

The Problem With Man pt 2

REVIEW: We are taking a long look at salvation. This is all a part of keeping an emphasis on evangelism throughout this year. We started the year looking at evangelism, and talking about the process of it. We then moved on to what death is for a Christian, what heaven is like, what eternity will hold. And now we are taking a long look at salvation

We started looking at the God of salvation. We looked at who He is, His holiness, self sufficiency, and sovereignty. We looked at God first because we need to understand this holy, amazing God before we can really understand who we are as man. Which brought us to the next point of starting to look at man. Who are we, what are we like, when compared to God, where do we stack up? Last week we began to see there is a large deficiency in man, and because of the deficiency, because we have no way to correct this problem, what we are owed is eternal separation from God.

INTRO: This morning we are going to complete our look at man. More specifically, we are going to look at man's eternal destiny apart from God. What does the Bible tell us about it, what is it like, what ideas do we have that are correct, and that are false.

Matthew 18:8-9 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."

- I. Where we ended last week was a simple truth about hell
 - A. Hell, with as awful a thought as it is, really points to the fact of how enormous and amazing our God is
 - B. If you remember the quote from John Piper, "The horror of hell is an echo of the infinite worth of God's glory."
 1. In other words, we think hell is absolutely horrible - and it is
 2. But the reason it is there, is it is the right response to humanity's efforts to steal God's glory and not glorify Him the way He deserves
 3. Which points us to just how glorious He really is if hell really is the response to taking away from God's glory
 - C. So let's make sure we really do understand what the horrors of hell are like from scripture, and not from popular media, or even classic books
- II. Just how horrible is hell?
 - A. This is where Matthew 18:8-9 come in

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- B. Think about what this passage is saying - and to be honest this is hard stuff for us as humans to swallow
1. It is better never to be able to run your fingers through your spouse, or your children's hair
 2. Better not to be able to shave or comb your own hair
 3. Better not to be able to go for a walk on the beach and feel the sand between your toes
 4. Better to be blind and never see your kid hit the home run or score the touchdown that wins the game - or never see your daughter at her ballet recital
 5. It is better for any or all of that to happen to you than for you to face eternity outside the kingdom of God
 - a) We all know how wonderful and amazing those things are
 - b) We all can imagine how horrible it would be to not be able to do those things
 - c) If that is true, and life is better missing out on those things than facing eternity outside God's kingdom - what must hell be like?
 - (1) How horrible must hell be like!
- C. So what happens to people that are committed to living a life that belittles God's glory?
1. Matthew 25:41-46
 2. We often make this passage about feeding the poor and caring for those in need
 - a) And it is certainly saying that
 - b) But it does not end there
 3. What is taking place is God is saying these are the things that I have provided for you out of my glorious grace
 - a) You are acting like these things are for your glory
 - b) You are acting like these things are for you, because of you
 - c) Rather than seeing the truth that God has been gracious to you in granting these material possessions to you for His glory, and now you can further bring glory to God by being gracious to others
 4. So we find the greater benefit that all of what we have was given to us for God's glory
 5. But the scary part is what happens when we terminate on the gifts from God themselves and do not acknowledge His glory in the process
 - a) When we seek our benefit apart from God's glory it demands the response of eternal separation from God
- D. Turn to Luke 12:4-5
1. We see a warning from Jesus that fits right into this whole idea

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2. Luke 12:4-5 “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”
3. Jesus is stating it plainly, “Don’t be worried about yourselves in this world and what man might do to you.”
 - a) Don’t be worried about your glory
 - b) Don’t be seeking to save yourself from man
 - c) Instead, be more concerned with what God may do
4. So the word picture would be like this
 - a) We often times will run from fellow humans, afraid of what they may do to us
 - b) Yet it is God that we should be concerned about
 - c) It’s like the difference between a kitten and a lion
 - d) We run from the kitten, trying to hide because we are scared of what the kitten might do
 - e) Yet when it comes to God, humanity is willing to walk up to the lion and slap Him in the face
 - (1) Does that make sense?
 - (2) Why would we do such a thing?
 - f) When we do that, fear man and disregard God, eternal punishment awaits, and that is infinitely worse, and to be feared more than anything man can do to us
 - (1) Which explains Hebrews 11:36-38
 - (2) Those people that the author refers to see of how much more importance God is than anything in this world, than any man
 - (3) Which is why we started this series looking at God
 - (a) We need to see how great God is
 - (b) So that we understand how small and insignificant everything else is light of Him

III. But what does this eternal punishment look like - what exactly do we know of hell from Scripture - let’s separate fact and fiction

A. Luke 16:19-26

1. This is a parable from Jesus, but remember that parables are stories meant to teach about real things
2. So what do we understand this parable is teaching?
 - a) First would be that hell is a place of eternal conscience torment
 - (1) Many people view this as eternal fire, and in fact Scripture even uses those words
 - (2) However, Scripture also says that it is a place of darkness

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- (a) So either the darkness is metaphorical and the fire is literal, or the fire is metaphorical and the darkness is literal
 - (b) Or, both could be metaphorical, but both cannot be literal - you cannot have literal fire and literal darkness
 - (3) Point is this, it seems as if we have not been read in on what form this eternal conscience torment will take, but the story makes it clear that the rich man was in agony
 - b) Second, it is a place of fire
 - (1) If I were to guess I would say the fire was metaphorical - probably alluding to the anguish from not saying yes to God when they could have, or the anger and bitterness they feel toward God and the blame they place on Him
 - (a) That is Keith's read on the situation
 - (b) Do not go out and present that as gospel truth
 - (2) The fire I think is an internal anguish of the soul
 - c) Third, once you are there, you are there to stay
 - (1) There is a chasm between the rich man and Lazarus
 - (2) Neither can cross from one side to the other
 - (3) Now, I think the chasm is metaphorical in a sense as well
 - (a) I think it is pointing to the fact of the loss of God's presence in hell
 - (b) Lazarus was comforted and at peace at Abraham's side
 - i) Which that is also representative
 - ii) How was Abraham justified? By faith!
 - iii) Who is it that would be standing on that side of God's presence? Those that have faith!
- B. The chasm can also be illustrative of one more thing: the chasm between God and us
- 1. God is glorious; we aren't
 - 2. God is holy; we aren't (apart from Christ)
 - 3. God is righteous; we are not
 - 4. This is a picture of God's total perfection, and our total depravity
 - a) And our depravity (as humanity), deserves the Gehenna - this hell
 - b) Our stinky, sinful ways deserve the punishment God set aside because we have turned our back on our perfect, holy, righteous Creator
- IV. Knowledge of hell is not enough to save us
- A. If your car was broken in such a way that you could still drive it, but the problem would kill you if you drive it longer than 10 miles, and I hand you

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- a diagram detailing what the problem is, would that be enough to save you from certain death?
1. Of course not!
 2. While you need the information, information alone will not save you
- B. So while i have given you the information about hell from Scripture
1. It is good information
 2. It is trustworthy information
 3. You can even tell me you believe the information, would that be enough to save you? No!
- C. We talked last week about “noticing God’s severity”
1. And that we have
 2. We have looked at His severity, eternal torment in hell, and how we deserve them
 3. But that alone is insufficient for us to love and praise God
 - a) Let’s face it, no one desires justice when it is their sentence and that sentence is all we have discussed about hell
 - b) What do we desire: mercy
 - c) So just knowing about hell, even though that is important will not create in us a desire to love and worship God
- D. There have been many preachers over the years that have tried to “scare” people into heaven
1. I grew up with some
 2. And some of them would proudly proclaim that they want to “scare the hell, out of you”
 - a) They thought they were being very clever with a play on words
 - b) But what they were missing is the fact that scaring someone with hell does not create in that person a sense of love for God
 3. Heaven is not a place for people scared to go to hell
 4. Heaven is a place for those that love God
 5. This is much like trying to force someone to love you
 - a) You cannot scare a person into staying with you
 - b) That is not love
 - c) That is forced love, and in a sense rape
- E. So why even bother talking about hell
1. Why highlight this chasm between heaven and hell; between God and us
 2. “Shouldn’t we just focus on the cross Pastor Keith? After all, that is what gets us across the chasm anyway, right? This is where all of this is leading.”
 3. And I would tell you yes, this is where it is all leading, but there is one significant thing that we have to understand to really appreciate the cross

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- a) We have to understand the weight of God's glory, and how serious it is that humanity has belittled God's glory by choosing sin, and deserves that punishment
- F. The fact is that the cross does not change us on our love for God if it does not first reveal to us the depth of the offense that we have been forgiven of
 - 1. Thomas Watson puts it like this: "Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet."
 - 2. There are so many people out there that want to deny the reality of hell, yet cling to the love of God
 - a) What they don't understand is that God's love does not carry the weight of His glory if we do not believe it saves us from much
 - b) Think about it: if hell is not real:
 - (1) What were we saved from?
 - (2) Why do we need to be saved at all?
 - (3) If we don't need to be saved, why did Christ have to die?
 - (a) There are some that make God out to be a divine child abuser
 - (b) If sin is not that serious, and hell is not real, then by all means, I agree, God is a divine child abuser
 - (c) Otherwise, Jesus was sent with a mission, to carry out something of great importance - to save us from the wrath that is coming because our sin is such a serious offense to a holy God
 - 3. Too often, we like to play with God's glory and perfection like little kids
 - a) We think it is just a fun toy, yet we do not realize what we really have in our hands
 - b) Like a kid playing with a gun
 - (1) They think it is just fun
 - (2) We realize how serious that would be
 - (3) When we give the gun the proper respect, all is well
 - (4) When we do not, it could kill us
 - (5) That is why it is so vital we get this down - how serious is the weight of God's glory and our sin
- V. Here is what I want to see in our church, and I pray this for my own life as well
 - A. I want the Psalm 42 Christians
 - 1. The "as the deer pants for the waters, so my soul longs for you, oh God!"
 - 2. The word picture is a deer in the wilderness where the water has dried up, and the deer is desperate for a drink
 - 3. Where are those Christians - the ones that want God so bad they realize its like a deer, gunna die without water

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- B. Where are the Psalm 84 Christians
 - 1. “My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the Lord”
 - 2. “My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God”
- C. Where are these people
 - 1. Where are the ones that so understand the glory of who God is that they yearn and are begging for more of Him
 - 2. The ones that push all else aside and say I want Christ above all else
- D. Just so you don’t think I am pointing at all of you and saying ,”What’s your problem people!?!”
 - 1. I look at myself like this
 - 2. Do I desire God like the deer for the water
 - 3. Do my heart and flesh cry out?
 - 4. Is my soul yearning to be back together with the people of God to worship the beauty, majesty and glory of God?
 - 5. And there are days when I fall far short of that order - but I don’t want to!
 - 6. I want to constantly be desiring more of Him
- E. When we understand what we have been saved from, then, and only then can we appreciate and fully know the weight of God’s kindness
 - 1. It’s like a person that worked their way up from the streets to become the head of a large corporation
 - 2. They understand the struggle and appreciate it because they know what they have overcome
 - 3. Not so, those that had everything handed to them on a silver platter
- F. Far too often our affections, our attention, our love is paid to others besides God
 - 1. Think of the way we treat sports
 - a) We get nervous for our favorite team to beat the other guys and win the trophy
 - b) We may even walk into the stadium with knots in our stomach because we are so anxious over the result of the game
 - c) I wrote this sermon the week after the Super Bowl
 - (1) Now I was fine with either team winning
 - (2) I liked both QB’s, and both teams
 - (3) However, I was cheering for the Broncos so Peyton would have the crowning achievement to an amazing season
 - (4) As the game went the road that it did, I remember feeling the disappointment and loss in my gut for not even so much the Broncos, but for Peyton

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- d) Now let me ask you, when was the last time you ever got worked up over coming to worship in the house of God with your brothers and sisters?
- e) When was the last time you were so anxious over expecting to hear from God that you could feel it in your gut?
- 2. We get worked up over all kinds of things
 - a) Sports, romance, tweeting, blogging, friendships
- 3. If we get worked up over such things, what does that say about our understanding of who God is, and the weight of His glory?
 - a) And when we pay so much attention to things of such lesser value, would you dare say that we are not deserving of hell?
- G. I'll close with this, which sets us up for next Sunday: All thanks, and praise and glory and honor to God that He responded to our sinful ways, and rejection of Him the way that He did: the cross of Jesus Christ