

It's Time to Start Talking About Hell Again

Hell. Most people go there but few preachers talk about it.

"Therefore My people go into captivity because they have no knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself and opened its mouth without measure; so their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he who rejoices shall descend into it" (Is. 5:13-14).

If ultimate, eternal judgment would visit God's very people, Judah and Jerusalem, due to their drinking and partying ways, what is to become of those who openly rebel and reject God and His mandates?

The church has done itself a grave injustice by refusing to connect sinful living with the clear expected outcome of eternal torment. Our arguments against the homosexual movement and the horrifying evil on display at Planned Parenthood clinics in our nation have been reduced to a debate about morals and human rights. It's no wonder we are accused of hatred when we are standing in the way of behavior that so many argue has no real impact on society. We have been forced into a position of analyzing metrics that reveal debatable negative trends in our culture that are a result of the behavior that we abhor.

For pro-lifers, it's extremely easy to be sickened by abortion—and certainly by what's been uncovered in the recent undercover videos that have exposed the evil practices at Planned Parenthood. However, the pro-abortion crowd is convinced that legal abortion is healthy and appropriate. Is our best, most-effective tactic trying to convince them that the baby is a person or is there another approach that would

be more impactful?

Homosexuality has an even stronger position that their behavior is personal and private and what happens behind their closed doors has no impact on you or me. Of course, I disagree that their behavior has no impact on my life or on our nation. Their agenda has been possibly the most aggressive in recent history by forcing their beliefs on us through parades, sitcoms, legislation and other advances. However, the church's response can easily be seen as selfish and hateful, as it demands everybody adhere to a code that doesn't even apply to those not in Christ.

I do feel there is a place to meet the mission of Planned Parenthood, the homosexual movement, immorality in Hollywood, corruption in government and the innumerable other strategies that the spirit of the age has been pushing on our nation at various more natural levels. We can and should support the defunding of Planned Parenthood. We absolutely must reject impurity that comes through movies and other media. We should be wise and understand that our liberties as Christians are at risk when we can't even refuse to bake a cake for an event we don't support. It's important that we vote for political candidates who will help restore our nation to its Christian roots by confronting the advances of various special interest groups.

Additionally, as many Christians propose, we should function in great love when dealing with others who don't support our biblical worldview.

However, as I said, stopping there compromises our efforts.

We will always look like haters if we demand people adhere to our code of values.

We will always look passive and with little concern if we simply grin and tell people that Jesus loves them.

The reason we so passionately sound alarms and alert homosexuals, abortionists, pornographers, liars, thieves, murderers and others who are living outside of God's brilliant plan for their lives is simple—we are broken over the fact that they will be tormented non-stop, forever with no relief in hell.

We need to let them know that heaven won't be the same without them! Hell must not win on the day of their physical death!

"His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean His floor and gather His wheat into the granary, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12).

I had an encounter of being dragged toward hell by an invisible demonic entity over 20 years ago. I almost went mad in that indescribable, horrifying experience. I can't even think of that moment for more than a few seconds before I have to shut the thought down. It's that terrible.

After I came out of that life-changing, uninvited revelation God spoke clearly to me: *"John, many Christians will be shocked to find themselves in hell one day."*

Just like those addressed in the passage I shared above from Isaiah, today many professing Christians will soon be in hell with no chance of ever leaving. Some of those are people who are convinced they are believers but who are following Jesus in an unsaved condition. Others are truly saved and will one day choose to fall away. That falling away will be great—and terrible.

If this is true for Christians, what then is to be expected for those who openly defy God?

We must see a return to Holy Spirit-anointed preaching on hell. We must warn people, with tears in our eyes, that they are headed there!

“Enter at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who are going through it, because small is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).

God doesn't need a publicist.

I'm dismayed by the radical shift away from full-counsel preaching of the Word of God.

I don't know how often I've heard people say that preaching on hell results in fear—and there is no fear in love—and so we must avoid it at all costs.

This demonically twisted wisdom has resulted in a massive resistance to large segments of the Bible in the hopes that highlighting the benefits would be enough to woo people to Christ.

“But I will warn you whom you shall fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell. Yes, I say to you, fear Him”(Luke 12:5).

Today we have evangelism that communicates how much God loves people without communicating how great their sin is, and what the result will be if they do not repent. This results in a new breed of deceived religious people who believe they are safe but are most likely not. Repentance is non-negotiable.

God does not need you or me as publicists, carefully reframing His words so they are received by the greatest number of people. We are preachers not politicians!

When people see how convicted we are that they are on a path to a place as horrific as hell, they will at least see our love for them. They all won't agree with us, but they will say: “Wow, they may be nuts but I really think they are

convinced that harm is coming to us. They don't hate us after all."

When we use more natural tactics alone to confront the various evil agendas in the land we communicate that we are more interested in the preservation of the society we prefer—one that fits into our definition of appropriate.

However, if we have the courage to take the battle to a higher level, we can boldly preach the reality of eternal damnation as a passionate yet heartbroken church. Our identity will be transformed from one who watches out for our own interests to true watchman—those who are invested in the eternities of others.

"Son of man, I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel. Whenever you hear the word from My mouth, then warn them from Me. When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you do not warn him, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand" (Ezek. 3:17-18).

Our cry must be: "No! Please! Understand that your lifestyle will result in a horror that you can't even imagine. You will never have even a moment of relief. Please, repent, turn, let God's love overwhelm you!"

Behavior Modification?

Some might suggest that I'm suggesting that behavior modification is the key to salvation. This couldn't be further from the truth. The keys to death, hell and the grave were retrieved by Jesus Christ, the only one who could do what was necessary to save mankind from destruction.

"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though I were dead. Then He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be

afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, though I was dead. Look! I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death'" (Rev. 1:17-18).

However, it does remain true that unrepentant participation in sin absolutely does disqualify us from a relationship with Jesus. The fact that homosexuals unapologetically confess to participating in behavior that is forbidden by God is a clear indicator that they are not saved. The fact that those who are pro-abortion are set in their ways and determined to keep murder legal in America is evidence that they are clearly not in a legitimate relationship with Jesus.

It is fully appropriate to preach without apology that continuing in those (and other) sins without repentance and without making Jesus the Lord and Master of their lives will end terribly for them.

People need to hear the prophets shouting the alarms of eternal destruction that comes to those in rebellion to God!

"So he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. For I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things. But now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf, so that those who would pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' He said, 'Then I pray you, father, to send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, to testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the Prophets. Let them hear them'" (Luke 16:24-29).

What About Sin in the Camp?

The next argument is that a focus on sin in the world while avoiding dealing with sin in the church is the perfect definition of hypocrisy. I agree.

As I shared above, many Christians will be shocked to find themselves in hell one day. It's a reality that haunts me every day.

Those who live in sexual sin outside of the camp will be judged, as will those who live in sexual sin in the camp will. Unforgiveness, hatred, lust, gossip and many other sins will have the exact same result as those in the world whom we would call wild and deviant.

"You have heard that it was said by the ancients, 'You shall not murder,' and 'Whoever murders shall be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire'" (Matt. 5:12-22).

"You have heard that it was said by the ancients, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away. For it is profitable that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body be thrown into hell" (Matt. 5:27-30).

However, the truth that we must deal with sin in the camp

doesn't erase our responsibility to preach the full counsel of Scripture to all. It highlights it.

Hell is awaiting millions of people, both in and out of the church, and we must make that known! So few actually even know or believe that hell is their future. They presume all is well. So few are letting them know that they are but a breath away from horror!

"He told them another parable, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. But when the shoots had sprung up and produced fruit, the weeds also appeared. So the servants of the landowner came and said to him, "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from?" He said to them, "An enemy did this." The servants said to him, "Will you then have us go and gather them up?" But he said, "No, lest while you gather up the weeds, you pull up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up the weeds first and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn'" (Matt. 13:24-30).

It's time for us to preach truth and to see the planet shaken by the firepower of God's Word again.

It's true love that will give people an opportunity to decide where they will spend their eternity.

"... and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 They shall be punished with eternal destruction, isolated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Isaiah clearly revealed truth and people had a choice. They scoffed at the idea that they would go to hell, but at least blood would not be found on Isaiah's hands.

"Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are in agreement. The overflowing scourge shall not come to us when it passes through, for we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood we have hid ourselves" (Is. 28:14-15).

People Must Hear the Truth About Hell Today

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea and gathered all kinds of fish. When it was full, they drew it to shore, sat down, and gathered the good into baskets, but threw the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:47-50).

"For if God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be kept for judgment; and if He did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, making them an example to those afterward who would live ungodly lives; and if He delivered righteous Lot, who was distressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man lived among them, and what he saw and heard of their lawless deeds tormented his righteous soul day after day); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the Day of Judgment, especially those who walk after the flesh in pursuit of

unclean desires, and despise authority. They are presumptuous and arrogant, and are not afraid to slander the angelic beings. Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring slanderous accusations against them before the Lord. But these people are like irrational animals, born to be captured and destroyed. They speak evil of the things that they do not understand, and in their corruption they will be destroyed. They shall receive the wages of unrighteousness. They count it a pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes who revel in their own deception while they carouse together with you. They have eyes full of adultery that cannot cease from sin. They entice unstable souls. Their hearts are trained in greed. They are cursed children!" (2 Pet. 2:4-14).

Contrary to popular belief, a revelation of hell absolutely does result in people running into the arms of a loving God.

When did today's popular teachers presume it was appropriate to de-emphasize clear, pure truth in favor of what is more pleasing? It's truly an abomination!

"Anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

Human wisdom would say we should focus on the benefits. Listen, we aren't selling a time-share. We aren't trying to convince someone on the fence of buying a new car of how much their life will be better by driving it.

The truth is that outside of Christ we are evil people who should burn forever in Hell—and who will without an admission of our deviance and rebellion. Our decision shouldn't be based on benefit. How selfish that is! It should be based on the reality of the punishment that is awaiting us and the revelation of God's intense rescue mission to save us from torment.

God's love is made more evident when contrasted with the truth of hell.

The bottom line is simple: We cannot erase the Word of God. It must be preached in fullness. The result will be many current homosexuals, liars, adulterers, murderers and others falling desperately in love with Jesus.

"I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book. 19 And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life and out of the Holy City and out of the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19).

"He who was seated on the throne said, 'Look! I am making all things new.' Then He said to me, 'Write, for these words are faithful and true.' He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the spring of the water of life to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers, the sexually immoral, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars shall have their portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. This is the second death" (Rev. 21:5-8).

That's the contrast we must have in today's preaching. Reveal the spring of the water of life and the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. It's how Jesus preached, after all.

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