

The Heart-Breaking Reality of Hell

My father has said, "Some teach 'universalism'—that eventually everybody will be saved and the God of love will never send anyone to hell. They believe the words 'eternal' or 'everlasting' do not actually mean forever."

This is what pastor and author Rob Bell and many others are teaching. Bell, in fact, has invoked my father's name in recent interviews talking about a new book he has written reflecting his own doubts about the existence of hell.

However, my father has pointed out, "the same word which speaks of eternal banishment from God is also used for the eternity of heaven." The Bible speaks more about hell than about heaven.

Why would God's Word put such an emphasis on hell? Because God sent His only Son the Lord Jesus Christ to die on the cross for the sins of mankind. Those who acknowledge and repent of their sin will receive forgiveness and eternal salvation and the hope of heaven forever.

God does not want anyone to perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16), but He does not force His salvation on anyone. He gives men and women the choice of accepting what He offers—His everlasting forgiveness and eternal love.

Some claim that evangelical Christians take pride in the fact that they are going to heaven, and those who believe differently are bound for hell. The redeemed of Christ have no claim apart from the Word of the Living God.

Before he ascended into heaven, Christ said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe

will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). The Bible says that God wants all people to be saved, but the Bible also warns, "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

This is why believers in the Lord Jesus Christ must preach the whole Gospel. Christ did die for "all" but not "all" will receive the grace and gift that He offers. At this Easter season, I encourage all followers of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to remember what a seminary professor once said, "Never preach about hell without tears in your eyes."