

Why Did Jesus Suffer And Die on the Cross?

Mark 15:15-25, 33-37

On this beautiful Resurrection Sunday morning, while flowers are hopefully beginning to bloom, many find themselves in church because they understand the significance of Jesus. Choirs are singing, and families are gathering together for a nice Sunday dinner. But today I'd like us to consider one of the major reasons for this celebration. Why was there a gruesome death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? When you study this out, one of the main reasons is because there is a real, literal Lake of Fire, or Hell, that we all need to be rescued from! We cannot miss the link between the cross of Calvary and Hell.

I suppose one of the most attacked doctrines of the Bible is its teachings regarding Hell. Hell is a place the Bible describes as a place of eternal torment. Hell does not suit our sophisticated, and progressive society, but my friends it is in fact a real place. The main issue regarding believing in Hell, is the question is the Bible the literal Word of God? Because if it is, then Hell is real and real people end up there.

Heaven is a real place, and so is Hell- and the cross of Calvary is one of the greatest proofs of that! If there were no place of eternal torment, then why did Christ have to die? The Gospel message is that Jesus took the Hell that we all deserve so that we don't have to end up there!

- I. Why do Sinners suffer in Hell?
 - a. Satan is not there but will be. All who die without being born again!
 - b. There is life after death. The resurrection of Christ points to the future resurrection of the saints. There is also a resurrection of sinners to damnation in the Lake of Fire- Rev. 21:8
 - i. (Hebrews 9:27) No reincarnation, second chance
 - ii. Our souls are eternal and will live on somewhere forever- life is not a cycle, it is linear- heading towards a destination!
 - c. Jesus spoke often of Heaven, but he spoke more often about Hell. In fact, Jesus said more about hell than Daniel, Isaiah, Paul, John, Peter put together!

- d. Mark 9:43-48. Gehenna- refers to the Valley of Hinnom where the garbage was burned outside of Jerusalem. Smoke could be seen rising day and night here!
- e. Hell is an awful place of fire, weeping and wailing, outer darkness- but the worst part is not the physical agony, but the spiritual- it is separation from God for eternity (consider knowing that there is a gracious, loving God out there but you will be separated from that forever!)
- f. Why...? We must understand that God has set the terms- i.e. basketball/soccer
 - i. It's a sad reality that most Americans are content to serve a god of their own imagination. This god never disagrees with them or disapproves of their lifestyles- how convenient! And so there is no room for Hell in their theology. They'll believe in Hell 10 seconds after they get there!
 - ii. If you accept Christ- you will be with Christ for eternity
 - iii. If you reject Christ- you will be apart from Him for all eternity
 - iv. Sinners going to Hell is God's way of giving them over to what they desired in this world anyway!
 - v. "All receive what they actually chose, either to be with God forever, worshipping him, or without God forever, worshipping themselves."
(J.I.Packer)
 - vi. In Romans 1-2 Paul explains that God, in his wrath against those who reject him, 'gives them up' to the sinful passions of their hearts. See Romans 2:3-5,
 - vii. In one sense, God doesn't send sinners to Hell, they send themselves there! Illustr- student failing a class
- g. God' Righteousness revealed (II Thess 2:5-9)
 - i. Romans 3:23, 5:12
 - ii. Some have said- isn't it a little harsh that just because Adam and Eve ate forbidden fruit mankind faces Hell? That's too severe!
 - iii. God is God. He has given man the privilege of mere existence and created man out of the dust of the ground. This dirt in return chose to defy the

Everlasting and Holy God! Even still after that God made a provision for man's salvation and planned to Himself be the atonement! The question is rather why aren't we all in Hell right now?

- iv. God tells us about hell to demonstrate to us the magnitude of his holiness. Hell is what hell is because the holiness of God is what it is. Hell should make our mouths stand agape at the righteousness and holiness of God. It should make us tremble before his majesty and grandeur.
- v. Deut. 32:4- God is perfectly just in all that He does- so yes in another sense God does send sinners to Hell!
- vi. This causes us to marvel at His holiness, and despise our sin!

II. Why did Jesus suffer on the cross?

- a. This is at the heart of Easter- not some bunny delivering chocolate eggs!
- b. The Gospel is not man-centered, is not centered on the Pope, Mary, any church or organization- but on Christ! He alone suffered for us! (by himself)
- c. Jesus suffered for our sins! In Hell, a key aspect of suffering is separation from God. On the cross-Jesus was separated from the Father (Matthew 27:46.) All our sin was laid on Him! In Luke 16:24 the rich man in hell is desperately thirsty (v.24) and on the cross Jesus said "I thirst" (John 19:28.) Unless we come to grips with this "terrible" doctrine of Hell, we will never even begin to understand the depths of what Jesus did for us on the cross. His body was being destroyed in the worst possible way, but that was a flea bite compared to what was happening to his soul. When he cried out that his God had forsaken him he was experiencing the agony we deserve! We reject false teaching that Christ literally suffered in Hell (Joyce Meyers)
- d. PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT- Jesus was punished for your sins and mine! His was the only sacrifice for sin that could satisfy the wrath of a Holy God.
 - a. I Peter 3:18- For Christ also suffered once for sins: Jesus suffered once for sins. There is no longer any sacrifice or atonement that can please God other than

what Jesus provided at the cross. We can't pay for our sins (golden rule, baptism/christening, etc.) The price has already been paid.

- b. The just, for the unjust- I was lost in my sin, but Christ took my punishment on the cross, and I trusted in Him for my salvation- now I am declared innocent and righteous before God!
- c. People often feel that hell is some great blemish on God's love. The Bible presents it as the opposite. Hell magnifies for us the love of God by showing us how far God went, and how much he went through, to save us.

III. Where will you go?

- a. It's only heaven or Hell. There is no purgatory or limbo
- b. The Bible is clear, that Hell is not just for the most wicked among us (murderers, rapists, etc.) but for all sinners who have never been saved. (Rev. 21:8) We are all sinners- but have you been saved?
- c. A decision must be made. God's mercy and grace are offered, but you must take it by faith
- d. Jesus' blood can wash your sins away, but the blood must be applied- personal faith.
- e. It's not the words of a prayer, it's not crying at the altar- it is repenting of sin, and trusting in what Jesus did for you.
- f. Accepting Jesus just to "get out of hell" is not what the Gospel is about. Christ does more than take us out of Hell, He takes Hell out of us and draws us to a relationship with God.

Conclusion:

- The doctrine of hell is important because it is a link showing us how much Jesus loved us and how greatly he sacrificed for us
- For Christians- Hell, and the cross, show us the wickedness of our sin. Why continue to play around with even the smallest sins? The Resurrection is proof of victory over sin!
- If you're not saved today the question is: What will you do with Jesus?

What will you do with Jesus?

Neutral you cannot be;

Someday your heart will be asking,

“What will He do with me?”