



Why Would A Loving God Send People To Hell?

MAIN THING

Hell Is God's Greatest Gesture Of Respect To The Person Who Hates Him

SCRIPTURE

1 John 4:7-8, Psalm 86:15, John 3:16, Matthew 6:9-10, Psalm 36:1, Revelation 20:14, Romans 5:8

ICEBREAKER

What is a dessert/candy bar that everyone else likes but you can't stand?

OPENING THOUGHT

One of the biggest problems with the Christian faith (and God in general) is the concept of hell. Many people see a huge inconsistency between the Christian message of a loving God and the existence of hell. Several theologians have dismissed hell, saying it isn't real. Churches have stopped preaching about it because it turns people off.

This is actually a rather recent phenomena, as the subject of hell was routinely discussed from American pulpits and earlier throughout the history of Christianity. Jesus Himself spoke more about hell than any other subject. Early church fathers were perfectly comfortable describing the justice and wrath of God- the subject of hell didn't seem to bother them nearly as much as it does contemporary Western cultures. The most likely reason for that is that they had a better understanding of being responsible for your actions and a greater understanding of eternity than many of us do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the one thing that you heard this past Sunday that stuck out to you? Why did it resonate with you like it did?
2. The sermon made the point that hell is simply the absence of God, and therefore everything that flows from Him is gone as well. How is that different from your previous understanding of what hell is?
3. The sermon made the point that hell is God's gesture of respect to people who want nothing to do with Him- that forcing someone into an eternity of a place they don't want to be is wrong. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

LIFE APPLICATION

One of the reasons we are doing this series is that we interact daily with people who have these questions. The Christian faith has answers to all of life's big questions, and we need to be able to discuss them intelligently with our non-Christian and seeking friends. Our homes need to be places where tough topics like hell are routinely discussed, so that we are able to articulate (and our kids are able, if we have kids) good answers to major objections. What would you say to someone who said, "I can't be a Christian because I can't worship a God that would send good people to hell"?

CHALLENGE

Catalyst is built on discipleship. Knowing that we will spend eternity one of two places should motivate us to engage in discipleship. Who needs you to mentor/disciple him or her and so affect their eternity?