

College Ministry Move in (out in lobby, download app)

Nones & Dones Series Slide

Over a decade ago- Rob Bell, a then pastor and author, released a controversial book about Hell called "Love Wins" at the height of his popularity and influence.

In a promotional video that caused quite a stir in Xian circles, Bell says the following:

"Millions and millions of people were taught that the primary message, the center of the gospel of Jesus, is that God is going to send you to hell unless you believe in Jesus. And so what gets subtly sort of caught and taught is that Jesus rescues you from God. But what kind of God is that, that we would need to be rescued from this God? How could that God ever be good? How could that God ever be trusted? And how could that ever be good news?"

This is why lots of people want nothing to do with the Christian faith. They see it as an endless list of absurdities and inconsistencies and they say, why would I ever want to be a part of that? See what we believe about heaven and hell is incredibly important because it exposes what we believe about who God is and what God is like. "- Rob Bell

What Rob Bell expresses in those paragraphs represents the trouble that most of us, Xian or not, have with the idea of Hell.

"There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power." CS Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

Doesn't it make God cruel? Why not save everybody? Even if Hell exists...why does anybody HAVE to go there?

Some people see Hell simply as a scare tactic to get us to act morally, so they dismiss Xianity altogether because they figure out a way to be a moral and ethical person without the threat of eternal damnation.

...others say Hell is a doctrine that is as passé as the cranky and moody God of the OT..."Just give me Jesus...the good, humble, meek, mild and merciful, caring guy that healed the sick and hung out with the lowly."

Problem with that is that Jesus spoke more about Hell than anybody else in the Bible. He talked about Hell more often than Heaven.

So to say that Hell is unloving is to say Jesus is also unloving. And most people aren't prepared to do that.

Title Slide- "Why Should I Trust a God That Sends People to Hell?" Luke 16:19-31

That means that we come to a crossroads regarding hell where we have to make a choice.

- We can ignore it. Pretend its not there. Take scissors to the Bible and cut out the part we don't like.
- OR we can reject Jesus and the entirety of the Xian faith with it.
- OR we can understand it...at least understand what is revealed to us in the Bible about Hell.

My goal is to do the latter today.

Hell isn't about an angry God coldly sending away the "non-believers" into eternal torment. Rather, its about a patient God somewhat reluctantly giving you exactly what you've been asking for.

In fact, to answer Rob Bell, "*the center of the gospel of Jesus Christ*" is NOT that "*God is going to send you to hell unless you believe in Jesus*".

I actually agree with Bell when he said "***what we believe about heaven and hell is incredibly important because it exposes what we believe about who God is and what God is like***"

Hell is not a blemish on God's character. It is the outworking of his character.

It is real. It is worse than you can imagine. And it will either paralyze you with the fear that will lead to rejecting God...or it will motivate you with gratitude and joy for the REAL gospel of Jesus...the one that rescues you not from GOD...but from yourself.

We're going to read a parable- short story- Jesus told to make a point. Granted, his point in this story is not necessarily to give you all the accurate details about Hell,... but there are some things he exposes about it...and about us...that will help us better see what Hell is, who we are, and...most importantly...who God is.

So I'll read the parable in its entirety, so you get the whole story, then we'll comb back through it for better understanding.

Luke 16:19-31

19 "There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. 20 But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was lying at his gate. 21 He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. 24 'Father Abraham! ' he called

out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame! '

25 " 'Son,' Abraham said, 'remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.'

27 " 'Father,' he said, 'then I beg you to send him to my father's house — 28 because I have five brothers — to warn them, so that they won't also come to this place of torment.'

29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.'

30 " 'No, father Abraham,' he said. 'But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

31 "But he told him, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.' "

Transition: Im going to give you three ideas today from this passage (and others in the Bible) that I hope will help you re-orient maybe some of the Cartoonish ideas you have about hell as an underground torture chamber where God shakes his head at people that want out and says "Tsk, Tsk, Tsk, You had your chance!"-

1) Hell is in *you*, before you are ever in *it*.

- Let me say before I even get going with this one, that I believe Hell is a real place. There is no way I can read the Bible without doing some sort of interpretive gymnastics and say otherwise.
- Additionally, this passage really isn't about HELL proper. In fact, in some readings of Scripture, Hell doesn't even exist until after Jesus comes back. Just like we don't have a redeemed New Creation yet, so we don't have Hell yet as the final place of the dead apart from God.
- So- when Jesus tells this story of reversal about Lazarus and the Rich Man- He's talking about the intermediate state of death.
- In other words- There is life after death- which is what this is. And then there is life after life after death. Which is when Jesus comes back, renews the entire cosmos- rids the world of sin and death and brokenness....and the question is where does all that sin and death and brokenness go?- Well- That's what Hell is.

- Now even though this is a story about Hades in the Greek or Sheol in the Hebrew- the intermediate state- this passage is the beginning of 2 trajectories-one towards the redeemed Earth where Jesus is King- the other- to Hell.
- OK, back to the parable.
- There are 2 things about this guy that Jesus describes that we should notice.
- The first thing is that this guy's entire identity is built on his wealth. (SCREEN-
- **Luke 16:19**
 - Did you know that in every single parable Jesus told, this is the only one where a character gets a name?
 - And through this entire parable, Lazarus, the poor man, is contrasted with the rich man.
 - In this case, Jesus gives the poor man a name to show you that the rich man DOESN'T have one.
 - In other words, at his deepest and most profound....he is only a rich man. Defined and controlled by his love of money and opulence.
 - While the poor man- who has been overlooked by society...- Is known and seen intimately by God.
- **The second thing Jesus tells us about this guy is that he is religious.**
- **Luke 16:14 & 24**
 - See back in v 14, We are told Jesus is talking to the Pharisees (who were also lovers of money), They were religious rulers of Jesus' time.
 - Additionally, the rich man calls out for "Father Abraham". The person that any good Jew would recognize as the Patriarch of the Jewish faith and tradition-- indicating HE was "good Jew"
- But Jesus also shows us that his religion and wealth didn't combine to make this guy generous or loving.
- See, he wouldn't help Lazarus. He ignored him. Allowing him to die of starvation. He was all about himself...his comfort and reputation.

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- Now, at this point, here's our temptation. We want to say "Ah HA, as long as I'm not a jerk, consumed by money and not caring for the poor, I won't go to hell. Hell is for bad people that do bad things."
- But when have you ever known Jesus to merely go after someone's external behavior? Man sees the outward appearance, but the Lord sees the heart.
- Jesus is showing us, and the Pharisees he is talking to, something about the **nature of sin.**

- As a Religious and wealthy man, like the Pharisees, this guy had certainly done some good things. Or else he would not be in the respected position he is in. This is a guy who, like the Pharisees, were really good at obeying the law on the exterior. They didn't murder, lie, sleep around...they were in the temple every week, giving money...and probably even giving alms to "the poor".
- In fact, by most people's common understanding today of what does and does not send you to hell, this rich man was probably OK.
- Surely he had done enough good ACTIONS to outweigh this ONE bad action. Surely he was one of the good people that deserved Heaven!
- But he ends up in Hell! Why?
- It is because the **nature of sin** is less about breaking of external moral commands of God (though that is certainly the expression of sin)...The nature of sin is more about your **identity**.,, and the foundation on which you build it.
- **The nature of sin is building your identity on anything other than God.**
- Soren Kierkegaard in his work "Sickness Unto Death" defined sin as building your identity on anything other than God. Your identity is whatever it is that gives you your sense of self-worth and happiness-.
- That is exactly what Jesus points out here. And it completely confronts the idea that the doctrine of Hell is simply made up to scare you into acting morally. Because acting morally changes nothing about this man's trajectory into hell.
- There are 3 ways that Jesus describes hell in other places in Scripture that show exactly what Jesus is talking about here.
 - **Fire, A Worm, and Outer Darkness**
- And I believe every single one is a metaphor for something.

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- First- **FIRE**
 - Think of the way a fire works.
 - It is never satisfied. It always has to have more.
 - In fact once it gets going, it is only quenched if you can extinguish it with water...or if it totally consumes what fuels it.
 - Its like an addiction.
 - Addicts tell themselves over and over if they can just get what their body tells them they need, they will be satisfied.
 - But an alcoholic taking a drink only wants more.

- A sex addict thinks, “I’ll just go once more to this website or chatroom and then I’ll be satisfied and I can put this aside for a while”
- But when they think they are putting water on the fire within them, they are actually throwing logs and gasoline on.
- See, the fire shows us that when we base our identity, our happiness and self-worth, on god-replacements, we think they will satisfy our longing, but they only increase it...until our idols control us.
- Just like the alcoholic is controlled by his insatiable desire for alcohol and the people pleaser is controlled by her insatiable desire for approval...
- Basing your purpose and your delight on anything or anyone other than God creates the smoke inside you that ends in the fires of Hell.
- By your own choice to worship something other than God, you are setting a course that will have you empty and longingburning for significance...for eternity.
- My favorite episode of the twilight zone is called “A Nice Place to Visit”
- In it- a 1920s Gangster gets shot...ends up in a place that he thinks is heaven.
- He has a personal “angel” that gets him whatever he wants. Booze, women, money, a penthouse...he pulls off bank robberies whenever he wants...HE GETS WHAT HE WANTS WHEN HE WANTS.
- Eventually, none of that stuff satisfies him. None of it gives him any significance. or Joy. He gets bored with hitting the jackpot every time he pulls the arm of the slot machine.
- He eventually forces all the “dames” that are fawning over him out of his lavish apartment..and sits perplexed. Why is getting less and less satisfied even though he’s getting everything he wants?
- So he goes to the angel to try and figure it out.
- **“If I gotta stay here another day, I'm gonna go nuts! I don't belong in Heaven, see? I want to go to [the other place](#).”**
- The angel retorts, **"Heaven? Whatever gave you the idea that you were in heaven,? This IS 'the other place!!"**

See- Hell is not a place where your freedom is taken away- Its where you get all you ever wanted- Just without God. And without God- all the stuff you ever wanted loses its significance. It loses its connection to its creator- just like you.

- That's the same idea that Jesus presents when he says this about a "Worm that doesn't die" in the Gospel of Mark.
- **Mark 9:47-48**
- **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, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'**
- The word Jesus uses for Hell here is Gehenna-
 - It was a place outside the city- sometimes thought of as a trash dump- but more importantly where people in the OT would make child Sacrifices to the God Molech. So there are dead bodies everywhere- sacrificed to an idol.
 - So imagine looking out-at a trash dump and seeing the maggots and worms feasting on the bodies.
 - But see, there, the worms die. Eventually they run out of material.
 - But Jesus says, just like your idolatry, just like your sin, the worm is never satisfied. It never gets enough. That empty longing keeps going for eternity. That is hell..
 - **Unsatisfied emptiness eating you up forever.**
 - **Now, maybe you think that's not all that bad.**
 - But that is exactly what people try to escape from day-after-day in THIS life through suicide.
 - The tastelessness of life. Everything that promises to be satisfying just ends up tasting, looking, smelling, like ashes.
 - But death doesn't provide an escape from that emptiness. It amplifies and eternalizes the very thing the human soul is trying to escape.

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- The third metaphor Jesus often uses to describe Hell is Outer darkness.
 - God is referred to throughout Scripture as light, while evil is described as darkness.
 - The idea is that wherever God is, evil cannot be.
 - Just like when you flip on a light, darkness disappears.
- **ILLUS:** You ever been camping before?
 - Think of the nights where it gets really cold and everyone is huddled around the fire, warming themselves, telling stories, and roasting hot dogs.
 - Then you step away because you have to use the bathroom...and you realize THERE IS NO BATHROOM! THAT IS HELL! No.. at that point...

- You are in the outer darkness. The warmth and comfort of the fire goes away. The fellowship and laughter you hear around the fire...you are no longer a part of that.
- You are cold, its dark, and you just want to get off the phone to go back and warm your body with the heat and your soul with the conversation.
- In Hell, you are in the outer darkness. Eternally. Completely conscious that you are missing the warmth and fellowship that comes through knowing God and being known by God, but even with all that frustration...you are unwilling to repent.
- And we see that unwillingness to repent in the rich man in this parable.
 - **v 23-24**
 - Jesus uses 2 words here to describe the pain of death and separation from God.... First he says the man is in torment¹
 - The Greek word here is basanos- which originally means stone that you would rub on a coin or jewelry to ensure that its authentic. That the way it presented on the outside- it was actually that metal or jewel through and through.
 - Similarly, as the word came to mean torment...or torture...it would prove whether someone was telling the truth. **WHO YOU REALLY WERE WOULD COME OUT. Under TORTMENT- you could no longer hide behind external good deeds.**
 - Then- there is the word “agony”- or odunomai in Greek. this word doesn’t just mean pain, but also “grief” or “anguish”. It is more emotional pain than physical pain.

It shows up in 2 other places in the NT- in Luke 2 When Mary and Joseph realize that 12 year old Jesus is lost- they search for him. Someone they love has been lost... and they are in agony over it.

Then in the book of Acts in chapter 20 when the Apostle Paul is leaving Ephesus and the leaders of the church realize they will never see him again- they are grieved- same word- because they are being separated from someone they love.

It is an inner sense of agony and torment- not outward. Based on the loss of relationship.

The rich man is in anguish, agony, and grief- because he realizes he has been separated from what he really loves- his riches and comfort. He is exposed as not loving God or others...but loving himself and his money.

¹ Joshua Ryan Butler, *Skeletons in God's Closet*, pg 76

He's not being tortured from outside- like we often picture hell.

In fact, the Rich man doesn't ask to be let out of hades. He doesn't ask to be released or saved. He just wants some more temporary satisfaction.

And in his pride, he still thinks he is greater than Lazarus, the poor man.

He treats him as his errand boy. See he doesn't say, "Save me." He says "Oh, I'll be fine. I can tough it out. I just need a little drink...and that poor man Lazarus would make a good littler runner. Send him down here."

- We get this idea that God throws people into hell kicking and screaming. And then for eternity they beg to get out.
- But (in the words of the French Playwright and Philosopher John Paul Sartre) "Hell has door that is locked from the inside"
- ...before it is ever locked from the outside
- Hell is simply the culmination of a life of telling God to "Stay out", and finally God gives you exactly what you have asked for.
- You think God is an abusive tyrant who won't give you what you want...but that is exactly what he gives you in hell. Eternal life without HIM. Exactly what you have been asking for all along.
- This is fundamentally what Paul says in the first chapter of his letter to the church at Rome
- **Romans 1:24-25**
- **24 Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.**

Back to 1)

- Listen, God doesn't send you to hell. In a very real sense, we both *send* and *keep* ourselves there with our foolish pride and refusal to admit that our own self-worship is NOT WHAT WE WERE MADE FOR.
- SEE, the evidence of Hell is in you, long before you arrive there.

APP:

- The reality of hell should have you asking
- Who am I?
- Is your identity based on who God is...and what he has declared about you in the gospel of Jesus...or have you built your identity on riches, success, comfort, beauty, popularity, or being known as a good parent,
- At the bottom, your identity is built on what you worship.

- And only the one who Created your soul can support the weight of its deepest longings. Nothing else you chase will ever satisfy you.
- Are you willing to look THAT deep into yourself and answer honestly whether or not fires of hell's dissatisfaction and frustration are already burning in you?

Here's the second truth about hell...and more importantly about God.

2) God is loving, just and merciful...so hell must exist.

- In this Parable, Lazarus is carried off to Abraham's side.
- Where Hades would represent where the unrighteous go in death, Abraham's side is where the righteous go. Notice how personal it is. The word here means "bosom". Its nestled into Father Abraham (the father of the Jewish Faith) up close and personal. In other words- Its WITH somebody.
- **v 25**
- "**Abraham** (who represents God's point of view as a Father here) calls the rich man "Child"- **while he is in Hades.**
- This greek word *Teknon* is a term of endearment.
- Its what I would call one of my boys when I'm sitting in my chair they climb up in my lap.
- It represents anything but **DISDAIN or hate.**
- See, what we often think is that God is waiting for us to mess up, then he says "Caught YA!" and makes us get in a car wreck so we go to hell while he laughs and says "Sorry. Should have worshipped me!"
- But that is not the picture of God we get here. Rather it is one of a loving, broken-hearted Dad who has been waiting on the front porch hours after curfew just to see his rebellious teenager's headlights finally pull in the driveway so he can give him a hug.
- **ILLUS:** In fact, this parable is just a continuation of the story that Jesus told about the Prodigal Son.
- Remember that one from a few weeks ago?
- Where the rebellious son insults his father, leaves home, gets in all kinds of trouble then returns home to his Father thinking he will be shunned and punished, but runs out to him and gives him a hug and party.
- But the point of that parable is not really the younger son. It is the older one.
- See the older son did everything right. Pristine record. Always did what daddy asked. But when Dad let little James Dean back in the family, and then threw a PARTY FOR him, the older son's pride got the best of him. And he stayed outside and pouted about what he deserved.

- “WHY HIM? I’m the one that deserves A PARTY.”
- see, the older brother’s heart is exposed not as loyal and loving. NO, he had the EXACT same attitude as the rebellious younger brother.
- They both wanted their FATHERS STUFF.
- Without really wanting their father.
- And in the end- the Younger one returns home to the Father and steps into a party...while the older one, stays out in the outer darkness-
- And do you know what that Father calls his son when he goes out of the Party, into the outer darkness, to entreat his older son to join the party?
- He calls him “Teknon”. Sweet Child. Dear Son.
- The Father doesn’t brainwash him.
- HE doesn’t hold him down and say “You are coming to this party and you are going to act like you are having fun!”
- He says with love “Child, COME BACK TO ME!”...and he leaves the choice to him.
- What this shows us is that it pains GOD to let go of his children.
- Hell exists at the same time God is loving.
- But because in the outer darkness, the older brothers and the rich man have their heart set on a party that doesn’t include their FATHER...they refuse. Forever.
- The reality is— there is no Party without the Father.

Back to 2)

- So you might ask “Why Hell then?” If God loves us so much, why doesn’t he just say “Awww shucks, even though you don’t really want to worship me, just come on in here”
- Its because God cannot deny who he is. God’s character is eternal.
- And God is eternally 2 things- Just & Merciful.
- These are both characteristics of his love.
- The reason God doesn’t just forgive people who are unwilling to repent is because **he is Just**.
- People often get the storyline of the bible wrong. We tend to think in terms of just me.
- So we think the storyline of the Bible is “I was born onto earth. And I go through my life and when I die—> I will either go to Heaven or to Hell.”

But that’s not the story of the Bible.

In fact- If you were to do a search in your bible app on how many times Heaven and Hell are listed together in the Scripture- that number would come back ZERO.

Heaven and Hell are never listed as a counter pairs. But you know what is...over and over and over?

Heaven and Earth.

The story the Bible tells is one where HEAVEN and EARTH are a natural pair. Like God and Humans. But when humanity chose our own way, apart from God- there was rift in heaven and earth.

Gods redemptive work through Jesus is to BRING HEAVEN and Earth back together again. To completely restore the broken image of God in humanity. And to do that- to bring Justice. To set the world right- he has to expunge, drive out, do away with Injustice and evil and disease, and and death.

The DOING away of all that is the creation of Hell. A quarantined outpost outside the city- where New Creation is no longer plagued by sin and death.

For those that refuse to attach themselves to the Father through his invitation of forgiveness through Jesus. Those that are adamant that they will do life without him- they connect themselves with Hell.

For God to be Just- to set the world right again- he has to do something with evil. The question is will you attach yourself to GOD and his party- or remain resistant to his love- frustrated in the outer darkness- committed only to yourself.

But where is God's Mercy in this?

Mercy is another word for God's patience

See mercy is God withholding what we all deserve.

And since each one of us have in some way, chosen to pridefully pursue joy and develop an identity in something other than God, then the fact that we are even standing here breathing and looking at each other is God's mercy.

Mercy is God's patience in waiting for you to change your mind about Him. Waiting for you to give up your unsatisfying self-worship, and cry out to him "Father, I'm coming home!".

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

See, if you are alive right now, even if the fires of hell have already started in you, there is still hope because of the mercy of God. You are not yet committed to Hell.

YES GOD MUST BE A JUST GOD, He must put away all sin and idolatry from himself, but If you are breathing, that means the mercy of God is on you, and he is calling you like a loving father to a wayward child to GIVE UP AND COME HOME!...and you are not yet so set in your ways that his love cannot reach you.

TRANSITION: And that leads us to the most beautiful reality that exists. The gospel. It is what all the good stories that have ever been written have in common with each other. Humility, deep love, and saving sacrifice.

3) Without Hell, you would never know how much God loves you.

- **Luke 16:27-28**
- From Hades, the rich man says “Send Lazarus back from the dead to my brothers!”
- “Have him tell them what death is like apart from you. Scare them with how bad it is! Amaze them with a miracle of a resurrection!”
- But Abraham says- “It won’t work. Fear of hell or amazing miracles won’t be enough to change them fundamentally. At their core. It won’t change their identity- and that’s what’s required to change their eternal destiny.”
- Exterior response to a fear of hell or amazement at the miracles and gifts of God DON’T make you a worshipper of God.

Back to 3)

- Sometimes that’s what the Atheist or Agnostic miss with their argument that if God was real and really wanted worshippers, the most loving thing he could do would be to write a message in the sky and say “HEY! I’m REAL. Worship ME!”
- But **That does not fix your heart.** It just makes you a fearful conformist... which is exactly what so many claim the idea of HELL does to XIANS!

But that CANNOT be true. Right here Jesus says “FEAR OF HELL IS NOT ENOUGH TO SAVE YOU FROM IT!”

- There is no such thing as “Fire Insurance”
- As Jesus being your “Savior and NOT your LORD”
- Jesus is either Savior and LORD, or he is nothing at all.
- Because the simple truth is that you cannot REALLY see and trust the salvation God provides in JESUS and NOT be TOTALLY consumed by it. Completely surrendered to his love.

- See, **Radical unconditional love is the only thing that will transform you into someone new.** That can give you a fundamentally new identity. FEAR doesn't have that power. Only unconditional, sacrificial love.
- **v 29-31**
- Do you see what Jesus says here?
- Even a person rising from the dead will not convince you.
- Listen, this is ASTOUNDING.
- See, when Jesus says MOSES & THE PROPHETS, he is talking about the Bible...in this case...the Old Testament.
- He is saying that even when HE RISES from the dead it won't change people's minds about God. In fact, the evidence and likelihood of Jesus' own resurrection is actually pretty stunning. But still, people continually reject God's call even when they see that evidence.
- The ONLY THING that will do it is the WORD of GOD.- Moses and the prophets & the rest of the Bible tells us THAT JESUS died and resurrected YES, but even more importantly, they explain WHY JESUS died and rose.

Jesus resurrection is just a strange supernatural trick...if we don't know how to interpret it.

Isaiah 53:4-5

- **Yet he himself bore our sicknesses,**
- **and he carried our pains;**
- **but we in turn regarded him stricken,**
- **struck down by God, and afflicted.**
- **5 But he was pierced because of our rebellion,**
- **crushed because of our iniquities;**
- **punishment for our peace was on him,**
- **and we are healed by his wounds.**
- See, **You don't know how much Jesus LOVES YOU** until you see what he suffered **FOR YOU.**
- **ILLUS: It's like this**
- Imagine you were out of town & a friend got your mail for you.
- And you got a text from your friend that said, "I've paid what you owed."
- How would you know how to respond?
 - I mean, if he paid a parking ticket for you...i guess you'd say "Thanks" and move on.

But, what if he had received the notice you got from IRS that said you owed 15 years worth of Backed taxes that added up to millions of dollars... and he paid that. A debt you thought you would never dig yourself out of. The response would demand something else from you. Not just- THANKS. It would fundamentally change your life and how you forever thought of that friend.

Back to 3)

See, “**Until you know how much Jesus paid, you don’t know whether to shake his hand or fall on the ground and kiss his feet.**”

That is exactly what Hell tells us about the price Jesus paid on the cross.

Unless you believe in hell, you will never know how much he loves you...because on the Cross- Jesus was taking on, absorbing all of the death, all of the evil, all of the punishment for you sin..he was doing that for you.

See, that is exactly Why Jesus spoke more about Hell than anybody else.

Because he was a fear monger? NO.
Because on the cross...

He was separated from God, he experienced the fire of unsatisfying idolatry, He was cast into the outer darkness of separation from his FATHER.

That’s why from the cross he cried “My God why have you forsaken me”

- Unless you see that, you will never know how much he loves you
- By getting rid of hell, you make God less loving...not more loving
- See, if Jesus just died as some demonstration of how much he loves us, without hell, that makes as much sense as my telling my kids I love them then jumping in front of truck.
- It is only a demonstration of my love if MY KIDS ARE STANDING IN FRONT OF THE TRUCK.
- If I simply know that God loves me, but don’t understand what it cost him, I can be happy....but I will not be transformed.
- The only thing powerful enough to transform my prideful heart that rejects God- to a humble heart that gives him EVERYTHING
- ...is for me to see Jesus experiencing the HELL that I should receive...and still inviting me into the party.

Isaiah 53:4-5

CONCLUSION- Let me end with two things

- First, If you claim to be a Xian
 - How long are we going to complain among ourselves about what music we play or what children's programs the church offers or how we wish we were being "fed"?
 - Listen, I'm not trying to guilt you.
 - The church is not, and will never be a cruise ship. It is stripped down battleship with one mission. Making the BEAUTIFUL TRUTH of the gospel known to as many people, in as many different walks of life as possible, Every tribe tongue and nation so that more and more people would worship the GOD that died in their place.

- And if you are not a Xian, or if prayed a prayer one time because you were afraid of hell, or just wanted something you thought you could get from God without really seeing what he's done and surrendering to him.

- You are created to know God, to love him, and be utterly satisfied with him. Nothing else you worship will ever bring you the deep, lasting acceptance and Joy that worshipping the God who created you, and then DIED FOR YOU...will bring.

But Some of you are resisting Jesus... hanging on to your belief that if you just keep going, stay the course...you'll arrive at the point you are finally happy. You won't. The fires of hell are already burning in you.

But I'm asking you right now to give it up. I'm asking you right now, even in your doubts and fears, to trust the God who died to transform you. He's inviting you out of the darkness...and into the party.

Prayer to pray, App

LORD'S SUPPER

Pray