How Can a Good God Send People to Hell? March 28, 2021

*Mark 9:42-48 Series: Hard Questions for the Christian Faith*

There are only two kinds of people—those who say “Thy will be done” to God or those to whom God in the end says, “Thy will be done.” – C. S. Lewis

Intro: Call from the devil?

1. Hell isn’t what you think. It’s worse.
2. How do you describe something so terrible it can’t be described?

v. 42 *it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea*

v. 43 *It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.*

v. 45 *It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell.*

vv. 47-48 *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.’*

Matthew 25:30 *… the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

2 Peter 2:17 *the gloom of utter darkness*

2 Thessalonians 1:9 *They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord*

1. How long does it last?

Matthew 25:46 *And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*

Revelation 20:10 *and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever*

* How does our culture talk about and describe hell?
* Hell, like heaven, is in one sense, indescribable. What can we know about what it will be like from the descriptions given?
* Hell has been readily accepted in other parts of the world and periods of history. Why do we struggle with it so much today?

1. God sends people to hell because of the cries for justice
2. What made Jesus talk about hell?

v. 36 *And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them …*

v. 42 *Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin …*

1. Is it love or indifference that leaves injustice unpunished?

Genesis 4:10 *What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.*

Romans 12:19 *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

Miroslav Volf: The only means of prohibiting all recourse to violence by ourselves is to insist that violence is legitimate only when it comes from God.

1. Is hell just for other people?

vv. 43, 45, 47 *if your hand … if your foot … if your eye causes you to sin*

Romans 3:23 *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

* How does the fact that Jesus is holding a child in his arms when He speaks about hell affect how you hear His words?
* Why wouldn’t it be more loving if God didn’t judge sin?
* How does a belief in hell make it easier to forgive others?
* According to this passage, who should be worried about hell?

1. God sends people to hell because they reject Him
2. Who was Jesus talking about?

vv. 43, 45, 47 *if*

vv. 43, 45, 47 *cut it off … cut it off … tear it out*

1. Bad news for people who reject good news

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 … *when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

1. Jesus experienced God’s wrath so that those who trust Him wouldn’t have to

Luke 22:42 … *saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”*

Rachael Denhollander (victim statement at the trial of Larry Nassar): Should you ever reach the point of truly facing what you have done, the guilt will be crushing. And that is what makes the gospel of Christ so sweet. Because it extends grace and hope and mercy where none should be found. And it will be there for you.

* Did Jesus really want people to cut off their limbs? What was He saying?
* What does it mean to “not obey the gospel”?
* What was the cup that Jesus was talking about?
* How does the fact that Jesus took the wrath of God on the cross change how we should think about hell?
* Are there aspects of the Bible’s teaching about hell that still don’t seem fair?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study John 21:1-19

Notes