

Matt 25:41

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" ESV

Three Things Every Disciple Needs to Know About Hell (That Jesus Taught) Part 3

The question was asked, "How do you present a message on Hell in a comforting way?" You can't because there is nothing comforting about it. The great preacher, Charles Spurgeon, writes the following regarding sinners' entrance into hell:

"Oh, my brothers and sisters in Christ, if sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies; and if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay, and not madly to destroy themselves. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for."

The love of Jesus compels us to this and there is no question that many do not want to be loved in this way. To attempt to do so is to risk relationship with them. But as disciples of Jesus the Christ we must. For if we fail to do so we indeed are guilty of aiding and abetting. Allowing them to simply waltz into hell, although it be the consequence of their hard hearts. Certainly, the love of Jesus compels us to make every effort to derail such an entrance by anyone into this horrible place. And lest we be ill-advised, to do so is not a violation of what we know to be true, that salvation is the work of God's Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men and women through the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. In fact, it is quite the opposite. It is of great assistance to God's Holy Spirit in this work.

2 Cor 5:11-21 “¹¹ Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. ¹² Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. ¹³ If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. ¹⁴ Either way, Christ’s love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. ¹⁵ He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. ¹⁶ So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! ¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! ¹⁸ And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹ For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” ²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.”

NLT

Brothers and Sisters, it is not only our responsibility, but it is the common call of every disciple of Jesus to seek to persuade others to come back to God through faith in God’s Son, Jesus, avoiding Hell. With this said, drawing from our text of focus I share the final thing

every disciple needs to know about Hell that Jesus taught. **It was not created for us. It was not created for humans. V41b**, “the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Hell was in existence before the creation of the world per scripture’s timeline. It was the place that came about because of the fall of Lucifer and a third of the angels that he convinced to join him in his rebellion against God, his creator. (For more on Lucifer’ rebellion see Isaiah 14:12-25, Ezekiel 28:12-17, Revelation 12:3-9, Luke 10:18, Jude 1:6) The timeline is extremely important here. If Satan is the purveyor of all that’s evil, then he has to be the one that instigated the temptation to sin in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3) Thus, Hell is a literally place that was already in existence before the creation of man for Lucifer had already fallen. Why is this important? I believe it is important because the major objection to belief in Hell is the objection that a loving God would not send a person to such a place or even create such a place. Well, Hell wasn’t created for us and so I understand our hard time accepting Hell a real place of never-ending punishment that humans will be sentenced to. But, if God prepared such a place to punish angels, His creation, who rebelled against Him in Heaven, why would He not condemn humans, His creation, as well, who possess and express that same spirit of rebellion on Earth? I am firmly convinced for God not to do so would make God unjust. For God not to do would bring everything in to question that scripture teaches us about God, especially that God is not a man that he should lie. That God does not change. If God is not impartial then we have no assurance in the salvific work of Jesus, the Christ, on Calvary’s cross, considering Jesus’ death is the crowning historical event of the justice of God on display for the benefit of the entire world. Here me! For God to not administer His eternal justice upon all who trample Jesus underfoot would be for

God to make Jesus' death a miscarriage of His own justice. And God cannot possibly do such a thing. It would be a violation of God's character.

2 Peter 2:1-10a “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. ⁴For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; ⁵if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked ⁸(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); ⁹then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, ¹⁰and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.” **ESV**

Having established that Hell was not created for us I want to remind us, and I want to stress that Jesus was crucified for us so that no one would have to face such end. No one. Not even the most detestable

among humanity. **Luke 23:38-43**, “³⁸ A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.” ³⁹ One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!” ⁴⁰ But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? ⁴¹ We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” ⁴³ And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.” **NLT**

This man was man guilty, by his own confession; on the cusp of death and spending an eternity apart from God and Jesus in Hell. But in his darkest hour, he places his hope in a man named Jesus suffering the same fate as him on a cross. There was no liturgy, no baptism, no Lord’s Supper, no confirmation classes, no meeting with the Apostles, no theological conversations or debate! No explaining what he believed about Jesus and why. Nothing, but trust. Just a hunch and courage to take a risk. Now, I can only imagine everything about his life would lead most to say let him die. And maybe most would not object to such a person as this man being sentenced to an eternity in Hell. But God goes great length to save him. As he is literally dying God draws him to Jesus. I imagine Jesus could have responded to his request in a number of ways, but nothing from Jesus but a promise. “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.” Here me! When we turn to him in honesty and humility, like this criminal, he gives us the same promise. Reminding us that Hell was not created for us but that we were created for life with God. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

