

Jesus Teaches Us About Hell

I know a lot of people do not like to think about hell, and even less like to hear a lesson on the subject. Yet the one person who spoke of the most about the punishment of hell was Jesus. There are at least two ways Jesus used to get us to realize how bad eternal punishment will be. One stresses the pain and agony of eternal punishment. In Matthew 25:30 Jesus describes hell in the parable of the talents. The one talent man went and hid his talent, in response the master said, "And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 25:30) We understand hell is a place of pain and agony.

Another way Jesus helps us understand hell is by pointing out what we should be willing to do, to give up, in order to escape the fire of hell. Consider the following passage.

"If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched-- 44 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.' 45 "And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched-- 46 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.' 47 "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire-- 48 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'" (Mark 9:43-48)

It would be a gruesome thing to have to cut off one's hand or leg or even to intentionally pluck out one's own eye. Occasionally we hear of stories where a person is trapped in a car or a cave in or a building collapse. In order to get out they had to cut off a hand or leg. We may wonder how a person could do such a thing or why they would allow someone else to do such a thing. The reason is twofold. They wanted to live and they were already in great pain.

Jesus was speaking figuratively in order to make a spiritual point. Do not let anything, or anyone to cause you to be lost eternally. Yet many people will be lost because they let something or someone to come between them and God.

Let us consider this in greater detail. Any time you "let" something do something to you; you are giving away great power. The addict lets alcohol or some other drug rule their life. Whether we are talking about materialism or idolatry or covetousness or anger, etc. you either have control or it controls you. Still you are handing over your power to desire.

While I know people will be lost due to circumstances mentioned in the above paragraph, I know there will also be lost souls because another person comes between them and God.

I have known some to leave the Lord because of sexual lust. They see a pretty young lady or handsome young man and give in to their desires. Many a marriage has ended due to sexual unfaithfulness. In most of those cases their spouse and the Lord are left behind. Some never repent and die in a sinful relationship. Do you allow another to end your marriage and separate you from the wife of your youth?

I know those that leave the Lord because a brother or sister in Christ hurt their feelings. Perhaps the person spoke hurtful words and never realized what those words did. In a lot of cases the offended person quits worshipping God. The Bible addresses this in Matthew 5.23-24 and Matthew 18.15-17. But it is easier to just quit and blame others. You are giving them the power to cause you to be lost, don't do it!

It may not be the words but the hypocrisy of a fellow Christian that is discouraging and causes one to just not worship with that hypocrite. They totally by passage Galatians 6.1-2 which teaches those who are spiritually minded to go and talk to a brother/sister caught in a trespass. Perhaps they are hypocritical or maybe they are just like the rest of us and have their own

struggles with sin. In either case, Jesus would tell you to give up your hurt feelings and follow Him.

I have even known people to blame the preacher for their unfaithfulness. He gave a lesson that was harsh or unloving or upset me and/or my family/friends, etc. It may not be a lesson but something else the preacher did that got their goat. Their response was to get angry and quit serving God. They let someone else come between them and their salvation.

Jesus would tell you to pluck out your eye or cut off your hand or leg if it would cause you to be lost. You should never give something or someone that kind of power. Your task and mine is to serve God so as to make it to heaven. Think about it! – Dennis Tucker