

## The Doctrine of Hell and Its Fruits

Luke 16:19-31

May 22, 2022

We have the joy, the privilege of returning to the Gospel of Luke once again. I have missed it for sure, and I trust that you have, too. So turn in your Bibles to Luke 16 and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It was a really unique parable among all of Jesus' parables. It's one of Jesus' longest. It's the most story-like of all his parables. It's full of rich and vivid detail. And it's because of the detail that the subject matter in this parable is really all the more disturbing, troubling, even harrowing, and the point of the parable all the more poignant, even piercing.

This parable, as you probably know if you've been reading it over, describes the conscious punishment of the ungodly. It's one of the major texts in Scripture that helps us to understand and piece together a biblical doctrine of hell. But that's not

its immediate purpose, to build the doctrine of hell. That's not the immediate purpose. The immediate purpose is to warn people. It's to warn anyone who may be in the rich man's condition, in the rich man's situation, "lest," as verse 28 says in Luke 16, "lest they also come to this place of torment."

Rich man is a picture of the Pharisees who, back in Luke 16:14, who were lovers of money. Rather than listening to Jesus' teaching on stewardship, he was teaching his disciples about how to use their funds, their money, their lives. Rather than listening to that, and rather than repenting of their greed and of their love of luxury, their love of ease and comfort, and living a self indulgent lifestyle, the Pharisees, Luke tells us, as they heard these things, they were ridiculing him.

Listen, that is the wrong response. When you find yourself listening to Jesus and ridiculing him or scoffing him, you know you are in a bad frame of mind and you'd better repent. These Pharisees were cutting themselves off from the only hope of salvation. Jesus is the only way to escape the horrors of hell

that are described in this parable, and yet they were scoffing at him.

So committed were they to their idolatry, so committed were they to their love of ease, their love of good company around the table, of good wines and fine foods and, maybe updated today, fast cars, and nice houses, and a nice spread of land, and a good way of living, so committed were they to all their pleasure and comfort and all the stuff that money can buy, they were willing to trade eternity for their best life now.

Listen, folks. We're to look at that and take these Pharisees all through Scripture as a cautionary tale. We should not look at the Pharisees as the, the villain in the story, merely, as like some kind of a flannel-graph killjoy, you know those cartoon characters that always showed up to rain on Jesus' parade. They were that. But we tend to identify ourselves with the hero in the story whenever we read. We need to look at the Pharisees and maybe hold them up as a mirror to ourselves and say, could that be me?

# GRACE CHURCH



Grace

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Pharisees are always there, dogging Jesus' steps, but they are useful, aren't they, on the pages of Scripture, for us. They're always there. They're always included, lest we, like them, go to this same place of torment. They, you need to understand this, they were not the killjoys that we may think them to be. They loved to party. They loved their money. They loved all the luxuries that money could afford. They were the wealthy religious establishment of their day, like the evangelicals of today. They held their religion in one hand at a safe and controllable distance from their hearts, but their first and abiding love was the good things in life.

So to punctuate his teaching to those who justified their love of money before man, according to verse 15, to those who cared more about being approved and admired among men but who disregarded God, and who softened the demands of his Word and his law, who distorted his Word and interpreted in such a way as to justify themselves before men, Jesus delivers a parable to illustrate what he's been teaching, verse 15, that what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

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Beloved, we need to hear this, all of us. Look at Luke 16, starting in verse 19. Let's read the parable. "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came, licked his sores.

"The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

"Then Abraham said, 'Child, remember that in your lifetime, you in your lifetime received your good things and Lazarus in like manner bad things. But now he is comforted here. You are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

"He said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Sobering, isn't it? The rich man suffers in torment. There's no hope for relief. Every avenue of his escape is cut off. There are no visitation hours in hell for him. There's no hope to bridge the chasm between separating him from paradise, between him and the land of the living, or paradise and the land of the living. There is no hope of bridging that gap.

His mind had to go back to what Jesus taught in verse 9, with everlasting regret. "'And I tell you,' Jesus said, 'make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal

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Greeley

dwellings.'” That's what's being pictured here. Too late for that, for him. Too late. No opportunity now to make eternal friends with his wealth. He's blown it. He has squandered it. He has spent it all, and it's profited him nothing.

His wealth is gone, along with all his friends, along with all his party companions, all his hunting and fishing buddies, gone along with all comfort and pleasure and ease. All that's gone along with all the accolades and the affirmations of men. That's gone. The only voice he hears now is his conscience. His only companion now is torment. His eternal regret, his only companion, is an accurate and active conscience that reminds him continually of what Jesus said and then accuses his unregenerate heart, which will never let him repent. Not ever. He is hopelessly lost.

My dear friends, I don't want this at all, this picture, to be true of any of you, not one of you. I don't want this to happen to any of you. So before we work our way through the details of this parable, I want to stop here at the very

beginning and kind of give you an overview on the doctrine that is informing this passage.

Understand, Jesus, he has seen in his preincarnate glory, he has seen the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. He's seen this. He knows the truth about heaven and hell, and he's come from God to us, to man, to preach the truth, to tell us this is what's next. But, beloved, if you've grown up in the evangelicalism I have, you haven't heard this very much.

So before we get into the details of the text, which are rich and vivid and so important in helping us to understand and really grasp this picture, we want to set a foundation about the doctrine of hell. And we need it because the doctrine of hell has fallen on hard times. There are very few pastors preaching this anymore, let alone mentioning it in public.

So I want to break that pattern for you and illuminate the doctrine of hell for you. If you're taking notes, you can write this down as point one in your outline. We'll call this the



modern rejection of the doctrine of hell. The modern rejection of the doctrine of hell.

Hell, as I'm sure you know, it refers to the place of eternal, conscious torment of the wicked, and it should come as no surprise that sinners are really not fond of that doctrine. What is surprising is the number of professing Christians who are squeamish about the doctrine of hell, who make all kinds of apologies for it if it ever comes up in conversation, who say, you know, I personally can't see my way to understanding why this is even here, but I want to tell you about God's love.

They're unwilling to preach it, unwilling to use it in their evangelism, unwilling to think about it deeply, unwilling to answer any objections about it. They'd rather tuck it into a closet and close the door. Ever since the Enlightenment in the late 17th century, early 18th centuries, there's, there has been an assault, as I'm sure you're under, aware of, and we're seeing all that, the fruit of that coming out today in our country, but there's been an assault on Christianity in the West. It's been going, going on for centuries.

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Grace

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I appreciate, as I've mentioned before and I want to mention again, David Wells has a four-volume set outlining all this. If you'd like the titles of that, contact the office. I'll give you all the titles and even links to Amazon to go and order those books, starting with *No Place for Truth*. More recently, Carl Trueman has published a book called *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*. You need to get ahold of that book as well. If you want the shorter version, it's called *Strange New World*. That's right out here in our foyer. You can get copies of that in the bookstore. That's a shorter version that's maybe more digestible. Get that one. That is fantastic. I've read both of them, and both of them are very, very helpful.

You've got to inform yourself on what's happened in our culture, and it's been going on for centuries. You need to see how what's going on in our culture has informed the way you think. Some of the assumptions that you make, some of the presuppositions that you hold, are actually not from the Bible, but from the world. Get informed.

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Grace

For hundreds of years, Enlightenment thinkers have been pursuing humanism. And it's a secular form of humanism. They emphasize humanity over the divine. They believe, rejecting the doctrine of sin, they believe in the inherent goodness of humanity, and they reject the doctrine of sin. They reject the doctrine of original sin and even sin in us now.

They elevate human reason. Enlightenment thinkers elevate human reason. They pursue human potential, which as yet for them is unrealized and boundless. Humanity's true potential in history past has been suppressed. It's been held down, held back by religion, holding back humanity in this primitive faith in God, in this, these primitive fears about an angry deity who will exact retribution and punishment upon the world. The Enlightenment has come to set humanity free.

As Enlightenment humanists, secular humanists promote man at the same time they demote God. They have to demote God and dethrone God in order to perpetrate an attack upon Christian theism, an attack upon the divine, in order to elevate man. So they say doctrines like sin and judgment and eternal hell, all

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

those were designed just to strike fear into the hearts of people, that they might be subdued and controlled by religion and controlled by the church. They intend to leave behind all that old dusty fear-mongering stuff and write new definitions and chart a new course.

So it's no surprise, really, when concepts like sin and righteousness and truth and justice, they are all redefined to fit in with human sentiment, to line up with human sympathy. I'll just give you an example of that. Every time some mass shooting takes place, every time some horrendous crime is perpetrated, especially on a child, and comes up on the news, the conversation in the public square, it's never about sin, is it? They recoil from using the word, wicked and evil and unrighteous, abhorrent before God. You don't talk about any of that.

It's all about psychology, isn't it? Some psychologist will come on CNN, explain the shooter's mental health, wag a chastising finger at society for not seeing the signs earlier, advocating for more treatment, more drugs. We could have handled

this. This could have been prevented. This is a preventable outbreak of mental illness. All that stuff. You know it, I know it, we see it all the time.

It's Herman Bavinck who describes this radical reversal. He says, "Whereas before the mentally ill were treated as criminals, now criminals are regarded as mentally ill. Before that time, every abnormality was viewed in terms of sin and guilt. Now all ideas of guilt, crime, responsibility, culpability and the like are robbed of their reality. The sense of right and justice, of the violation of law and guilt are seriously weakened to the extent that the norm of all these things is not found in God, but shifted to the opinions of human beings." End quote.

Is that not so? When concepts like right and wrong, truth, justice, sin, guilt, crime, punishment, when all these things must align with human opinions and satisfy human sentiment, listen, it is no wonder the biblical doctrine of hell is altered into a manageable level or rejected altogether. When sinful humanity dethrones a holy God, when people learn to sympathize

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

with humanity over and against God, it's no wonder when we hear things like these: Inflict an infinite eternal punishment on a finite sinner with a finite list of sins? However great they may be, however thousands of years that sinner sinned, the punishment does not fit the crime. Therefore, God is unfair.

Doctrine of hell, here's another objection: the doctrine of hell makes God less than a man since no man would ever do what God purportedly will do, torment the guilty forever and ever. Can you do that to somebody? If you can't even do it, why would we assume even worse of God? They say that.

The doctrine of hell, that is, believing God will punish the guilty with an eternal, conscious torment, is barbaric and abhorrent. We left all that stuff behind in the Middle Ages. This makes God a tyrannical monster, more a devil than a God, delighting in tormenting those who don't measure up to his supposed standards. Will God really glorify himself in the screams and the moans and the groans of tormented sinners for all of eternity?

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Even backing up, how could a good and loving God create millions and billions of souls, knowing they will not trust in Jesus Christ and knowing they will always have their sins and knowing they'll spend eternity in hell if he was powerful enough to avoid that?

And some of that right there is one of the difficulties that informs the false doctrine of open theism, says, God is loving, and he's kind and he creates all these souls, but he really doesn't know the outcome. God is in process like you and I are. He's learning along with all of us. He's waiting to see what happens, too. But he's got a, he's got standards to uphold, got justice to pursue. He can't deny that. Bummer that it's going to be hell.

Another commentator, theologian poses questions about the doctrine's usefulness. He says this: "What, what is the value of an eternal punishment that has," by the way, this is Herman Bavinck again, this is, he's sympathetic to us, so this, don't take him as any other way. He says, "What is the value of an eternal punishment that has no purpose other than to torment the

sinner forever and ever? What is its utility for those who suffer it, since then, in the nature of the case it, it excludes the possibility of true repentance and only impels them to keep on sinning? What glory does it bring to God's name if it does not overcome and destroy sin, but only perpetuates it forever? How is it possible that the unredeemed continually harden themselves under the burden of such an eternal punishment without ever coming to repentance and self-humiliation before God?" End quote.

We're going to answer those questions, these questions, as we go through Luke 16. But these are the accusations, are they not, of the modern and postmodern world, against God, those who have been shaped by a secularized, humanistic culture. They abhor the doctrine of hell. They deny the doctrine of eternal, conscious torment of the wicked in hell.

In fact, you want to draw a line down humanity? You put on one side those who are squeamish and reject the doctrine of hell. And on the other side, those whom, though they may not understand it, though they don't, they're not gleeful in



pronouncing that kind of a judgment on anybody, but they are on the other side because they, like David, settle themselves in trusting God.

Which side of the line do you stand on? When the world sympathizes with the sinner over and against the one who is ultimately sinned against in every act of sin, they demonstrate their sinfulness. When the world worships and serves the creature rather than the Creator, man becomes the victim, and God becomes the victimizer, the abuser, the oppressor, the tormentor. So the modern, postmodern world has turned God into the devil and the devil into a god.

In this world, the visible evangelical church, caught up as it is in its love affair with money and success, enamored as it is with the pop culture and political influence, hopelessly addicted to pragmatism, always trying to bait people, the unchurched, with entertainment and efficient programming, slick marketing campaigns, most of these churches have no room for theology whatsoever.

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Theology, at least as done by them, bores people. They have no patience for hearing and learning doctrine. They have no depth of understanding. They have even less concern about applying doctrine to their lives. And since so many churches today trade in the glib and the superficial, they have really no answers at all for the real problems that plague the human conscience. They have no answers for questions that have been posed against the doctrine of hell. They have no responses for all the hostile attacks that come from the modern, postmodern mind.

And so, folks, I want to tell you, with sadness in my soul but with love in my heart, that many professing evangelical Christians need to hear this message today. Many of you need to hear this, many of you who consider your evangelical friends, family members, neighbors, just because they enter churches, that they're okay, that they're fine.

Beloved, don't trade in the same kind of superficial, superficiality. Jesus couldn't be more serious about the doctrine of hell. And we need to pick up on that sobriety and

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

bring this to people that we love. We need to absorb it for ourselves so we live in a totally different way than we've lived. And then we need to bring this truth to people that we love and care for and we're concerned about because they're going to die if they don't repent, and they're going to go here.

If you or others that you know share more in common with the rich man than with Lazarus, perhaps you need to be snapped out of your complacency. Perhaps that loved one in your family needs to repent of their love for money. Perhaps you need to check yourself on your love of ease and comfort. Perhaps you need to question your self-assurance and self-satisfaction if it's in anything else except the Gospel. And if you're finding your assurance not in a, the evidence of a transformed life, but in the fact that you prayed a prayer, or walked an aisle, or were baptized at one point in your life, that is a problem.

Hear the truth, beloved, about hell for your own soul's sake and for the sake of those you love. Because this God with whom we have to do is the one that, after he has killed, he has

authority to cast both body and soul into hell. That's the one we reckon with.

My fear is that too many professing evangelicals have been inoculated against the truth of the doctrine of hell. And it's not by outright denial. It's not by accepting or embracing some falsehood about hell: annihilationism, universalism, conditional immortality, whatever it is. But just through repeated neglect, they've rejected this doctrine, not consciously, but in practice. They can hear the word hell; they can read it in a book, or even see it come in their Bible reading, their daily devotions. But it's absent doctrinal content. It's without any explanation, without any exhortation, without any admonition, without any warning, without any pleading.

And so the truth about con, eternal, conscious torment sits on the ground like a loaded gun. No one touching it, though. Has no real impact on their minds. It has, doesn't shape at all the way they think, the way they prioritize life, the way they go through their lives. Might as well not even be, right?

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

So many in our churches have become accustomed to hearing Bible talk, hearing sermons. They're used to the language, but they're strangers, they're foreigners to the, to the concepts, to the doctrines, to the theology, the really hard questions that are answered, all answered by the Bibles they hold in their hands, but they don't know how to use it. They don't, don't know even know how to pull it up on their phones.

Pastors that they listen to and sit under are glib. Bible studies that they attend are shallow. The Christians that they're around are sentimental and self-serving and affirming of their weakness. Even when they know about hell, they seem relatively unaffected. They seem at peace, they seem untroubled, and, by that doctrine. They should not be untroubled. This should trouble us. This should bother your soul. This should bother your psyche.

The evidence I see that Christians seem unaffected and at peace, untroubled by this doctrine, twofold. First of all, they say nothing to warn their neighbors about hell when they evangelize, if they evangelize. They don't warn their neighbors

about this. They tell them about what Jesus is going to do for them. They front-load the conversation with all Jesus' benefits and none of his wrath, none of his threats, none of his warnings.

Think about your own evangelism, as I've thought about mine. Who wants to deliver the bad news? Everyone wants to be the doctor on the sunny day, right? Nobody wants to be the doctor when you've got to tell the person, you got cancer; it's terminal. That's what we're telling people.

Second piece of evidence that I think Christians are not taking this seriously: they just never seem concerned enough to examine themselves to be sure that they're in the faith. They're not diligent, as Peter says in 2 Peter chapter 1, diligent to "make every effort to make your calling and election sure." Instead, many people should be asking questions when they live such a casual, mediocre, lackadaisical kind of Christianity, which is not Christianity. Doctrine of hell should snap us back into reality, shouldn't it?

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

I'm very concerned far too many evangelicals will stand before Christ, and they will confess to his face that he is Lord. But they will hear those dreadful words from him. That says, "Depart from me. I never knew you." From the very gates of heaven, they're going to find a porthole straight to hell, and they'll fall downward to their eternal fate, never losing that surprised look on their face. What happened?

So to think anyone would spend one second in this terrible place is absolutely terrifying. And yet, for an inoculated evangelical listener, he listens, stifles a yawn, checks his watch, and somewhere between boredom and mild irritation, he wonders, how long is this going to take?

Why doesn't hell concern him? Well, it's because of the same dripping faucets, secularism, and humanism, that's been aff, infecting our entire, the entire West for centuries, has been doing the same thing to our churches. David Wells said this nearly thir, thirty years ago. He says, "The fundamental problem in the evangelical world today is that God rests too inconsequentially upon the church. His truth is too distant, his

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

grace is too ordinary, his judgment is too benign, his gospel is too easy, and his Christ is too common." End quote.

Again, it's not that we've changed our view, that we consciously reject the doctrine of hell. We just don't talk about it, so it falls into disuse. Many professing Christians today, if they hear anything about hell, they seem unaffected. They simply shrug and move on with their day.

Robert Peterson wrote an excellent little book back in 1995 called *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment*. It's about the same time David Wells was writing his books. David Wells wrote a forward to Robert Peterson's book, *Hell on Trial*. He said this: "Insofar as our culture is secularized, it pressures all of those who live within it to marginalize God, to push the reality of his character and the truth of his Word to the periphery of life. A faith that is secularized in these ways does not necessarily deny the truth of God's ways. It simply makes that truth seem inconsequential. A secularized faith is therefore not one marked by outright unbelief, but rather one in which that belief has become tame and harmless." End quote.



He continues by saying that today "talk about hell has a strange and unfriendly ring to it." That is true. It seems strange, and it seems unfriendly. It ought not to be strange for us in the church, and it ought to be the friendliest thing that we talk about.

Why? Because we love people, because we love God, we love his Word, we know it's true. And so we love the people who are under the threat of its judgment. We love those people. If you love your neighbor and you see his house on fire, you're going to walk past and not wake him up? You would be the most beastly of a person if you did that. No, you run in there at the risk of your own life. Got to wake up your neighbor, get him out of a burning house so he doesn't die. How much more permanent is this?

Hell has a strange and unfriendly ring to it, that is very true. I checked websites of some of the larger churches in northern Colorado. Most of them, most of them have no statement

on hell at all. Some have no doctrinal statements posted on their website at all. Wonder what qualifies them as evangelical.

Others, if they mention hell, they're very vague about it, or they bury the doctrine of hell in a statement about hell several layers deep in the website. So if you're a lazy web surfer, which most of us are, you can't find it. Even those that admit believing in hell on their websites, when you listen to the preaching from the pulpit, you have to wonder if it's ever preached. Is it ever covered? They're too busy telling everybody about the love of God and the next big thing at their church. They're completely ignorant of what gives God's love such weight.

What gives his love weight? What makes it so lovable, so desirable, is the fact that we were under the threat of this judgment. It's the weight comes from doctrines about our accountability before a holy God. The weight of his glory. The fact that we are lost all glory. The weight of human accountability. The weight of our punishment. The, the threat of his justice. And that's what makes his love lovely.

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Look, a church that does not preach the doctrine of hell is like a bank that refuses to handle money. It's like a restaurant that refuses to serve food. It's like a hospital that refuses to treat illness. The very purpose of the church is to preach sin and righteousness and judgment. Why? So that sinners may be saved from this punishment of hell and be reconciled to God.

Again, Wells writes this, "A God who is without wrath is a God whose Christ has no cross. And if he has no cross, it can only be because we're thought to have no need of his cross. While there have always been those in the church eager to believe such happy propositions, in the end what remains is a faith remade in the likeness of fallen human life which has lost truth and reality. Not only so, but it will also have lost its hope entirely. For Christian hope rests upon the fact not that evil can be ignored, or that it will simply fade away, but that it has been judged at the cross. There is a day coming when truth is going to be put forever on the throne and error forever on the scaffold." End quote. And may that day come.

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

So beloved, we're we're not going to let the world push us into a sentimental prison with regard to the doctrine of hell or any other doctrine of the Bible. We're going to let Christ recover for our church the doctrine of hell, and may he use it to his glory. Jesus' parable refutes all the pretensions of our modern, secularized culture, the squishy-headed liberalization of today's religion. Even though that's not why he delivered the parable, that's what it does.

Parable, as I said, is a warning to the materialistic, a warning to us American Christians, the American Evangelical, to jolt our minds away from our complacency. It's written for the sake of the unbeliever, to provoke the unbeliever about God's compassion in his dire need. It fuels the fire of our evangelism, doesn't it? To rescue souls from hell, to snatch sinners like brands from the fire.

So let's look at this doctrine of hell in the pages of holy Scripture. You wondered if we're going to get into our Bibles. We are. This is point number two in our outline: the biblical

confirmation of the doctrine of hell. The biblical confirmation of the doctrine of hell, point number two.

Some people find it surprising Jesus taught more about hell than he did about heaven. That is true. You can check that out for yourself, but we'll cover some of that today. Jesus described hell probably more vividly than anybody else before or since. He came to give clarity to his own generation, not only about who he is, his identity, his salvation, heaven in the future, but also hell, lest any in his own generation should go there. He brought more clarity than anybody about a reality that's, that was hidden in the shadows until he explained it.

People of Jesus' day, they understood. They embraced the concept of life after death. They believed all souls went to the grave after death, a place in the Old Testament Hebrew called Sheol. You've probably heard about that, or read that word Sheol. Sheol is the abode of the dead, and the righteous understood the concept of punishment and reward in Sheol.

There was a vague concept. It wasn't clear in the Old Testament. Progressive revelation over time made things more clear as time went by. In fact, at the end of the Old Testament there are passages like Isaiah 66:24. You should write these down. Isaiah 66:24, Daniel 12:2. These passages made a clear distinction between the fate of the righteous and the fate of the unrighteous, and it pointed out the doctrine of an eternal, conscious torment.

Isaiah used the language, Isaiah 66:24. He used the language of torment. He said, "Their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." That's language we hear showing up in the New Testament, isn't it?

Daniel also used the language of consciousness and eternal, or everlasting, Daniel 12:2. He said, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." He's not talking about soul-sleep there. He's just talking about the fact that they are dead. They're no longer in the land of the living. They, that's a reference to, this is a reference that they'll awake. It's a

# GRACE CHURCH

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Grace

reference to general resurrection. They've, their souls have been in Sheol, separated from their buried body. Now they're going to be resurrected to judgment. Some are going to be resurrected to everlasting life, Daniel 12:2, some to shame and everlasting contempt. But there is a resurrection of all humanity.

In the New Testament, we see that Old Testament concept of Sheol a bit more clearly when we hear the term Hades. Hades is the abode of the unrighteous dead in the New Testament, and then paradise, which is the place of the righteous dead. In the end of Revelation 20, verses 13-14, it says death and Hades will surrender their dead as the general resurrection takes place. The unrighteous dead will be judged, it says, each one of them according to what they have done. Then death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

What about the righteous dead? Where are they? Well, they are in paradise. We see one here next to Abraham, at Abraham's side. He's in paradise. That's a picture of paradise. And they

will enter into the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem.

Now, you have Bibles ready and warmed up your fingers. Let's take a quick tour of the Bible, see how hell is described, and I'll try to keep you in the New Testament. Hell is, as I said, hell, if we're defining it, is the eternal, conscious torment of the unrighteous. Eternal, conscious torment of the wicked. And let's start by looking at that word torment. Jesus said the rich man in Hades, in Luke 16:23, "was in torment." The rich man confirms that in verse 24. He says, "I'm in anguish in this flame." Abraham, he affirms the same thing in verse 25. He says, "You are in anguish."

So what does that agony, that anguish, that torment consist of? First, go to Matthew 25 and verse 30, Matthew 25:30. Jesus here is describing hell for the Jews. He uses the language, here in Matthew 25:30, of utter rejection and abandonment. Rejection and abandonment. Matthew 25:30, it's a parable of the talents. It's about stewardship. Hell is a place of darkness for the servant who refused to invest his master's money. Jesus says,



the master says, "Cast that worthless servant into the outer darkness." Outer darkness, a place of total isolation, utter abandonment.

I don't know if you've ever been in a place of utter darkness, where you cannot see a hand in front of your face, like a cave or some night, or a cloud-covered sky that's so dark, with no moon, no illumination, and you cannot see a thing. If you're alone, that is a disorienting place to be. Your senses are all messed up.

This is banishment. Outer darkness is eternal exile, such an oppressive loneliness Jesus describes as a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Isolation is so severe. Absolutely cut off in this blackness. Visual senses are starved for stimulation. It causes this dreadful psychological trauma for those who've been banished there.

That's the first description, of rejection and abandonment. Next, go to Mark chapter 9, Mark chapter 9, and here's another description of hell from Christ himself. Jesus uses the language

of pain. The language of pain. Severe, unbearable pain in Mark 9 and verse 42. This is the beginning of Jesus' warnings about certain kinds of sins, and he says in verse 42, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it'd be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea."

Jesus is not here just talking about merely drowning. A drowning victim can feel panicky. He's running out of air underwater, and that's kind of a panic-inducing state of being. I've been there. That's not fun. Eventually though, and I've also experienced this, that panic gives way to peacefulness, as you're like, ah, this isn't so bad. And then you know you're in trouble. You're loopy. You are in trouble. The victim blacks out, settles into a watery sleep.

That's not what Jesus is describing here, panic of drowning and then blackness comes. That's not the issue here. He says, to have a great, heavy upper millstone tied around the neck, be cast in the depths of the sea. That takes the victim to the crushing depths of the bottom of the ocean. And it does it fast.

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Millstones, you probably know this, they were used to grind flour. They're, they're these stones that are round and then they're placed on their side. So you have a base, a lower, lower stone, the bedstone. It remains stationary; it was heavier, immovable. Then there's an upper stone that's a bit lighter but still very heavy. It's fixed on a vertical axle, and then it's turned around, tied to a donkey. These donkeys would go round and round and round. They'd put the grain down there, crush it and make flour. These stones weighed from, anywhere from hundreds to even a few thousand pounds.

So to have one of these millstones tied to your neck and cast into the sea, it means you don't die of drowning, which would be a mercy. The weight of the millstone drags you so rapidly to the crushing depths, the atmospheres of pressure upon you will crush your body. The descent is so fast the victim is unable to clear, unable to equalize the pressure in the ear drums and the sinuses. So that's the first to go. The screaming, excruciating pain in the eardrums and the sinuses as they squeeze. And the lower the body descends, the greater the weight of the water above, which crushes lungs and body cavities and

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

the body altogether. Jesus is describing an excruciatingly painful death, here. Cause one of his little ones to stumble? If you had that in your mind, like, maybe that's a good idea, don't.

More pain he describes. Keep reading, verse 43, "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands and go to hell, into the unquenchable fire. If your foot causes you to send, cut it off. Better for you to enter life lame than with two feet, be thrown into hell. Your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes be thrown into hell, where their worm doesn't die and where the fire is not quenched."

If you're struggling with sin and you think that the key to delivering yourself from sin is to start doing some self-mutilation, Jesus is using these as metaphors. Hyperbole. So don't mutilate yourself. The problem is not in your hand or your eye or your foot. It's in your heart. It's in your mind. Your heart needs to be regenerated, and you need to do, what the

hyperbole means is to do whatever it takes, short of cutting things off, but do whatever it takes in a hyperbolic sense to rid yourself of sin. Mortify all sin.

Why? Because adding to the imagery of a crushing pain is the imagery of a burning pain. Those who live closer to the earth, like the people the first century, they dealt with burning injuries all the time. Few times I've ministered in Haiti, there are a number of you who know this to be true as you've gone to Haiti as well. Such a need for nurses and burn clinics in that country because so much of their cooking is done over open fires. So accidents happened all the time, result in dreadful, painful burn wounds. Really sad to see it in children when they fall against a pot, and a boiling pot of water goes all over their skin.

It's not just about the burn itself, either. What really takes time to recover from are the burn wounds, was the nerve endings are exposed and damaged, and as they heal, it's excruciatingly painful. Those who believe Jesus and what he says here, they're going to heed his warnings to avoid hell, to avoid

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

this crushing, burning pain, a place where there's no relief for all of eternity.

Thirdly, Jesus uses the language of death. Go back to Luke, in Luke chapter 12, but he uses a language of, of death, and he kind of describes it using macabre, grotesque imagery of undying worms crawling through the corpse and feeding on the rotting, decaying flesh in Mark 9:48. But Luke 12, Jesus warns about fearing God, starting in verse 4. He says, "I tell you, my friends, don't fear those who can kill the body and after that have nothing more they can do. I'll warn you whom to fear. Fear him who after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. And yes, I tell you, fear him."

That term, we don't see it as much in English, but the term translated hell is *Gehenna* in the Greek. It refers to the valley of Hinnom. It was once a beautiful place of rest and repose, but it became defiled by the worship of Molech, most famously in the reins of Ahaz and Manasseh. They sacrificed their own children in fire offerings to this hideous, monstrous idol. The shrieks

of babies in agony reverberated all through that once peaceful and pristine, tranquil valley. It's horrid.

For that reason, King Josiah tore down all the altars of Molech, and he defiled the valley of Hinnom to discourage anyone from returning to that idolatry. He turned that place into the city's rubbish dump, pouring all the sewage and dead bodies and rot there. According to one commentator, refuse of all kinds, including carcasses of criminals, thrown into this valley and consumed by fire, which was ceaselessly burning.

That's the imagery, very similar to the description of Isaiah 66:24. Jesus applied that imagery from Isaiah to the valley of Hinnom when describing hell in Mark 9:48. It's a picture of eternal death, filth and defilement there, evil abomination. Unquenchable fire is all that's there because all that's there is bad. Death warmed over. It's all awful.

So he uses this language of rejection, isolation, to describe hell. Jesus used the language of pain and suffering to describe hell. He uses grotesque imagery, the language of death,

language of the macabre to portray the grisliness and gruesomeness of hell.

Fourthly, Jesus used the language of punishment, retributive justice, like a courtroom scene, and thinking about a criminal thrown into the slammer. When I say language of punishment and retributive justice, that's to say that hell is not merely consequential. It's not just something incidental, like if I jump from a, too high of a height and don't take into account the, the height that I'm jumping from and the law of gravity, consequentially I'll be judged in my stupidity and I will break my ankle.

That's not what he's talking about. He's not talking about his, something here that's impulsive or reactionary on God's part. Hell is intentional. It is a positive punishment for sin by God. Turn over to, you're in Luke, go to a few pages to the right to Luke 19. Luke 19 verse 12. This is Luke's record of the parable of the talents, which is also, we read, in Matthew 25.



And Jesus gives an introduction and a conclusion to the parable that is not in Matthew's account. Look at verse 12. He said, "Therefore a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' But his citizens hated him, sent a delegation after him saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given them money to be called to him, that he might know what they'd gained by doing business."

You can stop there. We know that the parable continues with the master commending two slaves for being obedient stewards, took the talents he gave them, worked diligently, made more. He rewards them with more responsibility, more honor. The disobedient slave, who hid his talents in verse 22, it says, there, the master condemns him, pronounces judgment over him, just like Jesus said Matthew 25:30. This worthless slave here is cast into outer darkness, where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What about those rebellious subjects from verse 14, the ones who hated him, said, "We don't want this man to reign over us," so that when he went away and then received the kingdom and came back. What about them? Look at verse 27. "But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me."

The whole parable has gone by. We can see clearly this master has not done an impulsive thing in punishing them, has he? He's not losing it. He's not reacting in a rage, in a huff. This is calm, cool, collected exercise of wrath. It's intentional, it's thoughtful, it's retributive. In fact, it's not just here that he's considering, and member he, remember he went away, and they sent a letter after him saying, "We'll not have you to rule over us."

Just thought about this, Master here, trade, is a picture of Jesus returning with the kingdom. He's portrayed here as calculating, as taking personal responsibility for this execution. Slaughter them before me. Slaughter them in my presence. He intends to see it done. This isn't him being some

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

petty, vindictive tyrant. This is justice, which means if it's justice, it means it's just, and if it's just, then it's good. This is God. This is Christ in his goodness.

We're not used to this imagery, are we? "Bring them here and slaughter them before my eyes." We live in such a sanitized world. There's a sense in which I'm thankful we're not seeing public executions out on the street, hangings and the like. The violence that we see seems to be either a cartoon caricature, like what we see on movie screens, or carefully curated images in the media.

But actual death? The execution of justice, we're not so familiar with that. Some passages in the Scripture, we need to admit, are pretty violent, aren't they? They're never going to make it into the children's Sunday school curriculum. Cartoon images, images like this, Phineas executing an adulterous couple, running a spear through the two of them while they're engaged in the act. It's not going to be in the pictures in the Children's Bible. May see Phineas holding a spear. But he's, you know, concerned, but not ramming it through them.

# GRACE CHURCH



Samuel confronted Saul, dealt with Saul being disobedient and not destroying all the Amalekites. But what does Samuel do? He takes that Amalekite king, Agag. He takes him out and it says he hacked him to pieces before the Lord. That's language of worship. Slaughtered him. It was just. And if it's just, it's good.

David, we know, killed Goliath. He's a hero of all of us young boys. Seeing him kill Goliath, sinking a stone into his skull, that's often where my children's books would end. It didn't end when he ran up to the giant and took his own sword out of his sheath and used it to sever his head from his body and then carry that head back to Saul. But he did that. Sounds really gruesome. It is gruesome.

We as Christians need to understand that that language is in our Bibles. We need not to be apologetic about it, squeamish about it. We need to own it and realize this is the God we serve, and this violence portrays something about his justice.

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Our Lord will execute the same kind of violent justice when he comes at his second coming. Turn over to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 7. Lord's going to execute justice when he comes. Let's actually start reading in verse 5. Paul says, "This is evidence." What's evidence? The persecutions you Christians are suffering, all the afflictions that you Christians are enduring. "This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for which you're also suffering, since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you."

Didn't we hear language like that as Abraham spoke to the rich man? There's a, a reversal of fortune, there. God considers it just, verse 6, "to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on the those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Listen, people may profess to be Christians. They may attend evangelical churches. But if they don't obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, what does this say in verse nine? "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day, to be glorified in his saints, to be marveled at among all who believe, because our testimony to you was believed."

Just a footnote. The punishment that God brings is not a remedial punishment. The punishment Christ brings and the holy angels bring at the Second Coming, it's not remedial. It's not in the, in the sense to say it's not disciplinary or instructive, trying to help sinners amend their ways. That's not what's going on. This is retributive justice, retributive punishment. It's an execution of a sentence because sin and rebellion are infinite offenses against a perfectly holy God.

We shrink back from the teaching of the Bible, the clear teaching of the Bible about the justice of eternal, conscious torment. Beloved, it's because we simply don't get it. We just

# GRACE CHURCH



Grace

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don't get it. We're so sin-laden, so sin-sodden, sin-saturated, that it dulls us to the perfection of divine holiness. We're not as offended as we ought to be about the sins committed against God. We have more in common with sinful people around us than with the God who saved us.

My friends, that ought not to be. We have no right, no right whatsoever to judge God as unjust. We're unjust. God isn't. Only God is good. We're not. As Paul put it this way in Romans 3:4, "Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, that you may be justified in your words, and that you might prevail when you are judged wrongly by sinners."

Another question, is this punishment eternal? We've seen its torment. It's an eternal torment. It is the torment suffered eternally by those who are conscious, and do they actually experience all this agony? Well, if Jesus' parable to the rich, about the rich man and Lazarus, is there any indication? We have every reason to see the torment of the ungodly as a conscious torment. We'll have more to say about that in time to come. But

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Jesus portrays the man, the rich man there, is completely aware of his situation. He's got all his faculties and senses, he feels everything, is aware of everything. I'd say he's conscious. But we'll come back to that.

For now, let's just confirm this is torment is eternal. For the sake of time we'll just look at one of these passages, starting in Matthew 25. Go back to Matthew 25. We were just there. Matthew 25, and what I want to point you to is Matthew 25, you can write this down, 40, 41, and 46. But I'm going back up. This is the sheep and the goats judgment. This comes after the final resurrection at the end of the millennial kingdom. It's after the final battle with satanic forces. All that's described in Revelation 19 and 20.

But Matthew 25, we'll start back in verse 31. "When the son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him," we just read about that in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, "then he will sit on his glorious throne, and before him will be gathered all the nations. He'll separate people one from another, as a shepherd



separates the sheep from the goats. He'll place the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

"And then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, you gave me drink. I was a stranger, you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison, you came to me.' And the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty give you a drink? When we when did we see you, when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothed you? When did we see you sick, in prison, visit you?' And the king answered, 'Look, truly I say to you, as you did it to the one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me.'

"And he'll say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, you gave me no food. I was thirsty, you gave me no drink. I was a stranger, you didn't welcome me. I

# GRACE CHURCH



Grace

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was naked, you didn't clothe me, sick and in prison, you didn't visit me.' And they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, in prison, didn't minister to you?' He'll answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Same word, eternal, used to describe both outcomes. The life of heaven described as eternal, to be experienced and enjoyed by the righteous forever and ever. Same word eternal describes the judgment of the unrighteous, also conscious, also eternal. Jesus referred to this scene and revealed it to John in Revelation 20:11-15 that this lake of fire, which is, that's interesting imagery, isn't it? A lake of fire? It's a lake, but it has no water. It's a fire which is not doused or put out by the lake. So since it's prepared for the devil and his angels, which are by nature spiritual beings, we recognize, don't we, there's a figurative nature to the physical language, picturing all the ungodly, angelic and human, who are drowning perpetually in excruciating pain and unrelenting suffering.

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Folks, that's just a brief survey of the passages. I mean, I'm just, I'm, I'm honestly hitting the, skipping across the waves of the depth of the ocean of teaching in the New Testament and the Old about the doctrine of hell. It's just a brief survey.

But I don't want to leave you there. Want to consider now for a final point, and this is shorter, I promise you. But it's about the usefulness of this doctrine. Why is this doctrine useful? Point three. Write down the fruitful vindication of the doctrine of hell. The fruitful vindication of the doctrine of hell.

Back to the questions we asked earlier. Those accusations from the unbelieving. What of them? Is the doctrine of hell fundamentally unjust? Is it disproportionate to the crime? Of course not. Bible tells us God is good, just, wise, all powerful. And as we've seen, the Bible does indeed teach the doctrine of hell, this eternal, conscious torment of all the ungodly, angelic and human.

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

Just before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, cities that were guilty of committing the most reprehensible acts of sin and wickedness, vile forms of wickedness, Abraham acknowledged a fundamental proposition about God, which is this. "Shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly?" Rhetorical question. Shall he not? Of course, he'll deal justly. Otherwise, how can he be the judge of all the earth? And if he's not the judge of all the earth, who, who is? You?

God is just by nature. He is just in his essence. It's an attribute of his being. So before accusing God of injustice and before letting any unjust sinner accuse God of injustice, remember that God is God. You are a fallen, sinful creature, but God is God. So as Solomon said, "Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, you are on earth. Therefore, let your words be few."

Don't dare to utter a slanderous and ignorant judgment against God. Rather, take the posture of David from Psalm 131,

not occupying ourselves with things too great for us, but settling ourself, like a weaned child with its mother.

It's another question we can ask here. Does God really take pleasure in delivering eternal retribution to the wicked? Is he gleeful about that, as he's portrayed to be by our enemies? God answered that in Ezekiel 18:23. "He says, 'Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked,' declares God, 'and not, and not rather that he should return from his way and live?'" It's a rhetorical question.

God returns to that, leaves no doubt in Ezekiel 33:11: "'As I live,' declares the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?'" Herman Bavinck adds this; he says, "The saying that he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone, Lamentations 3:33, applies also in hell. The pain he inflicts is not an object of pleasure either for him or for the blessed in heaven, but a means of glorifying his virtues, and hence the

punishment is determined in severity and measured by this ultimate goal." End quote.

So then what's the value of such a thing as the doctrine of hell? What's its utility? We're Americans. We're pragmatic by nature. We want to know what's the usefulness of this? What purpose does it serve?

Well, first of all, it reveals God. Jesus came to reveal God. He came to reveal all of God, not just the parts that people like and want to hear. Jesus intends we see God as high and holy, as great and glorious, which should humble us as we see ourselves in stark contrast to who God is.

To a society of self-righteous Jews in the first century Judea, those who relied on their physical connection to Abraham, those who boasted in their spiritual heritage, those who had in their hands the written revelation of God and law and the prophets, we can add to that the self-assured evangelicals who are worldly and yet untroubled. Jesus came to unsettle hearts

that are settled. He came to unsettle those that are at rest and at ease with a false sense of peace.

And so Jesus uses this language, these vivid metaphors, to create clear, true, dreadful pictures in our imagination. He intended this to cause within us a visceral reaction, to evoke from us an emotional response, so that we recoil, as we should, in horror at this doctrine.

That is intentional, folks. Jesus wants to warn us against going to hell, came to strike fear into the hearts of a complacent people. He came to clarify this doctrine of hell, tell people the truth about a current, eternal, conscious torment. For the ungodly religious people who believe they're doing just fine, who see no need in their life or repentance, he wants them to examine themselves.

That's what we're going to see as we work our way through this amazing parable. We're going to learn about the fear of God. You maybe jot some of these down. Number one, we're going to learn about the fear of God, that God's being and his

righteousness is the standard of judgment, not man and his mushy, mutable sentiment. When we learn to realign our sympathies with God, not man, when we fear him, our compassion will be rightly directed according to his will. That's what we want.

Number two, if we put God at the center of our thinking, we use our reason obediently. And when we do that, we learn true wisdom. We learn justice. We learn all that God has to teach us. Write down Psalm 36 verse 9, "For with you is the fountain of life in your light." Do we see light? Let's be humble learners at the feet of our God.

We're going to see more and learn more, number three, about true justice, that God is always just, that his judgments stand up to any and all scrutiny. This is going to help us see God in a more sobering light so we don't trifle with him. We teach others not to trifle with him, but to obey him.

Number four, we'll be forced to trust God with the things that we don't understand. Trust him, even when we don't



understand, especially when we don't understand. As we said, we tend to sympathize with sinners over and against God, which is total folly. But when we learn that God sees not as man sees, we realize he is not like one of us. He gets to and sees the heart of the matter, and he always does what's just and right? So we're forced to trust him, number four.

Number five, when we deepen our understanding of divine justice, we're going to see the dreadful sinfulness of sin. We're going to learn to see the offensiveness of sin from God's perspective and realize that eternal conscious torment of the ungodly in hell is the only fitting punishment in judgment for sin and for those who cling to their sin. We need to see the sinfulness of sin. If we don't look around our world and see it already, we don't look into our hearts and see it already and are abhor, it's abhorrent to us, the doctrine of hell will help you with that.

Lastly, when we learn about the sinfulness of sin, it's going to deepen our appreciation for the Gospel. We're going to realize that Christ died for us to pay the penalty, this

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

penalty, for our sins so we don't have to spend eternity in hell. We can repent of our sins. We can trust him now, and then we can learn to rejoice in gratitude because we've been spared this judgment.

If your heart is unaffected by the Gospel, check your pulse. More clarity we have about sin, righteousness, judgment, the more clarity we'll have about the Gospel of our salvation, the more it puts this life into proper perspective as well for ourselves. We're going to be more concerned to mortify all sin because we hate it, because we know what it deserves. We want to live obediently before the Lord, exercise a righteous, diligent stewardship of our lives.

As we consider other people, we're going to learn that every soul that we meet matters, matters to us, matters before God. We're eager to teach them the Gospel, to see them saved from this coming wrath. Nothing like the doctrine of hell to motivate our evangelism, right? So useful in calling sinners to fear God, this "one who, after he is killed, will cast so, both body and soul into hell."

Nothing like the doctrine of hell to challenge a false professor, a false professing Christian, to examine himself and see whether he's in the faith. Nothing like the doctrine of hell to exhort all Christians to exercise a wise, diligent stewardship and live for the Gospel and bring salvation to the lost. We're going to see all these fruits and more come to maturity in our lives when we embrace what Jesus taught here in Luke 16. And so will many other places on the doctrine of hell. It's one of the most fruitful doctrines in the Bible. And I hope you see that more and more as the weeks go by. We'll get to that next week as we start working through the amazing parable. Let's pray.

Father, thank you so much for your love for us in sending the Lord Jesus Christ to teach us, to teach us about who you are, what you're like, to reveal the truth about you and reality of the way you think about the world, the way you think about us, that you don't approve of our sin. In fact, it, it is what provokes wrath and brings judgment. But we're thankful that you sent him not only to teach about who you are and the consequences and the justice that comes from rejecting you and

# GRACE CHURCH

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Greeley

staying in our sins. We're thankful that you sent him to teach us what salvation looks like, that we can be saved from our sins, that we don't have to spend eternity in hell.

There are so many people here who have, by your grace, come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. They've looked upon his work on the cross and realized that he on the cross absorbed your wrath, that eternal wrath that is represented by hell, by all the language of hell. He absorbed that for us, for every sin we've committed against you. He took that on himself because he loves you and he loves us. You poured that upon him because you love us, Father.

Father, help us to learn to soak this in, to not recoil, not turn away, but to look square on at the truth about this doctrine in the Scripture. Let our minds be settled deep in our conviction, and deep in our resolve to fear you always and to tell sinners the truth. We love you, Father. We thank you so much for the salvation that we have in Jesus Christ. It's in his name we pray. Amen.