

Hard Questions

Can God be Love and Send People to Hell?

God is both love and justice (Luke 16:19-31). There are countless truths in Scripture that are overwhelmingly good and encouraging to our hearts and minds. But there are also other true, good, and necessary Scriptures that feel more serious than inspiring, more sobering than encouraging. One of these sobering truths – that Jesus specifically teaches – is the existence of hell and eternal separation from God. While justice for serious atrocities seems right and proper, hell seems extreme for decent people who never embrace Jesus. According to the Bible, we are *all* sinful, separated from God, and destined to face the wrath and justice of God (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Only through Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross can anyone escape the wrath of God.

GETTING STARTED

From the 2021 annual report presented this weekend, what things stuck out to you? What was highlighted that you possibly want to be a part of or support in this coming year? See the annual report at beltway.org/annualreport.

GO DEEPER

1. When reading or hearing Luke 16:19-31, how difficult is it to envision Jesus telling this story about the torment of hell? What makes the idea of hell, God's wrath, and eternal separation from Him so challenging for many people?
2. From 2 Timothy 4:2-3, what kinds of things do others want to hear to suit their own desires?
3. In Ephesians 2:1-3, what does it mean that we are or were children of wrath, dead in our trespasses and sins?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. How much do you wrestle with the reality of hell and the justice of God?
2. The rich man in Luke 16:19-31 is identified only by his wealth. His faith was entwined with his possessions. To what is your identity possibly tied? What do you think people around would say your identity is centered around?
3. We cannot make anyone embrace Jesus, but we can point them towards Jesus through the way we love and serve, and we can share with people the message of the good news of Jesus. What are some ways that you are showing (or could show) hope to those around you?

PRACTICE IT NOW

Spend time as a group thanking God for the reality of heaven and hell, and for salvation and eternal life through Jesus. Thank Him for the gracious gift of Jesus taking on the punishment that we deserved. Take time as a group to identify and pray for individuals in your family, friend group, co-workers, etc. that you want to see saved and accept Jesus as their King so they will be in heaven too.