“The Reality of Hell” – Eternal Realities, Part 2 of 4 – May 26, 2013 at SBC

 Genesis 8:5-6 & 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

Last week, as we began this series, on “Eternal Realities”, we talked about, the five realities of life. And, this, is real. So, again, . . . I want you to listen, as if your life, . . . depends on it.

Review of last week: 1) God made you to love you, . . . and, He wants your love back. 2) You were made, to last forever. 3) God has prepared two eternal places, . . . Heaven and Hell. 4) You get to choose, . . . where you’ll spend eternity. 5) There’s no second chances, . . . after, you die.

Next two weeks, . . . we’re going to talk about, . . . Heaven. But, today, . . . we want to ask, four questions: Why does Hell, exist? What is it like? How do I avoid it? (That’s, the important one.), and, . . . What, do I do, . . . once, I know all of this?

**\* First**, **why, does Hell exist**? There are two, fundamental reasons. The first, is because, **1) sin and evil, exist.**

There’s some people, that want to deny, . . . the existence, of evil. They think, that actually, the world is full of people, . . . and, we’re basically good. That human beings, are fundamentally by nature, unselfish, . . . always kind, always good, . . . and, always thinking, about others.

That’s just, . . not true. Have you turned on, your television? Have you picked up, a newspaper? Do you listen to, the radio? You might just want to, look around a little, . . . because, the world is filled, . . . with broken relationships, broken promises, rape, abuse, murder, child molestation, . . . all kinds of evil, terrorism, people who strap bombs onto themselves. The world, is filled, . . . with evil. It’s, . . . all around you.

We pick up the newspaper, and we read about murders, . . . even children, . . . people who was shot, randomly. Friends, that’s evil. We read about little children, picked up on the street, . . . and sold, . . . into sex trafficking. That’s evil.

Fundamentally, the Bible teaches, that it’s my nature, to not think about you. It’s my nature, to be selfish. And, it is your nature, to be selfish. You think about, you, . . . more than, anybody else. You’re not, naturally thinking, “What’s best, for other people? What’s best, for the world? What does God, want me to do?” You’re thinking, “What do I, want to do? What’s easy? What’s convenient? What’s in it, for me?”

Maybe, if you lived seventy-five years ago, on Little House on the Prairie, on a farm, you might think, . . . that people, are basically good. But, with all the media around us today, we know that the world, . . . is filled with evil. And, evil things happen. And, it happens, . . . all the time.

What was true, in Noah’s day, is still true, today. Genesis 8:5-6 – *“The Lord observed, the extent of people’s wickedness, and He saw that all their thoughts, were consistently and totally evil. And, He was sorry, . . . that, He had ever made them, . . . and, it broke His heart.”*

God looked down on the world, in Noah’s day, and He goes, “What a mess, they’ve made, of this! What they do, . . . to themselves. What they do, . . . to each other. They’ve really, made a mess, of this. They’ve really, . . . messed it up.” That, is the way God feels, **today**, . . . and, it says, “It broke, . . His heart.”

Did you know, that God, has emotions? Of course, He does! In fact, the reason you have emotions, is because God made you, in His image. The reason, that you have the ability, to feel, the reason that you have the ability, for your heart to be broken, is because God is an emotional God, . . . and, you were made, in His image.

When God looks, at all the things, . . . that are done in the world, that are wrong, and bad, and evil, . . . it breaks, . . . God’s heart. When people say, “Where is God, . . when people get molested, and people are abused, and, people are betrayed, . . . and, where is God, with the rape and the murder, and the world’s terrorism, and crime, and all? Where is, God?”

I’ll tell you, . . . what He’s doing. He’s, . . . weeping. He’s, grieving. He’s, brokenhearted. You say, “Why doesn’t He, . . . just, stop it.” He could. God could eliminate, all the evil, in the world – just, get rid of, . . . all of us. Where do you think, it comes from? It comes from, . . . our, . . . poor choices.

You’re not telling me, you’ve always made every decision, right, . . . that’s, never hurt, anybody else! No. We hurt, . . . each other.

God gave us, a free will. That is, our greatest gift. It’s also, our worst curse. Because, we don’t always make, . . . wise choices. While God gave us, this free ability, . . . to choose right or wrong, good or bad, evil or righteousness – He gives us this choice, because, we’re created, in His image. He gave us, the free will – we often choose, the wrong thing. As a result, . . . people get hurt – intentionally, and unintentionally.

God could take away, all the sin, all the suffering, all the sickness, and all the evil, in the world, . . . with a snap. All, He has to do, is take away, . . . your free will. And, mine, . . . too.

Why does God give us, . . . a free will? I’ll tell you, why. Because, He wanted you, . . . to **choose**, to love Him, not, be forced, . . . to love Him. It’s not real love, if you’re forced to do it. If you are forced to love me, it’s not, real love. If I’m forced to love you, it’s not real love. Love is only love, if **you can choose**, not to love.

God gives you, the free choice. You don’t have, . . . to love God. You don’t have, . . . to trust God. You don’t have, . . . to obey God. You don’t have to, . . . follow in His ways. You don’t have to, . . . fulfill the purpose, . . . He created for you. You can make, your life, . . . a total mess.

Why did God, do that? Because, He wants us to choose, . . . to love Him. He wants us to choose, to do right. God wanted a family, . . . that would live with Him, forever, . . . and, He wanted to produce a race, of tested individuals, who voluntarily choose to love, and do the right thing. That can’t be possible, unless, we’re allowed, . . . to do the wrong thing.

So, it is our greatest blessing, . . . and, our greatest curse. And, it still breaks God’s heart, today, . . . when we hurt, ourselves, . . . and, when we hurt, . . . other people.

You need to understand, that God allows, sin on earth, . . . so, you have a choice. But, He does not allow, any sin, . . . in Heaven. Heaven, . . . is a perfect place. There are no imperfections, . . . in Heaven. It is completely, . . . perfect. So, there’s no sin, there.

That raises, . . . an important problem. Heaven is a perfect place, and that means only perfect people, get to go there. Otherwise, if God let imperfect people come in, . . . with their selfishness, and their sin, and their sorrows, and all of their sicknesses, . . . then, it would be, just like earth. It wouldn’t, be Heaven, . . . any more.

I don’t want to go to a Heaven, . . where Hitler, can do his thing. Or, a rapist, or a murderer, can do their thing. No, I want to go to Heaven, where it’s perfect, and we’re away from, all that. So, only perfect people, . . get to go there. That’s a problem, . . . because, I’m not perfect, . . . and, neither, are you.

David asked this question, in the book of Psalms. Psalm 15:1-2, David says *“Lord, who may enter, Your holy tent? Lord, who may live, on Your holy mountain?”* And, God says, “*Only those, who are completely blameless, and innocent, and those who always do, what is right.”*

I don’t know about you, . . . but, I don’t fit, that category. I am not, blameless. I am not, innocent. I do not do, what is, . . . always right. So, I’ve got a problem. There’s not a chance, of me getting into Heaven, . . . unless, . . . God comes up, with Plan B. That plan, is Jesus, . . . and, the Cross!

Because, Heaven is perfect, . . . and, I stopped batting a thousand, about age one. And, by the way, you did too. The Bible says, we’ve all, . . . blown it. We’ve all, sinned. We don’t measure up, to our own standards, . . . much less, God’s.

So, there has to be a place, . . . for evil to go, . . . in eternity. If I’m made, to last forever, and I’m not perfect, . . I’ve got to have, another place, to go to. There is sin, and there is evil, . . . in the world.

2) There’s a second reason, that Hell exist, that’s because, . . . **God is holy and just.**

He is holy – that means, . . . He is perfect. He cannot sin, Himself. And, He’s just – that means, He believes, in justice. He settles, . . the score. He always does, the right thing. The Bible says, that one day, . . . God is going to, balance the books. God is going to, bring justice, to the world. God is going to, . . . right the wrongs.

I don’t know, if you’ve noticed this, or not, . . . but, have you noticed, that life, . . is unfair? What if you’d been born, in Darfur? Was it fair, that you were born in America, . . and somebody else, was born, in Darfur? That’s not, really that fair, is it? And, I don’t know if you’ve noticed this or not, . . but, people get away with, all kinds of stuff, on earth. Bad stuff. In fact, people get away with murder, . . . on earth.

Life is, not fair. I don’t know if you’ve noticed this or not, but bad things, often happen, to good people. And, good things, often happen, to bad people. And, people who cheat, and steal, and lie, and rob, their entire lives, often become enormously successful, and they get away, literally, with murder. While other people, who try to do the right thing, and live the right way, things don’t work out in their lives, all the time. Life is, . . . not fair.

David said, in the Psalms, *“I would have despaired, if I hadn’t believed, . . . in the goodness, of God.”* In other words, looking at the world, if I just look at it and go, . . . “This is, not fair. People do bad things, . . . and, get away with it. And, people who do good things, don’t get rewarded, for it.”

If I didn’t believe, that one day, God’s going to settle the score, that God is just, and He’s going to tip the scales, and, He’s going to even it all out, and there will be repayment, and justice, . . . it just wouldn’t, be right.

What would it be like, if Stalin and Hitler, who gassed six million Jews, showed up, in Heaven. There would be something wrong, . . . with Heaven. Or, if Bin Laden showed up in Heaven, after telling everybody to go blow themselves up, to help kill other people. One day, God is going to, . . settle the score.

 The Bible says this, *“For the Lord is coming, to judge the earth. He will judge the nations fairly, and with truth.”* And, by the way, He’s the only One, . . . who can judge fairly, . . . because, He’s impartial.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 – *“God will do, what is right. God is a righteous God, and He will bring suffering on those, who make you suffer.*  *And, He’ll give relief to you who suffer, as well. He will do this, when the Lord Jesus appears, from heaven, to punish those, who reject God, who do not obey the good news, about our Lord Jesus. They will suffer, the punishment, of eternal destruction, . . . separated, from the presence, of the Lord.”*

Notice, the last phrase – “separated, from the presence, . . of the Lord.” That’s the number one characteristic, of Hell. Separated, from the presence, of the Lord. People don’t realize, how bad that is, . . . because, we have, the Lord’s presence, here.

Here on earth, even when I reject God, . . . He shows me grace. I can be totally, ignoring God, . . . and, I get all kinds, of gifts from God, . . . because, everything you have in your life, . . . is a gift from God.

The air, you breathe – that’s a gift, . . . from God. The water, you drink – that’s a gift, . . from God. Your heart beating – that’s a gift, . . . from God. Everything you have in your life, is a gift, . . . of God’s grace. So, even people, who don’t know the Lord, . . . experience God’s grace, every single day, of their life.

Your health, is a gift, from God. Life, is a gift, from God. Everything you have on this planet, . . is because of, God’s grace. So, we don’t know what it means, to live, without God’s grace. Because, everything God does in your life, . . . He does, because He loves you, . . . and, He’s showing you grace, at that moment.

He says, one day, I’m going to, settle the score. You may, be thinking, “That’s great! All the people, who’ve hurt me. Go get ‘em, Lord.” There’s only, . . . one problem. I’m involved, too. You and me, . . . both.

2 Corinthians 5:10 – *“We will all, . . . stand before Christ, . . . to be judged.*  *We will each receive, whatever we deserve, for the good, or the evil, that we have done, in our bodies.”* Why does Hell, . . . exist? Because, sin and evil exist, . . . and, because God, is holy and just.

**\*\*\*\* What is Hell like?**

It’s really, hard to explain, . . . because, we don’t have, the human experience, . . . to explain it. It’s kind of like, trying to explain, the internet, to an ant. If you had never eaten, or seen a slice of pizza, how would you, explain it? So, it’s really, kind of hard. (If we had of just spent, 30 seconds there, . . . we might could explain it! And, we sure would witness, . . . more!)

Jesus actually, talked more about Hell, than, He did about Heaven. But, what is Hell like? Sometime, you hear these guys, preaching on Hell, on television – Hell fire, and brimstone – and, they’re yelling, . . . and, sweating.

When you listen to them, you kind of think, . . . they must, want people, to go there. What’s, with that? I don’t want anybody, to go to Hell. And, God certainly, doesn’t want anybody, . . to go to Hell. Jesus doesn’t want anybody, to go to Hell. That’s why, . . . He died, on the cross. That’s how much, He considered it, important. So, this is not something, that you’re happy about. You certainly, don’t have to yell about it.

But, what is Hell like? The Bible describes it, as **a place, . . of torment**. In fact, Matthew 8:12, *“In darkness, they will cry out, and grit their teeth, in pain.”* And, of course, . . . there’s **your image of Hell**, . . . and, the Bible talks about, fire and things like this.

But, do you know what, the worst part is? Hell, is total separation, from God. That’s, the worst thing, about it. It means, I’m totally apart, from God’s love, . . . totally apart, from God’s grace. Total separation, . . from God.

1 Corinthians 16:22 – *“If anyone, does not love the Lord, . . let him be separated, from God- and lost, forever.”* Here it is. If I go through, my entire life, saying, “I don’t want God, in my life, . . . on earth.” If I don’t want God, in my life, on earth, . . . why would I, want to spend eternity, . . . with Him?

Why would I, change my mind? Why would I say, I want to live **without God** on earth, . . . but, I want to live **with God**, in Heaven? That doesn’t, make sense. God says, “You get, to choose. You want to live with Me, or, live without Me.” Whatever you choose, on earth, . . . is what you choose, in Heaven, or Hell.

There’s a lot of people, who claim to know the Lord, . . . but, they live, . . . like the devil. What’s with that?

What is Hell, like? Think about this. If it’s total separation from God, . . . then, it’s the exact opposite, . . . of everything God is. We know, that *“God is love.”* That is, His nature. God, is **love**. What would it be,

 . . . to live without God, . . . completely? It means, . . . no love.

The Bible says, *“There is no fear, in love. Perfect love, casts out, all fear.”* The opposite, of love, . . . is fear. You know what it means, to live without love, in your life? It means, . . . you’re scared to death, . . . all the time. That’s Hell. It means, you’re lonely, . . . all the time. That’s Hell.

One of the big **myths**, about Hell, is that in Hell, it’s just going to be a big party, . . . for all the people, who like to party. Friends, no one will see anybody else, in Hell. It’s total separation from God, and everybody else. There are no relationships, . . . in Hell. There are no friends, . . . in Hell. It’s total, . . . aloneness.

And, by the way, there’s another **myth**, that Satan, . . . is going to be in charge, of Hell. Wrong! Satan’s not in Hell, right now. You may not, know that. The Bible says, . . he’s on earth. Satan’s not, in Hell, . . . yet.

He’s going to be, . . sent there. And, when he’s there, he’s not going to be in charge of it, like another kingdom. He’s going to, be punished. Nobody else, is going to see him, . . . he’s not going to see, anybody else.

God, is love. So, there’s no love, there. God, is light. So Hell, is complete darkness. God, is good. So, there’s absolutely, nothing good, in Hell. God, is life. So, that means, it’ll be, eternal death. God, is gracious. That means, there’s no place, . . . of grace, there.

Friends, you don’t want, . . . to choose Hell. And, I hope after today, you will never again, say to anybody, “Go to Hell!” I don’t want anybody, to go to Hell. No matter, how much, they hurt me. I hope, you’ll never again, tell a joke, on Hell, . . . because, it’s no joke. I’m begging you, to accept, this truth, . . . this good news.

\*\*\* So, how do we, avoid Hell? Is there a way for us, to absolutely know for certain, . . I’m going, to Heaven?

 Here’s the, good news. Yes. You can absolutely, confidently, . . . know, that you’re going, to Heaven.

The Bible tells us, how to do it. **How do I settle, my eternal destiny?** 1 John 5:13 – *“I write this, to you who believe, in the name of the Son of God,* [that’s the door – Jesus], *so that, you may* ***know****,* [not guess, not wonder, not hope], *with settled, and absolute knowledge, that you already, have life. Yes, eternal life.”*

 Circle, “know.” God says, I don’t want you, . . . guessing.

If you, ask somebody, “Where are you going, . . when you die?”, and, they say, “I hope, I’m going, to Heaven.” Friends, hope is not enough. It’s, too important. It’s too important, . . . to not know, . . . for certain.

Only a fool, would go all through life, unprepared, . . for what we know, is inevitable – death. A recent statistic shows, that the mortality rate, in the world, . . . is one hundred percent! You’re going, to die. So, am I some day. I don’t know when – I hope, it’s a long time, from now. But, . . . you’re going to die.

Only a fool, would go all the way through life, saying, “Yeah, I know I need to decide this, but, I’ll put it off… I’ll put it off… I’ll put it off…” Friend, you don’t know, if you’re going to drop dead, tomorrow. We could walk out of here, and have a heart attack, in the next hour. We’re not guaranteed, . . . next week, next month, next year. Much less, next hour. Why would you, put off something, . . . that, you know, is inevitable, . . . and, could come, at any time? You need to, settle this, . . . today.

So how do I settle it? Your ticket, to Heaven, . . is in Jesus Christ. 1 John 5:11-12 – *“God has ­­given us, eternal life, and this life, is in His Son. He who has the Son, has life; and, he who does not have the Son of God, does not have life.”* That’s about, as clear, . . . as you can get. Are you living life, . . . without God?

The cross, . . is the answer, to our problem. Colossians 2:21-22 – *“At one time, you were separated, from God. You were His enemies in your minds, and the evil things you did, were against God. But, now, God has made you, . . . His friends, again. He did this, through Christ’s death, in the body, when He died, on the cross, so that He might bring you, into God’s presence, as people who are holy, with no wrong, nothing of which, God can judge you.”*

He said, I’m going to wipe the slate clean. This is the etch-a-sketch verse, of the Bible. You make all the mess, turn up and shake it, and it comes up clean, and pure again. He said, that’s what I’m going to do, . . in your life.

The most famous verse, in the Bible, . . . is John 3:16 – *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

 If you underline six words: God’s – only – Son – perish – eternal – life. The first letters of that – gospel – that’s, the gospel.

**“The Reality of Hell” – Eternal Realities, Part 2 of 3**

**1. WHY DOES HELL EXIST?**

 1. Because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 8:5-6 – *“The Lord observed the extent of people’s wickedness and He saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil. And, He was sorry that He had ever made them* *and it broke His heart.”*

Psalm 15:1-2 – *“Lord, who may enter Your holy tent? Lord, who may live on Your holy mountain? Only those who are completely blameless and innocent, and those who always do what is right.”*

 2. Because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 – *“God will do what is right. God is a righteous God and He will bring suffering on those who make you suffer.*  *And, He’ll give relief to you who suffer, as well. He will do this when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven to punish those who reject God, who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord.”*

2 Corinthians 5:10 – *“We will all stand before Christ to be judged.*  *We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or the evil that we have done in our bodies.”*

**2. WHAT IS HELL LIKE? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 *“If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be separated from God—lost forever!”* 1 Cor. 16:22

 *GOD IS... WITHOUT GOD, HELL IS...*

 Love Terrifying and lonely

 Light Complete darkness

 Good Absolutely nothing good there

 Life Eternal death and torment

 Gracious A place of no grace.

 **3. HOW DO I SETTLE MY ETERNAL DESTINY?**

 *“I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know with settled and absolute knowledge that you already have life, yes, eternal life!”* 1 John 5:13

 *“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”* 1 John 5:11-12

 *“At one time you were separated from God. You were His enemies in your minds, and the evil things you did were against God. But now God has made you His friends again. He did this through Christ's death in the body so that He might bring you into God's presence as people who are holy, with no wrong, and with nothing of which God can judge you guilty.”* Col. 1:21-22

 *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not Perish but have Everlasting Life.”* John 3:16