

SERMON OUTLINE

WOULD A LOVING GOD SEND PEOPLE TO HELL?

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REVELATION 20:11-15

Introduction

1. The Certainty of _____

- Our _____ will be judged by God's righteous standard
- Our sins are _____ than we imagine
- Our _____ will be revealed
- Our _____ will be Christ himself

2. The Nature of _____

- T _____
- I _____
- F _____
- D _____
 - Eternal _____
 - Eternal _____

3. The _____ of God

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Icebreaker: Rebecca McLaughlin, in her book *Confronting Christianity*, writes that the Bible's teaching about hell is "the most difficult thing Christians are called to believe." Why might that be the case?

1. Read Revelation 20:11-13, Hebrews 9:27 and II Corinthians 5:10. Make a list of what is taught in these verses about the final judgment.
2. Revelation 20:12 says that everyone will be judged according to "what they have done as recorded in the books." What verdict will result from this data, according to Romans 3:23 and 6:23? Explain the difference between sins of commission and sins of omission. (See James 4:17 for a description of the latter.) Give several examples of each.
3. Read Matthew 5:21-23, 27, 28. How does Jesus' teaching intensify our sense of sinfulness? Read Jeremiah 5:23, 24a. What does God say is behind our sinful actions?
4. What does Jesus say about himself in John 5:22, 23, 28, 29? Why is this depiction of Jesus one that we don't often hear about? Reread Revelation 20:11 and put in your own words what this scene tells you about Jesus.
5. Note what the apostle Paul includes in his preaching of the Gospel to the Athenians in Acts 17:30, 31. Why is this an important aspect of the "Good News"?
6. Read Revelation 20:14, 15. What are two possible metaphorical understandings of "fire" in these verses (per the sermon)? Explain each. What would be the difference between God punishing sinners (as the Bible teaches) and God torturing sinners (which the Bible never teaches)? Why is this an important distinction?
7. Read Matthew 13:41, 42. What does the "gnashing of teeth" indicate? Why will those in hell feel this way? Why would this reaction be ironic (per the sermon)? In what sense is hell a person's choice--and why would they choose it?
8. Read Luke 16:19-26. What does v.26 teach about the nature of hell (referred to as "Hades" in this parable)? What common misperception about hell does this correct? How should this impact our concern and response toward those who seem to be headed in that direction?
9. Explain the difference between the "eternal torment" and the "eternal destruction" views of hell's duration. Which view makes more sense to you--and why? Read Matthew 25:46. Explain the difference between "eternal punishment" being a description of the "experience" of that punishment vs. it being a description of the "effects" of that punishment.
10. Read I Timothy 6:15b, 16. Who is immortal? What is meant by the "conditional immortality" of humans? What is the condition for our immortality, according to I John 5:11, 12? How might this truth lend support to the position of "eternal destruction" (vs. "eternal torment")?
11. Reread Revelation 20:12, 15, noting the references to "the book of life." How do Jesus' death and resurrection provide the basis for this book? How does a person get their name written in this book? Reread I John 5:11, 12. What is the difference between a person who merely believes certain truths about Jesus and one who "has" Jesus? Is your name in the book of life? How do you know?
12. Someone says to you that they can't believe in a God who would send people to hell. How would you respond based on this sermon (multiple points)?