

Joel Osteen: I'm Not Cheating People by Not Talking About Hell

Joel Osteen, who is known for his effervescent personality and sunny disposition in nearly all matters, says he is not cheating people by not preaching about hell.

"You know, it's not hellfire and brimstone. But I say most people are beaten down enough by life," Osteen said in a special Easter edition of *CBS Sunday Morning*. "They already feel guilty enough. They're not doing what they should, raising their kids—we can all find reasons. So I want them to come to Lakewood or our meetings and be lifted up, to say, 'You know what? I may not be perfect, but I'm moving forward. I'm doing better.' And I think that motivates you to do better."

Other pastors, however, believe fire and brimstone preaching may be what the church needs again.

"To the shame of much of today's church, there has been a firm and steadfast rejection of any truth that doesn't result in people feeling happy affection for God," writes Pastor John Burton. "While a core message of mine has to do with enjoyable and permeating intimacy with Jesus, I understand that it is not a mutually exclusive one. That teaching when it stands alone, apart from the full counsel of God's Word, produces a people who don't understand the fear of the Lord, the severity of their lifestyle decisions or the intensity and nearness of eternity."

Despite criticism, Osteen forges ahead.

"Our general message speaks to staying in peace and being respectful and staying full of joy and staying positive," he

tells . "I don't get specific about the politics, but our core message deals with [how] every day, you have to choose to be happy; you have to overlook things that are done wrong and things that are said."