

"Don't Erase Hell"

Series: *Final Destination*

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(You can sign up for Pastor Tom's e-newsletter
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"Does everyone go to heaven? Based on what I hear at funerals, the answer is an overwhelming 'Yes!' How many funerals have you attended where this was even in _____?" (Chan)

The idea of hell is something that if talked about at all, is either confined to usage as a curse word, something to _____ about, or something reserved for gruesome exploitation in a horror movie.

Today I want to help us move past our wrong ideas, _____, and prejudices about the reality of hell.

1. An Overview of Hell in the Bible

Hell is one of the most _____ about topics in the Bible.

- A. Not revealed very fully in the Old Testament (although the O.T. has numerous passages about God as the final _____). Doctrine of hell progressively developed throughout Scripture (i.e., just like _____, the Holy Spirit, and even the Messiah). *Note Daniel 12:2*– the concept of hell became fully developed in Jewish theology in the 1st Century as a place of p_____ after judgment...
- B. When _____ appeared, the Jewish understanding of hell was well-established and accepted. If Jesus didn't think it was _____, He would have clearly corrected it, just like He did with commonly held Jewish beliefs at the time (i.e., wealth, Luke _____; Sabbath laws, Mark _____; person's sins always being the direct cause of illness or physical disability, John _____; nature of forgiveness, Matthew _____; marriage and divorce, Matthew 5:32; _____). Jesus doesn't mince words, dance around the topic, or try to "_____". His statements about hell (*note Matthew 10:28; 25:41; Mark 9:43-44*). Jesus deliberately...chose powerful and c_____ words when He talked about hell, and He did so because of _____...Jesus wants us to take hell seriously and avoid it at all _____.
- C. In the rest of the New Testament, Jesus' followers also taught about hell, judgment, and eternal _____ (*note II Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:10, 12-15; 21:8*). Jesus and the rest of the New Testament clearly and without apology declare, describe, and _____ of the reality of hell so people will embrace the gift of salvation offered through Jesus...

(continued on reverse)

2. What is Hell?

2 most common images...to describe it are “_____...flames” and “darkness..._____ absolute darkness”.

“We have to remember that Jesus and the writers of Scripture are trying to help us understand something beyond our knowledge and experience. Hell belongs to another _____, another reality. Because there are no _____ words or concepts to describe it, the writers of Scripture turn to something familiar.” (Pitts)

Just as heaven is wherever God in all His undiluted glory is, so hell is an existence where God is _____.

Note James 1:17

Hell is a place of eternal _____, of memories that do not comfort or bring a smile but only painful disappointments and “if only’s”.

3. Why Hell Matters

Note I John 4:16

You cannot _____ or force love from others.

God doesn’t make people love Him (it’s no longer _____ if He did).

So those who do not wish to love God must be _____ not to love Him.

Those wanting to _____ separately from Him must be allowed to not be with Him.

Hell is just this—_____ separation from God.

A good and loving God doesn’t _____ people to hell; but He will let people go there if they so choose.

It’s an alternative _____ destination for people who don’t want to be in God’s eternal presence.

“There are only 2 kinds of people in the end; those who say _____ God, ‘Thy will be done’, and those to whom _____ says, ‘Thy will be done.’ “ (C.S. Lewis)

Your Final Destination:

The reality of hell matters to:

- A. People un_____ to Jesus Christ (*note II Peter 3:9; I Timothy 2:4*) - God has done everything He can to change your final destination from hell to heaven...(note John 3:16). Respond to His love today...
- B. Christ-followers—the reality of hell should _____ us to reach out with God’s love...and we have to be outward-focused as individuals and as a church in light of this reality (*note Romans 9:1-3*).

Use the connect card to tell us about a commitment you made today, and tell someone you know or a Pastor or Staff person at Riverside about the spiritual commitment you have made today!