

March 18th, 2018
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: No Place Like Hell
Sermon #3 Title: How It Is
Sermon #3 Text: (Mark 9:42-50)

As an army troop of men were getting ready to go to battle, the story goes, that a soldier asked the Chaplain what he believed about hell. The Chaplain replied, I don't believe in hell. The Soldiers then got together and asked for another chaplain. They said to their superiors – "If there's no hell, then we don't need a chaplain, if there is a hell, we don't need THAT chaplain."

- We've looked at What Hell Is
- We've looked at Why Hell Is
- This morning, I want you to get a glimpse of just Serious, how Somber, and how Sad Hell really is.

An anonymous writer once penned these words – "There is no way to describe Hell. Nothing on earth can compare with it. No living person has any real idea of it. No madman in wildest flights of insanity ever beheld its horror. No man in delirium ever picture a place so utterly terrible as this. No nightmare racing across a fevered mind ever produced a terror to match that of the mildest hell. No murder scene with splashed blood and oozing wound ever suggested a revulsion that could touch the border lands of hell. Let the most gifted writer exhaust his skill in describing this roaring cavern of unending flame, and he would not have even brushed in fancy the nearest edge of hell. Hell was originally "prepared for the Devil and his angels"—not for man! Little wonder that there is joy in heaven over one sinner

that repented. He is saved, redeemed, rescued. It makes the hearts in heaven glad.

Now while we cannot describe it, we cannot imagine or explain it, our Lord has given us enough to know that God Almighty does not want us to go there.

As we continue our look toward the good news of the cross, we look across the field of the bad news of hell.

In the text today our Lord's disciples had a multitude of problems.

- 1.) Pompous in their Ambition – "They had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest in the Kingdom"
- 2.) Prideful over their Ministry – vs 38 – "they had forbade another disciple of Christ who had performed a miracle, but was not in their inner circle with Jesus."
 - the Lord had rebuked them
- 3.) Petulant Among Themselves – Very often the disciples themselves didn't get along. – There was not always peace in the midst.
 - Mind you Simon the Zealot wanted to over throw the government... Matthew worked for the government.

They were not natural friends. – Let me say this, and we'll move on – It is NOT okay, to NOT get along one with another among the Lord's people.

- It was this set of dynamics that the Lord gave His Disciples a discourse on the depth, and the dangers of all sin, and they had better sober up to that fact.

I. The Magnitude of Sin's Offense

*Note – Textually speaking the Lord lays out three things to take note of when measuring the depth, breadth, and judgment of sin.

A. In our Realm of Influence

*note – To get what Jesus is speaking of in this verse there are two things to note: - a.) The people that Jesus has in Mind, and; b.) the Problem that Jesus has in mind.

1.) The People Jesus has in Mind - “the offending of little ones that believe in me.”

(a.) there is a child sitting in the middle of the group – (vs 36)

**note - Jesus used that child to teach the disciples about true greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven, explaining that Child-Like Faith, not Childish, but the child-like faith that is simple, trusting, and obedient is the kind of faith that it takes to Save, and to Serve, and to grow into the greatness of being what the Father wants His children to be.*

- when Matthew records this message he emphasizes this point – Matthew 18:3 – “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

- even deeper than that, though, this child is a representative of every believer when they are first born again . . .

- 1st Corinthians 1:30, the Apostle characterized the Corinthian believers as “babes in Christ.”

*Note – That being said in the immediate context, our Lord has his eyes on those who are willing to exercise child-like faith in him – that’s the circle of people that Jesus has in mind

2.) The Problem that Jesus Has in Mind

a.) “shall offend one of this little ones”

(1.) Offend – “Skandalizo” or “scandalon” – Literally means to cause them to stumble, or cause them to fall – and it is the idea of causing them to fall into sin.

*Note – the fullest idea of causing someone to stumble, or a new believer, is the idea of working in their lives against the will and work of God . . .

- to influence them in the wrong direction

*Note – Now mind you, this is one of the most overlooked passages in scripture but it has one of the farthest reaching impacts –

- The most vulnerable people in the world are “children” – ready to be shaped, taught, molded and helped –

Your influence has no greater impact than it does on children, highly impressionable . . .

Parents – “The Lord said, I am watching you! – Are you contributing to the wrong priorities in the lives of your children? – Are you leading them to stumble, teaching them to sin, encouraging them in the wrong things, encouraging them in worldly things? – Are you working AGAINST the Word, the Will, and the Spirit of God?

- Are you encouraging them to Follow their Dreams, or follow the Lord? (No man can serve two masters)

- the Lord is speaking of the problem of people leading sinful children, into becoming sinning adults!

b.) Deeper still He is speaking of causing other believers, and new believers – who are young in the faith, new their walk, impressionable, eager, willing to learn, to comfort them in their sin, and contribute to

encouraging them in the wrong direction.

*Note – All of that being said, take a good, long, steady, and deep look into what the Lord Jesus is saying . . .

- He is measuring the impact, and the influence we have on the children under us, and the new believers around us – He is measuring whether or not we are aiding and abetting them in their sin, or whether we are aiding and abetting Him in their lives . . .

B. In our Ruin from Indifference

1.) “And if thy hand offend thee; cut it off . . .”

a.) In verse 42, He is speaking of our sin in their life – in verse 43 He is speaking of our sin in our lives, and what’s more, our indifference to it . . .

*Note – The default picture of what Jesus is painting is of someone who’s “hand” is leading his life into scandal, into sin, and he is doing nothing about it . . .

2.) He goes on to talk about the eye, and the foot . . .

- a.) the hand
- b.) the foot
- c.) the eye

- What you do, where you go, and what you see – He is speaking symbolically of what you do, where you go, and what you see . . .

- Now He is not warning against having two hands, feet, and eyes – He is warning the picture of the man who, What he’s doing, where he’s going, and what he’s seeing, is causing him to sin, and he is doing nothing about it . . .

- When I say sin, when He says sin, He is using His dictionary . . .

{ - *Note This A little insight into sin– When an issue, choice, decision, action, or question of priority arises, never ask

someone the question, “Do you see anything wrong with that?” Furthermore, Don’t say, “Well I don’t see anything wrong with that?”

- What you see, and what I see, is not where right or wrong comes from . . . It is not what We see, but what He says!}

- But that being said, Jesus is not painting the picture of a man who has no sin in his life . . . He is painting the picture of a man who is doing little or NOTHING about the sin in his life, and treats it like a minor infraction, rather than High Treason against the King!

- In Ezekiel 8:17 – “Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.”

Know this, and know this for good, to know of sin, and do nothing about it carries the same weight of blue-ribbon idolatry. – Putting the branch to the nose was a ceremony in one of the Satanic false gods of those days.

- James 4:17 – “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is “hamarteah” (Sin – Offence)

- If What you are doing, and where you are going, and what you are watching is causing sin to flourish in your life, and you are doing nothing about it . . . you are multiplying that offense.

*Note – Now all of that being said, the Lord God is not merely measuring the sin in our lives – but the influence of that sin, as well as our reaction to that sin . . .

- Never get the idea that all that gets measured, is whether or not you are a good little boy or girl all by yourself – *Sin is not just the deeds we've done but it measures into the damage we do as well as our discernment of it, and our demeanor towards it . . .*"

II. The Misery of Sin's Consequence

*note – Here again, the Lord lays out for all to hear the ultimate consequence of sin.

*Note – Now I'm going to overstate the obvious – It's a sin to sin. It's a sin to export sin, and It's a sin to do nothing about sin – and all of that sin is piling up deep and wide, and Jesus explains the degree of its ultimate consequence . . .

A. It is Worse than Dying

1.) Note what Jesus says about those who spread sin around . . .

a.) "It is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and were cast into the sea."

- Jesus just how bad can the consequences be? – "You'd rather be tied to a rock at the bottom of the ocean than face those consequences . . ."

*Note – Now here what Jesus just said – "If you could see what I can see, you'd rather be tied to a one ton stone and thrown in the deepest ocean, than the consequences I see for aiding and abetting sin in the lives of others."

B. It is the Way of the Damned

1.) Three times the Lord expresses the warning of being cast – "into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

a.) Gehenna

(1.) the place of waste – with all of it's atmosphere

(2.) the place of wickedness – where pagans put live children in the fire of the altars

*note – There is one other reference in the Old Testament that the Jews were familiar with concerning the valley of hinnom, or the visible Gehenna before their eyes – Jeremiah 7:31 – "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart."

- Tophet – what's that? One commentarian put it this way – "Topheth, meaning "place of fire," was a site of worship for Molech; however, it's primitive root word "toph" meant "playing or beating a percussion instrument such as a timbrel, tambourine, or drum". Scholars believe that it was possible that percussion instruments were used to drown out the sounds of infants as they were burned alive."

- Some even reference this as the Valley of the Drums

b.) Fire –

*note the description of the fire – "it never shall be quenched" – or extinguished – the perpetual, eternal burning of the wasted life, and wicked refusal to submit and repent . . .

c.) Worms

(1.) Literally the Grub, or the Maggot, or a rendition of both.

(2.) – It too never dies

*Note – Wherever you find rotting, decaying, waste, you find maggots and grubs, devouring, devouring, devouring, devouring,

- Listen to God's Word about the destiny of the devil himself – and as we said last week – to the farmer goes the fruit, to the criminal goes the punishment –
Isaiah 14:11 – “Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: ***the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.*** – And Jesus said – They will not die!

- That is the ultimate destination of all natural once born men and women who do nothing about being a sinner . . . who do nothing about the sins in their life . . .

III. The Measure of Sin's Avoidance

*Note – Now note to what degree the Lord calls men to avoid sin. One preacher called this “Actual Discipleship” or “Radical Discipleship.”

A. Have the Right set of Values – “It is better”

- 1.) Three times, the Lord repeated what is better for us . . .
 - a.) it is better to be one handed and saved, than two handed and lost . . .
 - b.) it is better to be one footed and saved than having two feet and lost . . .
 - c.) it is better to be half blind and all saved, than full sighted and all lost.

*Note – All boiled down the Right set of Values is to value what is Eternal, and What is Spiritual, What is Biblical more than anything physical, material, or earthly circumstantial . . .

- It is the NEXT life, not this one! It is what is Eternal, not what is Temporary – It is Dying for Now that we might have life Later.

Jim Elliott the famous Missionary that was killed by the Auca Indians who most Majestically said – “He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep, in order to have what he cannot lose.”

B. Have A Real Will of Submission

- 1.) “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off”
- 2.) “If thy foot offend thee, cut it off”
- 3.) “If they eye offend thee, pluck it out”

*Note – It is not a sin to have two hands – two feet or two eyes.

- It is not a sin to enjoy life, be entertained, be hard working, successful, prosperous or fruitful . . . until it is the source of stumbling . . .

I hope you enjoy your job – until your job is in the Lord's way.

I hope you enjoy your friends – until your friends get in the Lord's way.

I hope you enjoy sports, entertainment, relaxation – Until it starts telling you where to spend your time, your talents, and your treasures – rather than the Lord.

*Note – Here is a good question to ask yourself – Who tells you where to spend your Time, Talent, and Treasures? That's your god.

*Note – Preacher the Lord doesn't expect me to revolve my life around Him, He wants me to live and succeed in this world . . . The Appalachian word for that is Hogwash –

- You're right, the Lord doesn't expect your life to *revolve* around Him; He wants your life *returned* to Him at the expense of anything and everything that gets in His way.

Preacher – No one can do that? The Lord does not expect that degree of fanaticism, and radical followship!

Let me read to you what the Bible records about the Unnamed Disciples and how those Unnamed Disciples stand as witnesses either for us, or against us . . .

“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and

imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: ... Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hebrews 11:36-12:2

They did that, and could do that BECAUSE they trusted Jesus the Man, the Lord, the Savior, and they trusted Him with their SOULS, with the Kind of Trust that just said, "I'll obey you – no matter what it costs me."

Conclusion - IV. The Moment of Sin's Repentance

*Note – Jesus closes with two different objects being "salted."

- Every One – with fire
- Every Sacrifice – with Salt

The metaphors for salt, and sacrifices, and salting run through the Bible in varying contexts. So much that there is no consensus among scholars about which ones the Lord had in mind.

- The act of "Salting" though, throughout the scripture is associated with preservation, and flavoring . . . whether it is in the Levitical system, or the common dietary practices . . .

In verse 48 when Jesus says, "Where Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." – He is quoting Isaiah 66:24 – "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

- (I believe -) The Every One of verse 49 speaks of all the "Theirs" in verse 48...

- By Contrast – "While they are salted with Fire" – Preserved, and their smoke ascendeth up forever as a sweet savor unto the Lord

- Those who are considered the "Sacrifice" are salted with Salt, as the preservative, and flavoring of the gospel in this world.

- Jesus had already told the disciples they were the "Salt of the earth."

- Romans 12:1 – "I beseech ye brethren by the mercies of God that ye present yourselves a living sacrifice"

What all of that means – is that Now is the Moment of Repentance – Not then – but Now.

It is Salt now, or Fire later!

Warren Wiersbe – In Mark 9:49–50, Jesus used the concept of "living sacrifices" to illustrate His point (see Rom. 12:1–2). The sacrifice ends up on the altar and is consumed by the fire. Would you rather endure the fires of hell as a lost sinner or the purifying fires of God as a sacrifice for His glory? Remember, Satan promises you glory now, but the pain

comes later. Jesus calls us to suffering now, and then we will enjoy the glory.

If the Disciples being the Salt of the earth failed to be that preservative, what then is left? – (vs 50)

Have Salt – as a Sacrifice

Have Peace among yourselves as Sacrifices together!

