The Reality of Hell

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**Foundational Scripture:** Mk. 9:43-48

**Intro**:

* There are few subjects that are as problematic and churning to the soul like that of the subject of Hell. For years, many have wondered if Hell really exists. The very idea of Hell has often been a controversial topic for many who acknowledge the existence of the Almighty God. It is certainly a hot button issue that has often caused divisions among people in the religious world. Generally speaking, most people tend to believe more concerning the reality of Heaven than that of Hell. It is much easier to swallow the thought of a place where things are peaceful, painless, restful, glorious etc. than that which is painful, dark, tumultuous and utterly miserable. And the reason we feel that way is because we were created by a God who Himself is a God of peace, glory, comfort and safety. The fact that we feel that way should indicate that there is nothing normal about pain, suffering, injustice and all the bad we have and we see. But let’s investigate the idea of Hell by asking two key questions this morning:
1. **Is Hell a real place or just a myth?**
	1. We mentioned earlier that is easier to swallow the thought of a place where everything is great (Heaven) because we were created with the natural inclinations to desire such things (cf. Ecc. 3:11). We long for Heaven because we were created by the God of Heaven who Himself is perfect and absolutely great.
	2. On the other side of that spectrum, it’s harder to swallow the thought of some place where there is never ending suffering, pain, destruction, death etc. And the reason we have a hard time swallowing this is because its unnatural.
	3. Therein lies the key to the reality of Hell. In the beginning, the bible tells us that everything was good and everything was just as God intended it to be (Gen. 1-2). But sin entered the world and what was previously good and natural was now changed and reversed to that which is evil and unnatural (Gen. 3; 6; Rom. 1:26-27).
	4. From Gen 3. and onward, the cycle of sin keeps turning and turning and it just seems to get worse as it goes along. Along with sin, consequences follow because its unnatural. And that which is unnatural will undoubtedly lead to greater and graver consequences.
	5. The bible tells us explicitly and repeatedly that God is light. He is sinless. He is utterly holy and righteous and where He is, sin cannot be. No exceptions whatsoever (cf. Isa. 6:1-3; Hab. 1:13; 1 Jn. 1:5; Rev. 4:8).
	6. So, because of His righteousness and holiness, He judges and punishes those who sin. Sin is a choice, a conscientious decision made to follow through on the unnatural, evil desires (Jam. 1:13-15). Sin is not natural and it should never be condoned as a part of our biological make up.
	7. No one has to tell us that evil and wrong must be held accountable. There has to be some form of justice for the bad things and bad people we observe in the world. While our courts and systems of justice do grant justice and accountability, it’s not always perfect nor fair.
	8. This is why the bible tells us there must be a Hell. Hell is a place prepared by God not primarily for us but for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). The devil is representative of everything unjust, unfair and unnatural about this world and its experiences.
	9. And because we give in to his temptations and offers to commit sin, people will end up there because you cannot have injustice, evil and everything unnatural go on with impunity.
	10. God will bring all of it to an end and Hell is that place. Hell is described as the place of eternal suffering where there is an unquenchable fire and it’s perfected to be incredibly painful and disgusting in every which way imaginable to the human mind (Matt. 25:30; Mk. 9:43-48).
	11. That there is such a place called Hell is very plausible given the pattern of sin and injustice we see in the bible and we continue to see in the world around us. We know this can’t go on forever and ultimately it takes a combination of seeing the evidence and having faith to conclude Hell is real and it’s not a place anyone should ever desire to be.
2. **Does the reality of Hell negate the love of God?**
	1. One of the most popular questions asked concerning this idea of Hell is: **How can a loving God can send people to a place of eternal punishment forever and ever?** Surely, He would not even think of doing something like that.
	2. The argument is often made that there doesn’t need to be a Hell because if God is all-powerful and truly loves us then He could just end all sin period and everyone gets to go to Heaven. The problem with that argument is that He did do that!
	3. God does love us. He loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us on a cross so that we might have hope of eternal life with Him (John 3:16).
	4. If God would allow us to sin and commit evil as we please and we were never held accountable for any of it and people could just receive a pardon to get into Heaven then what purpose did Jesus’ death and resurrection serve?
	5. The other aspect of that argument is that we would be watering down God’s love. The reality of Hell doesn’t negate the love of God because one of the most important aspects of love is discipline. You cannot properly love someone or someone without justice and discipline being involved. Love is never separated from these things (Heb. 12:4-11).
	6. If anything, the reality of Hell shows God is loving! Love is about doing what is right and bringing into judgment those who have committed wrong even if it’s the most unpopular thing to do and the hardest thing to do.
	7. Hell shows God is loving because injustice will be punished. Sin will have an end. The devil will face the punishment he deserves. A lot of people that question Hell and God’s love are the ones who are most fearful of the idea of it because of their sin and the evil they are involved in.
	8. If our lives is what God would have it to be, then we would have nothing to worry about as far as Hell is concerned. In fact, the more and more we grow closer to God, the more we respect the idea of Hell because that means there is justice for sin.
	9. There is justice for evil and all of God’s enemies and the enemies of the Christians throughout human history. All the evidence both in the bible and in the world points to the conclusion that Hell doesn’t negate the love of God but it in fact solidifies it!

**Conclusion:** Hell is real. It is just as real as Heaven. It is a place of eternal suffering and horrors the likes no man or creature has ever experienced. And what makes Hell so bad is that God is not there. God does not want to send anyone to Hell. He truly does love and care for every single person but that won’t change the fact that we must choose to willingly serve and obey Him. Jesus warned in Matthew 7:13-14, *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*