

The Glory and the Fire

August 13, 2006

Mark 9:43-48 (NLT)

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better to enter heaven with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of hell with two hands. [44] [45] If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better to enter heaven with only one foot than to be thrown into hell with two feet. [46] [47] And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. It is better to enter the Kingdom of God half blind than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, [48] 'where the worm never dies and the fire never goes out.'

I want to talk to you today about heaven and about hell.

According to the Bible, there is a place called hell and there is a place called heaven and every person on earth, including you and me, will spend eternity in one of those two places.

The Bible has a lot to say about heaven and it also has quite a bit to say about hell. Jesus talked about heaven and hell. He used the word “heaven” 113 times in His teachings that are recorded in the New Testament and He used the word “hell” 15 times.

I have already read to you some of the things Jesus said about hell.

Let me read a few more of the things that Jesus said about hell.

Matthew 5:22 (NLT)

....if you curse someone, you are in danger of **the fires of hell.**

Matthew 10:28 (NLT)

"Don't be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, **who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**

Sometimes, Jesus used other words to describe hell. He called it “**outer darkness**”.

Matthew 8:12 (NLT)

But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be cast into **outer darkness**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 22:13 (NLT)

Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind him hand and foot and throw him out into the **outer darkness**, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Jesus calls it "**eternal fire**" and "**eternal punishment**".

Matthew 25:41 (NLT)

"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the **eternal fire** prepared for the Devil and his demons!'

Matthew 25:46 (NLT)

And they will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous will go into **eternal life**."

The Greek word used in that verse for "**eternal**" is "**aionios**".
(ah ee o`nee os).

Jesus used the same word to describe **eternal punishment** and **eternal life**. It means eternal, forever, everlasting. It means that the punishment for those in hell will last as long as the life for those in heaven.

We don't hear much preaching about hell anymore. People don't like to think about it. Some don't even believe that there is a place called hell. They believe that there is a wonderful place called heaven, and most people think that they are going to go to heaven, but a lot of people are not sure that there is a place called hell and most people don't think that if there is such a place, they are going to end up there.

But Jesus said that a lot of people are going to end up in hell.

He said.....

Matthew 7:13 (NLT)

"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose the easy way. [14] But the gateway to life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.

For some people, it's the goodness of God and the prospect of going to heaven that causes them to repent.

Romans 2:4 (NKJV)

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

But for others, it's the awful prospect of spending eternity in hell that causes them to repent.

2 Cor. 5:10-11 (NKJV)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. [11] Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;

Four weeks from tonight, we are going to present the most powerful production that I have ever seen to persuade men and women, boys and girls to repent. Many of you have seen it. Some of you got saved because you came to "**The Glory and the Fire**" production.

It is such a powerful and effective tool of evangelism because it makes those who watch it face up to the reality that each one of them will spend eternity in either heaven or hell.

Everyone in the play dies. And that is not fun to watch. But death is a reality that we all must face. You are going to die. I am going to die. And each of us will spend eternity in either heaven or hell. That is a fact! You can choose to ignore it, but that will not change it.

We have had "**The Glory and the Fire**" team here at Elim three times before. This will be the fourth time that we have done it.

The first time we held it over for two weeks and a total of 1300 people responded to the invitation to receive Christ as their Savior.

The second and third times we did it, over 700 people responded each time.

Nothing else that we have ever done has produced that kind of results.

But let me tell you, it did not happen simply because Dean Fransen and his team came to Elim. It happened because the people of Elim got involved.

- It happened because you fasted and prayed for revival.
- It happened because you made a list of names and invited your friends, families and neighbors to come with you.
- You handed out thousands of tickets and put up hundreds of posters.
- You volunteered to be in the drama.
- You volunteered to counsel with those who responded to the invitation.
- You volunteered to follow up on the new converts.

We must do our part again if we want God to do His part again. Our part is to go out and bring them in. His part is to convict them of their sin and cause them to repent.

The Glory and the Fire is not easy to watch.

I remember one lady who got up and walked out to the foyer and sat down out there. One of the ladies from our church went out there and asked her what was wrong and she said, "I don't want to watch that. I don't think God is like that. I don't think God would send a mother to hell who is pleading to stay with her daughter and pleading for mercy.

It's intense! It's hard to watch! It's in your face! It's disturbing! I agree. It is all of those things.

But if you believe the Bible, then you must face the reality that there is a place called hell just as sure as there is a place called heaven, and every person on earth is going to end up in one or the other.

By the way, the lady who walked out, walked back in and gave her heart to the Lord! Praise God!

You see she had her facts wrong. God didn't send the woman in the drama to hell that was pleading to stay with her daughter and pleading for mercy. God gave her every opportunity to be saved and to go to heaven.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The Glory and the Fire is careful to point out that God gives each one an opportunity to get saved.

I don't know if they will do the same scenes this year or not that they have done in the past, but I remember what they did last time.

- One scene was about a group of teenagers who are killed in a car wreck.
- Another scene was about a woman who committed suicide.
- Another one was about a couple of prostitutes.
- Another one was about a famous rock and roll singer.

God didn't send those teenagers who were in the car wreck to hell, or the woman who committed suicide to hell, or those prostitutes to hell, or J.D. Starbuck to hell.

God gave each of them the opportunity to go to heaven.

- The little daughter begged her mother to go to church with her, and her husband begged her to accept Christ as her Savior, but she refused.
- The teenagers who died in the car wreck were told by Frank's uncle, who was a preacher, that Jesus loved them and that they needed to give their hearts to Him, but they just laughed.

- The woman who committed suicide had a sister who told her about Jesus, but she wouldn't listen.
- Those prostitutes were told that very night that they needed to get saved, but they wouldn't listen.
- J.D. Starbuck was told by Bobby Joe Cornstubble that he needed to stop pretending to be a Christian and truly commit his life to Christ but he refused.

The truth is, God wants everyone to get saved and He repeatedly reaches out to each one, but not everyone listens; not every one responds.

There were hundreds who came to "**The Glory and the Fire**", and yet did not respond to God's call. Who are they going to blame if they go to hell?

If anyone goes to hell it won't be because God sent him or her there. It will be because they refused to accept His offer of salvation.

Listen to these familiar words of Christ....

John 3:14-18 (NLT)

And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so I, the Son of Man, must be lifted up on a pole, [15] so that everyone who believes in me will have eternal life.

[16] "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. [17] God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.

[18] "There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God.

The provision for every person's salvation has been provided. When Jesus died on the cross He paid the price in full and He offers eternal life to whosoever will receive it.

John 1:11-12 (NKJV)

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. [12] But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

All you and I can do is to do our best to get the lost to come to “**The Glory and the Fire**” production.

Then it will be up to them to receive Christ or reject Him.

I am calling on each one of you today to join together and put forth a real effort to get the lost to come to this production.

- I am calling on each of you to give sacrificially to help pay for the cost of putting it on.
- I am asking each of you to do your part. If you can act, volunteer to play one of the parts.
- If you have recently started attending our church, we need you to get involved. We need every person who attends Elim to help, to go out to the highways and byways and invite people to come.
- If those that you invite don't have a way to get here, then bring them.
- We also need to fast and pray that God will touch the hearts of those who come. We need to pray that He will open their eyes to the gospel and that they will respond and that their lives will be transformed.

It is truly a matter of life or death and of heaven or hell.

The time is short. We have no idea how much more time we have until it will be too late. We must work as though this is our last chance because it might be.

Heaven is going to be a wonderful place. There is no way that our brains can possibly conceive of just how wonderful and glorious it is going to be.

1 Cor. 2:9 (NLT)

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
and no mind has imagined
what God has prepared
for those who love him."

Hell is going to be horrible. There is no way that we can imagine just how horrible it will be.

Mark 9:43 (NKJV)

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched--

I don't want to go to hell and I don't want anyone else to go there. I certainly don't want any of my family or my friends to go there.

I am going to do everything I can to persuade them to go to heaven.

In the Book of Revelation we read....

Rev. 20:12-15 (NKJV)

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. [13] The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. [14] Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **[15] And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**

The question is, "How does a person get his or her name written in the Book of Life?"

There is only one way.

John 14:6 (NKJV)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Let me ask you today, is your name written down in the Book of Life?

If not, don't wait until the "Glory and the Fire" comes, get your name written in that book right now.

Romans 10:9 (NKJV)

..... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

If you will do that, your name will be written down in the Book of Life.

Give invitation!