

Look at Hell by Bill Hybels Matthew 13:47-51 *Topic:* What hell is like and how to avoid it

Big Idea: Hell is a spiritual reality that can be countered only by the Cross of Christ.

Keywords: Hell; Death, spiritual; Salvation

Introduction Matthew 13:47-51

- Jesus uses a commercial fishing illustration to teach about the afterlife: (1) there will be judgment for everyone, (2) people will be separated into two groups, and (3) the saved will be destined for heaven and the unsaved for hell.
- Jesus speaks often of hell, and other biblical writers do, too.
- But even apart from Scripture, justice demands a hell.
- *Illustration:* Hybels describes a woman whose daughter had been raped and murdered. She did not want the murderer to suffer the death penalty because she wanted him to pay for his crime every hour of every day for the rest of his life.

Hell involves emotional anguish.

- Hell is like *gehenna*, the smoldering trash dump outside Jerusalem, and in hell, people will be consciously aware that they have been deemed trash--worthless, irredeemable, fit for no good purpose.
- Hell involves gnashing of teeth--like when we say, "Arrgh!" over a stupid mistake.
- *Illustration:* Hybels gives three short illustrations of when we reproach ourselves: a woman who burns something for dinner, a quarterback who overthrows a pass, and a preacher who makes a mistake while preaching.
- Hell involves continual self-reproach: "I knew better. Jesus was the Son of God. I had the opportunity. I rejected him. I was self-willed. Arrrgh!" But what's awful is there is no next time to do better.

Hell involves physical anguish.

- Hell is described as fire, flames, furnace--a pain so intense that in the parable in Luke 16, a man begs for a few drops of water.
- A runner may overcome a sideache knowing it will go away, but the pain in hell never goes away, it intensifies.

Hell involves relational anguish.

- The idea there will be good fellowship in hell--poker games, fraternity parties, orgies--is a flat-out lie.
- Hell means solitary suffering interrupted only by the terror that someone you love might be headed down the same track.

Hell involves spiritual anguish.

- In hell God is conspicuous by his absence, which brings spiritual terror.
- "Utter darkness": there's absolute chaos and confusion, hopelessness, futility, but the morning never comes, and the light never goes on.
- "The bottomless pit": you're falling, and every moment you fall further and further away from the only source of help and truth and love.
- Hell is suffering without annihilation.

We end up in hell if we reject the person and work of Jesus.

- We are defiant in sin; we know what we're violating, but forget who we're violating.
- *Hebrews 10:29*
- We continually bump into the Cross and the person and work of Jesus Christ, and it's decision time.

The truth about hell has three implications.

- For unbelievers: fall to your knees and repent.
- For believers: rejoice over what you have been spared from.
- For this church: what we do matters, because we're a rescue operation for humanity.