

A VOICE FROM HELL

Luke 16:19-31

INTRODUCTION

- Two weeks ago, a 26 year old missionary, John Allen Chau, was martyred by savages on North Sentinel Island.
- What we need in the church today is for men and women to be stirred up with that same zeal to take the gospel to a lost and dying world.
- What is going to move us out of our apathy?
- First and foremost, our love to Christ for redeeming us by His blood should be the prime motivation to witness to the lost.
- Our love to our fellow man should be another motivation.
- Our duty to Christ's command should motivate us further.
- All those should be more than enough to move us to witness; yet too often, we are not moved by these things.
- Imagine if we could open a portal to hell and ask one of the damned there, in between his screams of agony, to speak a motivating word to us on this matter; to tell us what he would wish we might say and do for those who are yet alive that they might not suffer the same eternal judgment he faces. Can you imagine how helpful and motivating that would be?
- Well there is such a record of a voice from hell in Luke chapter 19.
- Hell is real, as much as many contemporary preachers would deny its existence whether explicitly or implicitly (cf. 2 Timothy 4:3-4)
- The Bible teaches that the fire in hell is literal physical fire, not metaphorical.
- Note "flame" (Gk *phlox*) in v24, not "fire".
- There is something powerful in that Biblical word "hell" that pricks the heart and provokes a response from those who hear it.
- Many ask, "How can a loving God send people to a fiery hell to burn forever?"

- The confusion comes from a failure to understand God's holiness, as well as man's sinfulness.
- The difficult question is not "how could God send people to hell", but "how could he love sinners like us and offer us salvation from hell?"
- I'd like us today to look at this rich man, his terrible state, his desire for himself, but more importantly, his desire for those who are still alive.
- He is representative of all those who are in hell right now; knowing what they now know, what do they wish for those who are yet alive?
- Note that the rich man in hell was consumed with his own self-interest, and had no love to Christ or concern for His kingdom.
- His first thought was for himself, as it had been during his life (Luke 16:24)
- But when it became clear there was no escape or relief, his thoughts turned to others (Luke 16:27)
- He desired that one would "testify" to his brethren (Luke 16:28)
- The word for "testify" denotes a solemn and thorough witness; to attest and charge earnestly.

I. TESTIFY OF THE REALITY OF THE SUFFERING (28)

A. We have a duty to warn the wicked

1. It is callous negligence to fail to warn others of coming judgment (Ezekiel 3:17-18)
2. We are to warn them to "flee from the wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7)
3. We are to "save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 23)
4. We are to warn "every man" (Colossians 1:28)

B. Most will not listen but we must warn still

1. Blinded by Satan, most people reject the warnings of the gospel
2. Yet the Christian's commission is to preach the gospel, and leave the results to God (Ezekiel 2:3-5)

3. The damned souls in hell want us to warn their living loved ones about that place

II. TESTIFY REVELATION OF SCRIPTURE (29,31)

- A. All that is needed for man's conversion is available in the word of God
 1. The rich man was under the delusion that sinners would listen to one who returned from the dead
 2. Yet they have a more sure word of prophecy that they reject (2 Peter 1:19)
 3. It is the word of God that converts the soul (Psalms 19:7)
 4. Faith comes by the word of God (Romans 10:17)
 5. We are born again by the word of God (1 Peter 1:23)
- B. The Great Commission calls us to preach the gospel to every creature (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8)
- C. We must be proficient in the word of God
 1. Be ready always to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15)
 2. There are so many false views out there regarding death and the afterlife; we must be able to correct them.

III. TESTIFY REPENTANCE FROM SIN (30)

- A. It was preached throughout the Bible and history
- B. Repentance is necessary for salvation
 1. The conditions for salvation are "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21)
 2. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of life.
 3. Omitting repentance is an incomplete gospel

IV. TESTIFY WITH RELENTLESS STRIVING (30)

- A. We need a burden for souls (1 Corinthians 9:22)

- B. We need a heart like God's (Luke 15:4)
- C. We need a sight and view of harvest of souls around us (John 4:35)
 - 1. Remember that all of us will spend eternity somewhere
 - 2. "If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for." – Charles Spurgeon
 - 3. "A foolish physician he is, and a most unfaithful friend, that will let a sick man die for fear of troubling him; and cruel wretches are we to our friends, that will rather suffer them to go quietly to hell, then we will anger them, or hazard our reputation with them." – Richard Baxter
- D. Trust God to give the increase (1 Corinthians 3:7)

CONCLUSION

- 1. The Christian should need nothing more than the love of Christ to constrain him to fervently witness to the lost (2 Corinthians 5:14)
- 2. But the reality of hell should serve as a further motivation for all Christians to do everything in their power to warn their lost families, friends and all people of the torments that await them unless they repent.
- 3. "If I had my choice, I wouldn't send you to school, I'd send you to Hell for five minutes, and you'd come back real soul winners." (William Booth)
- 4. Are you not thankful that someone cared enough for your soul to warn you of the fires of hell and show you the means of escape through Christ?
- 5. Do you care enough for others to warn them of the eternal misery they will suffer without Christ?
- 6. "This is not a pointless thing – the eternal lives of this tribe are at hand and I can't wait to see them around the throne of God worshipping in their own language as Revelations 7:9-10 states. I love you all and I pray none of you love anything in this world more than Jesus Christ." – John Chau