God's justice demands that sin, rebellion, and idolatry not go unpunished. We often struggle to embrace God's right to execute judgment but when a referee fails to execute a call we scream and yell at the TV. When our insurance company refuses to pay what the policy says it should we get down right indignant. We all have a sense of justice but some how we don't think God can be concerned for justice when He is wrong. God is concerned.

Lastly, He has hell to display His holy wrath for the sinful arrogance and rebellion of mankind. We see this in Revelation 6:15–17 which says *[15] Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, [16] calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, [17] for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"* We also see this in Revelation 14:9–11 which says *[9] And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, [10] he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of His anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. [11] And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."* We see here the wrath of the Lamb and who can stand against it? God is going to exact wrath because He is an offended Judge for the sin of mankind.

Will He really do this forever and ever? Our catechism, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, question 84 says: What does every sin deserve? Answer: Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come (Ephesians 5:6; Galatians 3:10; Lamentations 3:39; Matthew 25:41). Sin committed in time, for all eternity, why? Sin is committed against an infinite, holy and just God and therefore requires infinite satisfaction. God has satisfied His wrath in Christ and that's what gives us hope. When we come to Christ we have Hope and won't experience His wrath, but if not there is no sacrifice if we don't come to Christ so you pay eternally for those sins.

The reason God can create something like this is because He is a glorious God and He can't lie and He said in His Word that this is true. The justice of God and the judgment of God is one of His perfections, one of His holy attributes. I Peter 2:23 says *[23] When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to **Him who judges justly**.* Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father. The King, the Lord of the earth, always judges justly, always does right. That is what gives us great comfort and confidence. We don't have to worry about judgment or justice being too harsh or too this or too that because it's always going to be right since the Judge judges justly.

Interestingly, along these lines, the Scripture does talk about degrees of judgment. Romans 2:5 says *[5] But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for*

yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. Some are storing up wrath for themselves for the day of wrath, more severely the judgment.

In Luke 12 Jesus says we're judges according to the life we have been given and He says that some people, because they have little knowledge of God's will, will be beaten slightly. So they will suffer slight punishment. Others who knew the will of God and didn't do it will receive a severe beating. Does this mean there are possibly different degrees in hell of some being not as bad? It could but Pastor Reeder will answer that question in a few studies from now when he talks about the degrees of punishment in hell and the rewards believers have in heaven.

What if you have a loved one that you think might be in hell? That's a horrible thing to have to deal with so it causes people tremendous anguish. I don't have time to deal with that in this study and it wouldn't be right for me to throw a few verses at you to tell you not to worry but I would encourage you to get with a pastor here at Briarwood or a trusted Godly friend or maybe make an appointment in our counseling department. Let someone walk through that with you because it's a difficult thing to have to deal with.

In closing, this is what Randy Alcorn says in his book titled Heaven, dealing with the section on hell and God's judgment on hell; 'Hell is not pleasant, appealing or encouraging but neither is it evil. Rather it's a place where evil is judged. Indeed, if being sentenced to hell is just punishment then the absence of hell would itself be evil. Most of us imagine that we hate the idea of hell because we love people too much to want them to suffer but that implies that God loves them less. Our revulsion is understandable but what about hell makes us cringe? Is it that the wicked is being punished? Perhaps we hate hell too much because we don't hate evil enough. By denying hell we deny the extent of God's holiness. When we minimize sin's seriousness we minimize God's grace and Christ's blood shed for us, for if the evils He died for isn't significant enough to warrant eternal punishment perhaps the grace displayed on the cross isn't significant enough to warrant eternal praise.' Amen and Amen! God is just and He always acts justly.

This leads me to a final question, should Christians think about hell more often? My answer is yes. Why? I Thessalonians 1:10 says *[10] and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.* The reason we should think on hell and its horrors is because it leads us into eternal praise that God has delivered us from the wrath to come, not through anything we have done but through the blessings of His holy Son who endured His wrath for us.

Secondly, we dwell on the wrath of God because we need endurance. Revelation 14:11–13 says *[11] And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.* *[12] Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.* *[13] And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."* "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" As we contemplate this horrible place it reminds us and gives us endurance that God will vindicate Himself, all His enemies and our enemies.

Finally, the reason we need to contemplate on hell is not really for our comfort but because it should convict us that there is a world out there where thousands a week are slipping into a Christless eternity, called hell. So, it should get our eyes off of ourselves and onto them. John 3:16–18 says *[16] For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* *[17] For God did not send His Son into*

the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. [18] Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

This whole subject should grieve and break our hearts for the lost. One of our pastors on staff said to me that one of the reasons he thinks we don't witness more and share the Gospel more is because we're afraid of what people will think. As I was preparing for this sermon I was rebuked and convicted for that is probably true in my life but what is more convicting is that me, as a minister cares so little about the lost around me that are going to a Christless eternity. I probably care what they think but the bottom line is I don't care enough about them. I'm praying and asking that God would break my heart and change me to love the lost and to share the Good News of the Gospel with them. I pray that would be the same for you.

Randy Alcorn said 'If we really understood hell even in the slightest bit, we would never say to someone 'go to hell.' For it's far too easy to go to hell because it requires no change of course, no navigational adjustments and we were born with our auto pilot set towards hell. It is nothing to take lightly. Hell is the single greatest tragedy in all the universe, but the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest triumph of hope in all the universe. His mercy is more, His love is greater, His hand is stronger, He is able to save to the uttermost.'

That's the Gospel we have to take to the lost world and that's one of the reasons we have a Global Ministries Conference to hear how the Gospel is being taken to all the nations and to send more out. These are men and women who are on the frontlines and encourage us to take the Gospel here to those all around us. I am reminded at the end of this study of the great words of C. T. Studd, a cricket player who left to go be a missionary in China who was a part of the Cambridge Seven. He said 'Some people want to live within the sight and sound of church and chapel bell, but I want to run a rescue mission, a yard from the gate of hell.' May God give us with that same understanding and desire and may He cause us to say that everyone around us will have to trample over us to get to hell. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, we do think about this difficult and sobering subject and yet You remind us that we have comfort in Christ because You delivered us from the wrath to come and we're grateful for that. Lord, we pray now that You would grip our hearts and convict us to take the Gospel to a lost world. Help us to even ask the person next to us, where they stand and help us forget what they would think but that we would know what we know and therefore plea and beg them to come to Christ. We love You and pray that You would strengthen us in this endeavor for we pray this in Christ's Name, Amen.

Power Point

4 Questions

1. What Is Hell Like?
2. Does Hell Really Last Forever?
3. Why Would A Loving God Create A Place Like Hell?
4. Should Christians Think About Hell More Often?

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM [FOR THE RIGHTEOUS]	PARKS SHORTER CATECHISM [FOR THE WICKED]
<p>Question 37 – What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?</p> <p>The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.</p>	<p>Question 37 – What loss do unbelievers receive from Christ (the Righteous) Judge at death?</p> <p>The souls of unbelievers at their death become ultimate in wickedness, and are immediately cast into hell; and their bodies are kept in their graves, as in prisons, until the resurrection and judgment.</p>

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM [FOR THE RIGHTEOUS]	PARKS SHORTER CATECHISM [FOR THE WICKED]
<p>Question 38 – What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?</p> <p>At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God, to all eternity.</p>	<p>Question 38 – What loss do unbelievers receive from Christ at the resurrection?</p> <p>At the resurrection, unbelievers being raised up in dishonor by Jesus Christ as an offended Judge, shall be openly rejected and condemned in the day of judgment, and become completely miserable and hopeless, in the full experiencing of the holy, unmixed wrath of God, to all eternity.</p>

1. What Is Hell Like?

- Immediate Conscious Torment
 - Luke 16:22–25
- Unquenchable Fire
 - Matthew 3:12; Revelation 20:10; Mark 9:48
- Outer Darkness
 - Matthew 8:12

- Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth
 - Matthew 8:12; Luke 13:27–28
- Physical/Bodily Suffering [In the Final State]
 - Matt. 5:29–30; John 5:26–29

2. Does Hell Really Last Forever?

- Eternal
 - Matthew 25:46
 - Revelation 20:10–15
 - Revelation 14:11
- Irreversible
 - Hebrews 9:27
 - Luke 16:26

3. Why Would A Loving God Create A Place Like Hell?

- Ezekiel 36:22–23
- Hebrews 10:12–13; I Corinthians 15:25–26
- Acts 17:30–31; Romans 2:5
- Revelation 6:15–17; Revelation 14:9–13

4. Should Christians Think About Hell More Often?

- I Thessalonians 1:10
- Revelation 14:11–13
- Luke 13:3; Romans 5:8–9; John 3:16–18