



“1 NUMBER CHANGED EVERYTHING”

“The Greatest Exclusion”

John 3:16

December 22, 2013 AM Worship

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT HELL

- Hell is a real and literal place
- 13% of Jesus’ teachings refer to eternal judgment and hell.
- Two-thirds of his parables relate to resurrection and judgment.
- There is no second chance or an opportunity to change one’s mind.
- Hell will last forever, no vacation or breaks, it is for eternity.
- Hell was created for Satan and his demons, not people.
- Hell is a place people choose, not a place God sends people.

WHAT BELIEVERS ARE EXCLUDED FROM...

- _____
- _____
- _____

“Thanks to Jesus Christ, this earth can be the nearest you come to hell. But apart from Christ, this earth will be the nearest you come to heaven.” Max Lucado

OUR RESPONSE:

1. Great news today – it’s the greatest news... you don’t have to perish, you can have eternal life! You can make that decision today, there could be no greater Christmas Gift than this!! Receive that gift of salvation TODAY! Remember it is as simple as **ABC!** **Admit** to God you are a sinner, **Ask** for His forgiveness, **Believe** Jesus is God’s Son, **Confess** Him as Savior & **Commit** Your Life to Him as Lord (the Boss).
2. In order for you to grow and be all that the Lord is calling you to be, you need to be plugged in to a church. If you do not have a church home, and God has called you to be a part of **Petal FBC**, then step across the line today and join! We need you and you need us!
3. Christ Follower...Spend time rejoicing in Jesus for conquering Hell, Death and the Grave for you. He paid the price so that we don’t have to pay it. We are excluded!!
4. Allow this sobering truth to motivate us to be sharing the good news of Christmas and the cross and resurrection with those who are lost both right here in Petal, MS, North American and to the ends of the earth! There has never been a greater hour nor more lost people living than there are right now!
5. Let’s be motivated to pray more than ever before, and give more than ever before and be willing to sacrifice and go so that our church can help spread the good news both here and to the ends of the earth.
6. How will your obituary read? Will it be like Fred’s or will it read like Jim’s? Will we treasure the things of this world and reject Christ or will we invest in that which will last forever?

JOHN 3:16 THE NUMBERS OF HOPE

“The Greatest Exclusion”

John 3:16

December 22, 2013 AM Service

FOR GOD - *THE GREATEST GOD*
SO LOVED – *THE GREATEST LOVE*
THE WORLD - *THE GREATEST NUMBER*
THAT HE GAVE – *THE GREATEST GIVER*
HIS ONLY SON – *THE GREATEST GIFT*
THAT WHOEVER – *THE GREATEST INVITATION*
WOULD BELIEVE IN HIM – *THE GREATEST BELIEF*

To be excluded from something. That is no fun. It means we got left out, we were not picked, we were too little or too old, not tall enough, not a member, whatever. Many times it is painful

But today we will talk about the greatest exclusion of all times, something we should all want to be excluded from, hell itself.

I want to preach on a subject that will shock some of us, especially at Christmas and in fact I remember having this conversation with my Dad – he was teaching a SS lesson at Christmas on this same topic and we talked about how appropriate it really was – the greatest exclusion – exclude from what? Hell – the most awful thing we can imagine!

Perish is not a word we would often think about at Christmas. We are thinking about life, the newness of it most of the time at Christmas. The birth of the newborn baby. But as we often realize that as life is beginning, death is also happening. You go to the hospital and in the same visit someone is passing from this life to the next and the next visit someone is having a new baby. The rhythm and cycle of life continues.

But you know, what a great time to consider both life and death. Really it is the greatest news of all, what began in the manger is that you & I can miss hell & make heaven because of Jesus’ supreme sacrifice.

The word perish should make the sinner tremble. It is a revelation of the other side of God’s character. He is not only the God of immeasurable love but also the God of infinite holiness. The word perish is to receive God’s final eternal judgment. Perish comes from the passive form of the Greek word *apolyimi* meaning to be destroyed or to be utterly lost.

The word perish used by the disciples in [Matthew 8:25](#) when they awoke Jesus and said, “[Lord save us or we will perish.](#)” It is also translated destroy when Joseph is warned in a dream to take Jesus to Egypt because Herod was seeking to destroy Jesus. We’ve all seen people destroy their bodies with drugs or alcohol, sex out of marriage, diseases that arises from these decisions. But the judgment of God on sin means that sin is allowed to complete it’s work beyond the grave by destroying the soul!. The soul does not perish like the body; the soul is immortal. Sinners take with them into eternity those unquenchable thirsts, terrible passions and appetites, mad cravings and inflamed desires, fierce longings and furious hates, lusts and loathings, white-hot temper and spin-chilling fear. These will continue to ravage the soul and will never be satisfied or stilled. They don’t even ask to leave or be transferred – they become even more hardened than ever!

There is an appointment that we all must keep, we won’t be early nor will be late, it will happen for all of us, and none of us know where our turn will come nor anyone else’s for that matter. The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us “[there is a time to be born and a time to die.](#)”

[Hebrews 9:27](#) reminds us “[And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,](#)” (NASU)

We will have to face death, but the great promise that Christmas begins culminating in the cross is that we don’t have to perish. Die yes, but perish no. Our bodies die, but our souls won’t perish.

The Lord even at this moment offers the invitation by the millions. That Greatest Invitation is being extended in so many ways. Through the words of a preacher, through the kindness of a grandparents, through the tempest of a tsunami. Through a funeral where He cautions, Life is fragile, and through a sickness we are reminded that our days are numbered. Yet we often live with no thought in mind that we will live on this earth forever so it seems. And we are shocked almost every time when someone’s life on this earth comes to and end.

But the real question that has to be answered as we have looked at this amazing verse, is what will we do with its truth. For we will look and see that what we do with Jesus has everything to do with eternity. Most want to talk about heaven and most Americans believe in heaven and that they will go there but not near as many believe in hell and most think they will never go there.

We don't preach about hell very often. In fact that only time hell is mentioned in a movie or in someone conversation of that was a hell of a steak, you did a hell of a job minimizing the seriousness of this place called hell. We laugh about it, ignore it, don't think about it, yet the truth is still there. The only time someone comes close is someone screaming for a person to go to hell.

Yet, we must face the music this morning and the reality about hell.

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT HELL

- **Hell is a real and literal place, the Bible is clear.** It is not some fictitious place that exists in people's mind or some fairytale.
- **13% of Jesus' teachings refer to eternal judgment and hell.**
- **Two-thirds of his parables relate to resurrection and judgment.**
- **There is no second chance or an opportunity to change one's mind.** We don't die and then get to decide, it is too late.
- **Hell will last forever, no vacation or breaks, it is for eternity.** there will be no missionary journeys to hell and no holiday excursions to heaven.
- **Hell was created for Satan and his demons, not people.** Because of rebellion and refusal to acknowledge God as Lord. He was kicked out of heaven and there hell was created for him and his angels.
- **There will be no atheists in hell.** All will believe and acknowledge God whether they want to or not. Yet they won't seek God either!
- **Hell is a place people choose, not a place God sends people.**
Why is that? Because people volunteer. God simply honors their rebellious choice. **"Hell is the ultimate expression of God's high regard for the dignity of man. He has never forced us to choose him, even when that means we would choose hell."** Lucado

All over hell's porch God has wrapped with caution tape and posted a million red flags outside the entrance. **"To descend its stairs, you'd have to cover your ears, blindfold your eyes, and most of all ignore the epic sacrifice of history: Christ, in God's hell on humanity's cross, crying out, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"** Over the doors of hell, God has posted a Huge Do Not Enter Sign through his only Son Jesus Christ dying on Calvary's Cross." Max Lucado

Jesus wasn't cruel, but Jesus was blunt. He left no questions. It is presented in a crystal clear fashion, even right here in John 3:16. We simply have to respond to the truth we have heard over these last several weeks. But there is

some great news. The person who has become a believer, the person who has placed their life in the hands of Jesus Christ, admitting their sin, believing in Jesus as God's Son, etc. and confessing that sin, and committing our life to the Lord, great news this Christmas, we are excluded from the worst thing possible, hell itself.

We can rejoice in that truth today!! The choice is something we need to make today. For it may be too late tomorrow.

ILLUS: Newspaper Obituary Christian versus non-Christian

The lost man will hear, "I never knew you, depart from me. Matt 7:23
The saved man will hear, 'Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your master.' Matthew 25:21 (NASB)

WHAT BELIEVERS ARE EXCLUDED FROM... What we can escape!

- **Believers are Excluded From Eternal Suffering**
They would wish to die, but they can't because the suffering will that intense. Suffering beyond our wildest belief. Evil is left unchecked and it goes to the limit and beyond.
- **Believers are Excluded From Eternal Sorrow**
Sorrow that we cannot comprehend, grief over what they didn't do in this life to be prepared for the next, for hearing those invitations over and over again to find Christ. Yet one thing in hell won't happen, they will still not repent. They still curse God. (Rev. 16:9) Lazarus and the rich man, he never asks for a transfer, just for relief.
- **Believers are Excluded From Eternal Separation**
This is by far the worst part of heaven. Separated from God, His goodness, hope, and heaven. They will be outside of these things. They will not hear the voice of God anymore.

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ILLUS: Logan Video Clip

Closing ILLUS: Page 101 from Lucado

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1. Great news today – it's the greatest news... you don't have to perish, you can have eternal life! You can make that decision today, there could be no greater Christmas Gift than this!! Receive that gift of salvation TODAY! Remember it is as simple as ABC! Admit to God you are a sinner, Ask for His forgiveness, Believe Jesus is God's Son, Confess Him as Savior & Commit Your Life to Him as Lord (the Boss).
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4. Allow this sobering truth to motivate us to be sharing the good news of Christmas and the cross and resurrection with those who are lost both right here in Petal, MS, North American and to the ends of the earth! There has never been a greater hour nor more lost people living than there are right now! **An atheist who denies the existence of God and thereby the existence of hell once said this: If you're a Christian and really believe what you say you believe, you must really hate others if you know where they're going without Christ and don't tell them.**
5. Let's be motivated to pray more than ever before, and give more than ever before and be willing to sacrifice and go so that our church can help spread the good news both here and to the ends of the earth.
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