

MADRID CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY, JUNE 04, 2017

2017 ANNUAL THEME:

PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD



EPHESIANS 6:10-20

"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL" (EPHESIANS 6:11).

THE REALITY OF HELL

BY DOY MOYER

Why A great deal may be said about what is sometimes thought of the "problem of hell." That is, hell is seen as one of those stumbling blocks against God. How can we believe in a loving, powerful God who would also cast people into an eternal destination of pain and torment?



Of course, whether or not we like the idea of hell has no bearing on whether or not God actually exists. We will still have to face its reality if we don't listen to God.

Hell is not to be taken lightly. Eternity is serious business no matter what side of the issue one takes, and what is at stake is everything. Reconciling the dire and horrible nature of hell with a God who desires all to be saved can be challenging, but Scripture does just that. Though the argument is long and involved, what we are concerned about now is what Jesus taught about hell. Notice that Jesus simply assumes the reality of hell without offering an apology for it. He shows hell as the alternative to the reward that God offers to those who serve Him. Using it to show the contrast, Jesus said, “If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire.” Not that one would really enter life crippled, but the contrast shows how serious these choices are. Would it better to keep a limb and suffer eternal consequences, or lose a limb and have eternal life? We know the answer. Jesus uses the same example with feet and eyes. Eternal life is more important than anything we have here. Sacrificing eternity for earthly pleasures is not worth it (cf. 8:34-38). “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” ([Matt. 16:26](#))

What did Jesus say about hell?

Jesus uses the imagery of the Valley of Ben-Hinnom from the Old Testament. This valley was just outside of Jerusalem. Here many practiced the idolatrous form of child sacrifice known as passing their children through the fire. Hear Jeremiah’s description:

“They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind. Therefore, behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when it will no longer be called Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the Slaughter; for they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place” ([Jer. 7:31-32](#); cf. [32:35](#); [2 Chron. 28:3](#); [33:6](#)).

Gehenna is the New Testament term for this valley, and is a fitting description of separation from God. Jesus said that hell (*Gehenna*) is where the “worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” ([Mark 9:47-48](#), quoting [Isaiah 66:24](#)). He referenced hell as a “sentence” for wickedness ([Matt 23:33](#)). It is where the soul and body meet destruction ([Matt 10:28](#)). Hell is “outer darkness”; “in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” ([Matt 25:30](#)). It is the “eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels” ([Matt 25:41](#)). Hell is “eternal punishment” ([Matt 25:46](#)). Now if Jesus is Lord, then how we feel about these statements is irrelevant. If we accept Jesus as Lord, then we accept the reality of what He taught and adjust our lives accordingly.

Remember that sin is not only a violation of God’s law, but is also a rebellion against His glory. The law reflects the glory of God, who is infinitely holy, and who must act with justice if this holiness is to be vindicated. We are created to be henceforth eternal. If we reject God and rebel against His nature, then we will continue on eternally without Him. This we call hell. How can we say that we should be in God’s presence when our actions have indicated to God that we don’t want Him in our lives here? If we have repudiated God’s word, then we judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life ([Acts 13:46](#); [John 12:48](#)).

Hell is the consequence for rejection of God’s glory and authority in favor of our own. If we insist on retaining our own autonomous authority apart from God now, then we must recognize what eternity is like without God’s presence when He gives us completely over to our wills. Hell is not some kind of medieval dungeon with laughing demons and evil torture devices. The devil will be there ([Matt 25:41](#)), but he won’t be in charge and he won’t be laughing. Further, while the descriptions of hell in physical terms evoke painful images in our minds, the real tragedy is that God has withdrawn His presence. The true issue of hell is about a final separation from God. That realization will, indeed, be a pain far beyond what any physical description can represent.

VISITORS: THANK YOU FOR COMING TODAY!

If you are visiting with us and have any questions about what you have seen or heard today, please fill out a visitor's card or ask to talk to one of our elders. You can also contact Jason Smith using the information below. We would be happy to schedule a time to sit down with you and to answer your questions from God's word. If there is anything we can do to help you spiritually, please let us know. We are here to serve!

Call or text Jason @ 412-999-4837 or email him @
preacher@madridchurch.com

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 06/18 – Apps and dessert at the Smith's @ 6PM
- 07/02 – Song Service @ 9AM
- 07/19 – Labor Day Planning Meeting @ 6PM
- 07/30 – Next Invite Sunday - *The Best Possible News: Jesus is Risen*

Do you have any interest in doing a group bike ride on the trail on 6/17? If you interested and have a preference regarding the time or distance your family could ride, let Jason know.

DAILY READING:

- 06/05 – Proverbs 13-15; Psalm 2
- 06/06 – Proverbs 16-18; Psalm 3
- 06/07 – Proverbs 19-21; Psalm 4
- 06/08 – Proverbs 22-24; Psalm 5
- 06/09 – Proverbs 25-27; Psalm 6
- 06/10 – Proverbs 28-31; Psalm 7
- 06/11 – Ecclesiastes 1-4; Psalm 8



"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

-Psalm 119:105