

Missions and Hell

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[0:00] Fires of hell are unquenchable, but more explicitly, they are forever destroying fire. It's eternal punishment.

! It's for destruction.

The word is *apollemi*. It means ruin or loss or perish, and it does not imply annihilation. Just because something is destroyed doesn't mean it has totally disappeared.

So hell is the continual ruin of the sinner. They're destroyed more and more forever and ever. Listen to Matthew 25 and verses 41 and 46.

Then he will say to those at his left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

[1:18] So who is hell for? According to Jesus, it's for the cursed. You cursed. And what is hell for?

He says it's for punishment. It's not for remedial action. It's not to help them get better. It's for punishment. To make them pay for their actions.

And how long does it last? It says forever. As long as the righteous enjoy life, the cursed will experience death and destruction.

Well, we could go on and on. We could talk about a lot more passages. But do you see why missions is urgent? Because hell is real.

And it is forever and ever. There is no escape. There is no way out. And so if we could see by faith those flames that are going to last forever and ever, we would have a new fire put in us for missions.

[2:28] We would see that missions is urgent. And so, brothers and sisters, we do need to be reminded of this. And we need to pray that God would give us faith to see the terrible thing, the terrible reality of hell.

We need to go because people are going to perish in hell forever. Why is missions urgent? Here is the second reason. Christ is the only hope for people everywhere.

Christ is the only hope for people everywhere. So how do you escape this eternal hell? Are there lots of paths? Are there different ways of going?

Do people in other countries really need Jesus? Do they really need him? Do those people who have never heard? You know, we like to talk about those theoretical people that have never heard. And what happens to them? Do those people who have never heard, who have grown up in Muslim countries, who have grown up in their sincere Hindus, their indigenous tribe in Africa, do those people, wherever they are at, do they need Jesus to be saved?

[3:42] Or is there some other way? Or are all other religions just different paths to the same point? Well, the Bible answer is that there is no salvation for anyone, wherever they are at, unless it's in Christ.

There's no salvation apart from the salvation that Christ achieved in his death and his resurrection. There is only one way. So the Bible's answer is that the gospel is the solution to man's global problem of sin.

So I'd invite you to turn to Romans chapter 5. Romans chapter 5. We want to look at the universality of Christ's work from a few passages.

We're asking who is Christ, who is the gospel for? Who does it save and who is it offered to?

Romans chapter 5, verse 17.

For if by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?

[5:02] So let me ask you, what, according to Romans 5, 17, what is the consequence of Adam's sin? Of the one man, Adam? What's the consequence? Death.

And what does death do? It reigns. Death reigns. And who does it reign over? All.

It reigns over all, everyone. For the wages of sin is death, and we all die. So the effect of Adam's sin was universal.

It's universal. It's not just Europeans that die. It's not Asians, just Asians that die. It's not just those people who have heard the gospel. They aren't the ones that just die.

Everyone, everywhere, dies. But what is the result of Christ, of God's grace in Jesus?

[6:02] Let's read verses 18 and 19. I think we got part of the answer in verse 17, but we want to read more. Verses 18 and 19. Consequently, just as the result of the trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

For just as through the disobedience of the one man that many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man that many will be made righteous. So what is the effect of Jesus' righteousness?

You see it in verse 18. What is the effect of Jesus' righteousness? Okay. And what do we have through justification?

Just like sin brought death, Jesus' righteousness brings life. And it says it brings life to who?

All men. The point is not that Jesus saves all men indiscriminately. It's not that this is a guaranteed thing. Because verse 17 says, those who receive God's abundant provision of grace.

[7:21] So this is who it actually is for. This is who it actually does bring life to. But Paul is still using this language of all because it is universal.

Just like death is for everyone, Asian, Europeans, blacks, whites, Spanish speaking, English speaking, no matter what tribe, language, or tongue you are, death reigns over.

In the same way, Christ is the Savior for all men everywhere. His righteousness is for everyone everywhere, whether Jew or Greek, whether near or far.

And so Jesus' life and his death is the answer, the global answer, to the global problem that we have with sin.

It's the global solution. So turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. It's one book over.

[8:20] In verses 21 and 23. 23. For since death came through a man, this is a very similar passage, isn't it?

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive, but each in his own turn.

Christ, the first fruits, then when he comes, those who belong to him. So what is the universal answer to the universal human misery of death?

It's Jesus. Jesus is the one solution to the man's problem of death. Jesus is not a tribal deity.

Lots of gods are just the gods of this person, this people, this group, but Jesus is not that. He's not just solving the problems of a very limited, select tribe.

[9:35] He's God's answer to the universal problem of death. If anyone attains to the resurrection, they attain it in Christ.

He's the only way. You probably know the next passage. Let me just read it to you. It's Revelation chapter 5. You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slain.

And with your blood, you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priest to serve our God and they will reign on the earth.

So the whole book of Revelation pictures Christ as the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. He's the universal ruler of every person, every people, every power.

And in Revelation 5, he says that he, the angels say that he's purchased a people from all the nations, from every tribe and language. And so his atonement is the means in every culture, in every language, in every nation, where men and women become a part of God's kingdom.

[10:56] And his death ensures that people from every nation, language, tribe, tongue, all those things. People from everywhere will come. His atonement is universal in the sense that it reaches around the globe.

It's not just one particular group. And so his death is the only way that people are made priests and kings. So the problem of sin is universal.

It brings death. It cuts people off from God. And the solution to that problem, the Bible says, no matter where you are, is Jesus Christ, his atoning work.

So missions is urgent because Jesus Christ is the only hope of salvation for people everywhere.

We have a very American-centered view of Christianity.

It's just because this is our culture and Christianity has been a part of our culture for so long and so we kind of start to think that Christianity is an American thing or a European or a Western thing or something like that.

[12:09] Like, it just doesn't quite apply the same way to those people in Africa or the people in the Far East. But, that's not the Bible's perspective.

The Bible's perspective is this is the answer to people's problem everywhere. everywhere. So that's the second reason Jesus Christ is the only hope of salvation for people everywhere.

Now, why is missions urgent? Here's the third reason, the final reason. The gospel must be heard. The gospel must be heard.

It's only in believing the gospel that anyone is saved. Let me, let me repeat that because a lot of people get confused on that. The only in believing the gospel is anyone saved.

There's no other way except through faith in Jesus Christ. Being a good Muslim, being a fervent, sincere Hindu, or a sincere, humble Jew is not the way to salvation.

[13:19] God commands people everywhere to repent and believe the good news of Jesus Christ. So turn over in your Bibles to Acts chapter 17.

Acts chapter 17. Paul is on Mars Hill, the Areopagus.

he's speaking to the philosophers there and he's preaching to them. And this is the climax of his sermon on Mars Hill.

Acts 17 verses 29 through 31. Therefore, since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image made by man's design and skill.

In the past, God overlooked such ignorance. But now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.

[14:37] And he has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead. So Paul is talking to a Gentile audience, an audience that worships false gods, whether they're stone or gold or silver or just the ideas.

I mean, these were philosophers and so they probably weren't thinking such rudimentary idols.

They had other gods that they had made in their own minds. And he's preaching to them and he says, in the past, God overlooked such ignorance.

In the times of ignorance, it says, in the times of ignorance, God overlooked that. You were overlooked. But now he commands people everywhere to repent.

Now, something has happened. The past is now different than the present. That's what Paul is saying. There's been a change of time.

In the past, God overlooked ignorance, this ignorance. In the past, God overlooked this idolatry that you were participating in, the idolatry of the nations. But now something new has happened.

[15:47] A new time has come and now God is commanding repentance. So you might be, like, scratching your head, like, what is he talking about?

What does it mean that God overlooked such ignorance? What does that mean? Does that mean that God overlooked their sin? It was just sort of like, well, I don't care about that.

That's not a problem right now. Is that what he means when he says God overlooks such ignorance? And the answer is no. God does, when it says God overlooks such ignorance, it doesn't mean that he overlooked their sin of idolatry, because there's a lot of other passages that say that that's just not the case.

Romans 1.18, you know this verse, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men. Romans 1-3 is talking about men are under condemnation, and it's not just the Jews who have the law, it is the nations of this world, they are condemned.

So no matter what, whether you're a Jew or a Gentile, you are condemned. Romans 2.12 says, those who have sinned without the law, that's the Gentiles, they didn't have God's law, without the law, they will perish.

[17:15] They will perish without the law. So when Paul says God overlooked those things of ignorance in the past, he's not saying that God overlooked their sin of idolatry, but what, it's not like that God is giving all these people a free pass into heaven.

As long as you don't hear the gospel, you automatically get to heaven. That is not what he means. He wasn't overlooking sin. When he says he overlooked the ignorance, it means that God gave them up to their own ways.

God gave them over, he didn't pursue them, he let the nations go, they were ignorant, they were idolaters, and he really didn't do anything about it.

He overlooked them, he didn't pay any attention, to them. So, God sovereignly decided to postpone an all-out pursuit of their repentance.

So, in the past, he overlooked, he wasn't pursuing them. He wasn't going to pursue them for repentance. Listen to John Calvin. The reason why men have wandered from the truth for so long is that God did not stretch forth his hand from heaven to lead them back to the way.

[18 : 36] Ignorance was in the world as long as it pleased God to take no notice of it. So, in the past, before Christ came, God overlooked.

He let men go their own way. He didn't intervene. But now everything has changed. Everything is different now. God commands everyone, everywhere to repent.

And so, God isn't overlooking anymore. Now, God is in an all-out pursuit for the repentance of the nations. At one point, he wasn't pursuing the nations.

But now, he is pursuing. God is on a mission. He's commanding them to come back and he commands them through the gospel. So, what happened?

Why this change of plan? Well, it tells us because the Son of God appeared. The Son of God appeared. He atoned for sin. He was raised from the dead. And now, he has this universal authority to judge all men.

[19 : 39] And so, now the fullness of God's redemption has been finished. Redemption is now complete. insofar as Jesus has paid for the sins of his people. And so, now God says, repent.

And now the word of God, God's salvation, has to be extended to the ends of the earth. And so, men must repent. And they must believe if they are to be saved.

Let's turn over to one more passage, Romans chapter 10. Romans chapter 10, verse 13. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?

And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? let me ask you, how are people saved? Verse 13.

[21 : 03] What does it say? Yes. Whoops. You call on the name of the Lord. But Paul wants to nail this down.

He wants to secure this. And he does it with three questions. They're rhetorical questions. And each question rules out an argument from those who would say that you can be saved without hearing the gospel.

You can be saved without hearing the gospel. There's some other way. There's something else. And these three questions makes it crystal clear that the gospel must be preached, people must believe, or they will not be saved.

And so the first question is, how then can they call on the one they have not believed in? Let me ask you, what is necessary for you to effectively call on the name of the Lord?

According to this question. You have to have some knowledge? What's the word? You have to believe. How can they call on the one they have not believed?

[22 : 14] believed in? And so what saves? It's calling on Jesus. And Paul says, people cannot call effectively on the Lord without faith.

And so some people think you don't have to believe in Jesus to be saved. But Paul says, you can't call on the name of the Lord. You can't be saved without believing in Jesus Christ.

Do you see why missions is necessary? Why we have to preach? They have to believe. And so that leads to the next question. How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?

And someone will say, well, someone might believe in Jesus without the gospel being preached to them. You know, maybe they've never heard the gospel, but somehow they still believe.

But do you see how Paul's question cuts that argument right at the knees? How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?

[23 : 24] Hearing and meeting Jesus in the gospel always precedes saving faith. It always precedes saving faith.

So what do people need in order to believe? believe. They need to hear. They need to meet Jesus in the gospel. Well, maybe there's some other way that they can meet Jesus.

Maybe there's some other way that this could happen. Paul's third question. How can they hear without someone preaching to them?

So can people hear? Can they meet Christ or hear Christ without a messenger to tell them the gospel? The answer is no. Is there any other way but missions?

The answer is no. All the eggs are in this basket. And God has put them there in his own wisdom. He's after his own glory.

[24 : 27] So do you see why missions is so urgent? People will not be saved unless they believe. People will not believe unless they hear the gospel.

people will not hear without someone preaching. So what does all this boil down to? It boils down to this, that missions is urgent.

This is the most pressing thing in the world today. The world needs for us to go to them. The message of the gospel must go to all the nations or they won't be saved.

And they will spend eternity in hell. And so brothers and sisters, every one of us, and this is what I prayed for myself, every one of us needs to be gripped again by these truths.

They're simple truths, they're not anything new, but we need to pray that God would grip us with these things, that the reality of hell, the reality of Jesus is the only way, and that he must be preached.

[25 : 33] These things have to grip us, and so we need to pray that God would give us urgency for missions, and then we need to act. We need to see about what we can do. What more can we do?

What can we give? What about going? God, we pray for people, for men to be raised up. Maybe there's men like you.

Maybe those answers are in this room. Think about it. See about going. See about sending. See about sacrificing to send others. The need is urgent.

Hell is real. Jesus is the only way, and he must be preached. Well, let's pray, then we'll be dismissed. Our Heavenly Father, we do just ask for that one thing, that you would make these realities real to us, that the truths that we have seen in the Scripture would be alive in our own hearts, that we would be gripped by them.

Holy Spirit, will you show us the beauty and the exclusivity of Jesus, that he is the only way.

[26 : 44] Pray that you would show us the reality of hell, and that we would fear it rightly. And we pray these things for Jesus' sake, for his kingdom's sake.

Amen. may may may may