

CROSSROADS BIBLE CHURCH

GROWTH GROUP CURRICULUM

October 14, 2018

"SENT" - Week 3

For more information or to join a Growth Group,
please visit our Growth Group page online at cbclife.org/groups
or call the Church Office at 408.288.4115.

Reminder: Don't feel the need to get to every question. Use this resource as a guide but feel free to ask questions that may be related to the topic but have some special applicability to your group.

Quick Review

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

This past Sunday we dealt with (in small part) with some brand theological truths that have been notoriously difficult to understand. If there is a question that comes up in your group or an area where you need clarification please feel free to email Pastor Jeff at jeff@cbclife.org so he or one of our Elders can come alongside you.

2. In 30 seconds or less, write down five words you would use to describe God.

If you were asked this same question five years ago do you think your answer would have been any different?

My Story

1. On Sunday, we learned about the judgment of God. Judging is something we all do. Can you recall a situation where you made a judgment about a person (fairly or unfairly)?
2. Seeing God as a judge has fallen out of fashion for many who want to see God as a "God of love." Why do you think people struggle with the notion that God will judge us?

On Sunday Pastor Jeff quoted Timothy Keller who has written on the importance of understanding God's judgment. Here is the quote from Sunday.

"There are a lot of people who struggle mightily with this whole idea. They say, "If God is a God of love, he doesn't send people to hell. If God is a God of judgment, he can't be a God of love. I can't reconcile the two things." Yet the Bible insists that not only is God a God both of love and wrath—not only do those two things not conflict with each other, but they actually establish each other. One without the other is nonsense. One without the other is meaningless. If you actually try to somehow extract, remove surgically, excise the Christian message of the wrath and judgment of God, what you actually have is nothing left at all."

- Timothy Keller

Digging Deeper

1. This weekend, we heard that because of God's wrath towards sin, everyone is under the judgment of God. There's no question that the topic of judgment can be uncomfortable or confusing to many people and these days, it's hardly politically correct. That's why it's important for us to take a look at what Jesus and the Bible actually say about it. How does the Bible describe the reality and consequences of judgment in each of the following verses?

Ephesians 5:6, Matthew 25:41, Ezekiel 7:8

Ephesians 5:6 (NIV)

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

(Here it will be helpful to read the whole unit of thought [vv. 3-6]. God's wrath is falling on people who are engaging in sinful behavior, even though they had been deceived!)

Matthew 25:41 (NIV)

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

(Here again context is important. The imagery is horrific but we need to be cognoscenti of the fact that God's wrath is falling on those who neglected the poor.)

Ezekiel 7:8 (NIV)

8

I am about to pour out my wrath on you
and spend my anger against you.
I will judge you according to your conduct
and repay you for all your detestable practices.

(The heart behind this verse is that God will not simply be able to "sweep it under the carpet" in regard to our disobedience. If God is perfect, then He must be a perfect judge, who will judge perfectly. God is Holy so He must punish sin, but, He is also infinitely loving so He bore the penalty himself.)

2. Modern people in our culture often revile the idea of God's judgment, along with the concept of Hell. The Bible teaches that Hell is real. Read the following passages that describe Hell and consider the questions that follow.

Matthew 25:41,46, Matthew 5:22; 18:8-9, Matt 25:30; (cf. Jude 6,7,13,)

Matthew 25:41 (NIV)

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Matthew 25:46 (NIV)

46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Matthew 5:22 (NIV)

22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Matthew 18:8-9 (NIV)

8 If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

Matthew 25:30 (NIV)

30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Jude 6-7 (NIV)

6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. 7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Jude 13 (NIV)

13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

- Based on these passages, see if you can describe Hell in your own words.

The goal for this question is for us to realize that Hell is a real place and it is horrible in every sense. You may have some in your group who question whether the "flames of Hell" are actual or metaphorical. Most Protestant theologians hold that the imagery we have of Hell is symbolic of suffering. One commentator said it like this "There may not be actual flames in Hell as it is probably something far worse." The point you want to ensure everyone know is that Hell is real and the people who receive the wrath of God are going there.

- In addition to "eternal fire," what other imagery is used to describe Hell? Punishment (Mt 25:46), banishment (Mt 25:30), darkness (Mt 25:30), bondage (Jd 6),

3. On Sunday, we learned that God's judgment, as frightening as it is, is actually good news. Read the following verses and see if you can find any evidence that supports this idea.

Exodus 34:6-7, Isaiah 53:1-10, Psalm 103:12, Hebrews 9:11-14

Exodus 34:6-7 (NIV)

6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

Isaiah 53:1-10 (NIV)

53

Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2

He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3

He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4

Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

6

We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,

and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

8

By oppression[a] and judgment he was taken away.

Yet who of his generation protested?

For he was cut off from the land of the living;

for the transgression of my people he was punished.[b]

9

He was assigned a grave with the wicked,

and with the rich in his death,

though he had done no violence,

nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,

and though the Lord makes[c] his life an offering for sin,

he will see his offspring and prolong his days,

and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

Psalm 103:12 (NIV)

12

as far as the east is from the west,

so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Hebrews 9:11-14 (NIV)

11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here,[a] he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining[b] eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

- Based on these texts, how would you help someone who is struggling to reconcile God's mercy and his judgment?

There is a common objection to faith in God which goes like this: "If God was good He wouldn't send people to Hell." One response could be; God is both loving and just, He has to punish sin because he is just, but offers to pay the penalty Himself with Christ's sacrifice once and for all.

- Why is a comprehensive understanding of God's judgment important in coming to faith in Christ?

There could be several acceptable answers to this. A few of them could be:

1. Hell is real and for the those who discount Jesus are going there.
2. Jesus took the very penalty that we deserved. On the Cross He got the silence of God when He cried out towards heaven and the Father did not intervene.
3. God loves us so much that He was willing to give up His Son so we would never have to pay that price.

- Why is this important after coming to faith in Christ?

There could be several acceptable answers tot his question as well.

1. We never outgrow the Gospel which has at its heart the propitiation (1 Jn 2:2).
2. Our eternal security can give is an intractable psychological strength to face life's challenges.
3. The prospect of God's wrath should compel us towards urgency in sharing our faith with those who do not know Christ.

- Exodus 34 says God is "slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Can you think of a reason why it might be important for believers to remember God's patience?

God's "loving kindness" and patience far outshine his wrath in the Scriptures. God is patient with us as we struggle to conform to the image of Jesus. The process of sanctification takes a lifetime and a day. This side of heaven no one is without sin, but God is merciful, giving us every chance to repent of our sin and follow Christ.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking back at this week's teaching and study, is there one thing you'd especially like to remember this week?
2. Do you have any prayer requests for your group?