

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 5 – The Great Verdict – Bible Study Helps

Title: The Great Verdict: We have to talk about hell.

Sermon Summary: This sermon addresses the critical doctrine of hell and God's judgment, emphasizing that every person has an appointment with death followed by judgment. The sermon explains that people must understand they are guilty sinners deserving of hell before they can appreciate their need for a Savior. The message stresses that hell is reasonable, deserved, and eternal - not because God is cruel, but because He is holy, just, and righteous. God's warnings about hell are actually expressions of His mercy and love. The sermon challenges believers to boldly share the gospel, including the uncomfortable truth about hell, so that people can understand what Jesus Christ has saved them from. The sermon emphasizes that witnessing is an act of love, not offense, and that silence about eternal judgment is the truly unloving response.

Key Points:

- Everyone has an appointment with death, and after death comes God's judgment (Hebrews 9:27)
- God will judge the world in righteousness, and the verdict for sinners is guilty
- Hell is reasonable because a good judge must punish evil and sin
- Hell is deserved because all sin is against an infinitely holy God
- Hell is eternal, conscious torment with no hope, relief, or escape
- The seriousness of a crime is determined by who is offended - sins against holy God deserve eternal punishment
- Jesus spoke more about hell than heaven, emphasizing its reality
- Warning people about hell is an act of God's mercy and love, not cruelty
- People must understand what they're being saved from to appreciate Jesus Christ
- Silence about judgment and hell is unloving; the loving thing is to warn people
- Christians are called to be ambassadors who warn people before judgment comes
- The gospel becomes beautiful when people understand they deserve hell but Jesus Christ paid their penalty with His own blood

Scripture Reference:

- Genesis 18:25 - "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"
- Hebrews 9:27 - Appointment with death and judgment
- Romans 3:9-23 - All have sinned, none are righteous

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 5 – The Great Verdict – Bible Study Helps

- Luke 16:19-31 - The rich man and Lazarus (historical account of hell)
- Matthew 25:46 - Everlasting punishment versus eternal life
- Mark 9:43-48 - Hell fire where the worm does not die and fire is not quenched
- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 - Punished with everlasting destruction
- Psalm 51:4 - David's confession that all sin is against God
- Ezekiel 33 - God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked

Stories:

- The illustration of a good judge dealing with murderers, rapists, and traffickers - showing that a loving judge must punish evil
- The comparison of stealing a paperclip versus harming a child to illustrate how the seriousness of crime depends on who is offended
- Noah building the ark for over a century as a visible warning and invitation before God's judgment came
- The bridge illustration - if a bridge is out, the loving thing is to warn people, not remain silent
- The pastor's personal testimony of being under conviction and getting saved on January 7, 1996, and immediately receiving a burden for lost friends
- The pastor's experience at his uncle's funeral where the Baptist pastor refused to preach about sin, judgment, or hell
- The YouTube interview about a father and son struggling with the doctrine of eternal torment in hell
- The rich young ruler who went away sad when confronted with his true condition before God

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 5 – The Great Verdict – Bible Study Helps

Discipleship Questions

How does understanding that we deserve hell rather than heaven change the way we appreciate Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross?

In what ways does our culture's tendency to minimize sin prevent people from recognizing their need for a Savior?

Why do you think Jesus spoke more about hell than heaven, and what does this tell us about the importance of warning people about judgment?

How can we balance being gracious and loving while still being bold and clear about the reality of sin and hell when sharing the gospel?

What does it mean that the seriousness of a crime is determined by who is offended, and how does this help us understand why hell is a just punishment for sin against a holy God?

Why do many Christians struggle to talk about hell, and how does avoiding this topic actually demonstrate a lack of love for lost people?

How does the warning of judgment itself demonstrate God's mercy and love rather than contradict it?

In what ways are the lost in our world like the people in Noah's day who heard the warning but refused to believe until it was too late?

What prevents us from living intentionally for Christ and sharing the gospel daily, and how can we overcome our selfishness and fear?

How should the reality that our lost friends and family members are headed to hell affect our daily priorities and conversations with them?

Small Group Guide: The Great Verdict

Mission Rescue Souls Series

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand the reality of judgment, the seriousness of sin, – and the beauty of the gospel.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: When was a time someone warned you about danger, and you were grateful they did? How did that warning demonstrate love?

Key Scripture References

- Genesis 18:25
 - Romans 3:10-12, 19-23
 - Hebrews 9:27
 - Luke 16:19-31
 - Matthew 25:46
 - Mark 9:43-48
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10
-

Sermon Summary

This message addresses the uncomfortable but essential truth about God's judgment and hell. To effectively lead people to Christ, we must help them understand:

1. Everyone has sinned against a holy God
2. God is a just judge who must punish sin
3. Hell is a real, eternal consequence for sin
4. Warning people about judgment is an act of love and mercy
5. Only through Jesus Christ can anyone escape the judgment they deserve

Discussion Questions

Understanding God's Justice (15-20 minutes)

1. The Bible says: "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25)

- How does understanding God as a perfectly just judge change how we view hell?
- Why would it be wrong for God to simply overlook sin and let everyone into heaven?

2. The sermon used the illustration of a judge letting criminals go free.

- How does this help us understand that hell actually demonstrates God's goodness, not cruelty?
- Why do people in our culture struggle with the concept of divine justice?

3. Read Romans 3:10-12, 19-23 together.

- Why do most people think they're "basically good"?
- How does the law (Ten Commandments) help people see their true condition before God?

The Reality of Hell (15-20 minutes)

4. Jesus spoke more about hell than heaven. Why do you think this is significant?

- What does this tell us about the importance of warning people?
- How should this shape our evangelism efforts?

5. Read Luke 16:19-31 (the rich man and Lazarus).

- What specific details does Jesus give us about hell in this passage?
- How does this passage counter the idea that hell is just "separation from God" without conscious torment?

6. The sermon said: "Many skip hell because it's uncomfortable."

- Why are Christians often reluctant to talk about hell?
- What happens when we avoid this topic in evangelism?

The Warning as Mercy (15-20 minutes)

7. The sermon illustrated: "If a bridge is out, the loving thing is not silence."

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 5 – The Great Verdict – Bible Study Helps

- How does this help us understand that warning people about hell is actually loving?
- Share a time when someone's difficult truth helped you avoid danger or consequences.

8. Read Ezekiel 33:11: "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

- How does this verse reveal God's heart toward lost people?
- How should this motivate our evangelism?

9. The pastor shared his own conversion story and immediate burden for lost friends.

- Have you experienced a similar burden for the lost? Share your story.
- What keeps us from maintaining that fresh urgency about people's eternal destiny?

Key Takeaways

1. **Hell is reasonable** - A good judge must punish evil. God's holiness demands justice for sin.
2. **Hell is deserved** - All sin is against an infinitely holy God. The seriousness of the crime is determined by who is offended.
3. **Hell is eternal** - The Bible consistently describes hell as conscious, everlasting torment with no hope, relief, or escape.
4. **Warning is loving** - God's mercy is demonstrated in sending us to warn people before judgment comes.
5. **Understanding judgment helps us appreciate Jesus** - People must understand what they're being saved FROM to fully appreciate what Christ has done.

Practical Application

Personal Reflection (5 minutes of silence)

- Do I truly believe in the reality of hell as the Bible describes it?
- Does my lifestyle reflect urgency about people's eternal destiny?
- Who in my life needs to hear the gospel, and what's stopping me from sharing it?

This Week's Action Steps

Everyone commits to:

1. **Pray daily** for at least 3 specific lost people by name
 - Ask God to open their hearts to the gospel
 - Ask God for boldness and opportunities to share

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 5 – The Great Verdict – Bible Study Helps

2. **Carry gospel tracts** everywhere you go this week
 - Be ready to hand them out or start conversations
3. **Start one spiritual conversation** this week
 - Use the questions: "Can I ask you something? If you died tonight, are you 100% sure you'd go to heaven?"
 - Or: "The Bible says everyone has an appointment with death. Do you know how God will judge you?"
4. **Study these verses** to be prepared:
 - Romans 3:23 (all have sinned)
 - Romans 6:23 (wages of sin/gift of God)
 - John 3:16 (God's love and provision)
 - Romans 10:9-10, 13 (how to be saved)

Accountability Partners

Pair up with someone in the group to:

- Share who you're praying for
 - Report back next week on spiritual conversations
 - Encourage each other in boldness
-

Closing Discussion (10 minutes)

1. **What was most challenging about this sermon for you?**
 2. **What was most encouraging?**
 3. **How has this study changed your perspective on:**
 - The seriousness of sin?
 - The love of God in sending warnings?
 - Your responsibility to share the gospel?
-

Closing Prayer

Pray together as a group:

- Thank God for His mercy in warning us about judgment
- Thank Jesus for taking the punishment we deserved
- Ask for boldness to speak truth in love
- Pray specifically for the lost people you named earlier

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 5 – The Great Verdict – Bible Study Helps

- Ask God to give you opportunities this week to share the gospel
-

Additional Resources

For Further Study:

- Read through the book of Romans, noting every reference to judgment, sin, and salvation
- Study Jesus' parables about judgment (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50; Matthew 25:31-46)
- Research: "What did Jesus say about hell?" - compile all His references

Recommended Action: Practice sharing the gospel with another Christian this week using the outline from the sermon. Get comfortable with the conversation flow before talking to lost people.

Next Week Preview

Be prepared to share testimonies of conversations you had, gospel tracts you gave out, or how God answered prayers for the lost people on your list.

Remember: "The love of Christ must constrain us. We have to care for people. We have to care for their soul."

5-Day Devotional: Mission Rescue Souls

Day 1: The Reality of Judgment

Reading: Hebrews 9:27; Romans 3:9-23

Devotional: Every person has an appointment with death, and after death comes judgment. This sobering truth should awaken us from spiritual complacency. The Bible declares that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We cannot compare ourselves to others and claim righteousness. Before a holy God, there are no "good people"—only sinners in desperate need of grace. Today, examine your heart honestly. Have you acknowledged your sin before God? The diagnosis must come before the cure. Don't minimize your need for a Savior by comparing yourself to others. God's standard is perfection, and we all fall short. This reality should drive us to our knees and to the cross.

Reflection Question: Am I willing to admit that I deserve God's judgment apart from Christ?

Day 2: The Justice of God

Reading: Genesis 18:22-33; Psalm 51:1-4

Devotional: Abraham asked God, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The answer is a resounding yes. God's justice is not cruelty—it is righteousness. A good judge must punish evil. If God simply dismissed our sins without consequence, He would be corrupt, not loving. David understood this when he cried, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." All sin is ultimately against God's infinite holiness. The seriousness of our crime is determined by whom we've offended. We haven't just broken human laws; we've sinned against the eternal, holy God. This makes hell reasonable, not cruel. God's justice demands payment for sin. The question is: who will pay?

Reflection Question: Do I truly understand that my sin is primarily against God Himself?

Day 3: The Terror of Hell

Reading: Luke 16:19-31; Mark 9:42-48

Devotional: Jesus spoke more about hell than heaven. The rich man's account in Luke 16 is not a parable—it's a historical reality. He was conscious, aware, tormented, and without hope. Jesus repeated three times that hell is where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." This is everlasting punishment, eternal separation from God's presence. Why does Jesus emphasize this?

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 5 – The Great Verdict – Bible Study Helps

Because it's true, and He loves us too much to let us walk blindly toward destruction. Understanding hell doesn't make God cruel—it makes the cross glorious. When we grasp what Christ saved us from, our love for Him deepens immeasurably. Hell's reality should motivate us to warn others and treasure our salvation.

Reflection Question: Does the reality of hell increase my gratitude for salvation and burden for the lost?

Day 4: The Warning is Love

Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

Devotional: God declares, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Warning someone about judgment is not unloving—silence is. If a bridge is out ahead, the loving response is to warn travelers, even if they find the warning offensive. God has made us His ambassadors, His loving warning to a dying world. Like Noah building the ark for over a century, we are visible invitations to salvation. God warns before He judges because He is merciful. The question is: how selfish are we? Will we remain silent to avoid discomfort while people perish? True love speaks truth, even difficult truth, because souls hang in the balance.

Reflection Question: Am I willing to risk offense to lovingly warn someone about eternity?

Day 5: The Hope of the Gospel

Reading: Romans 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Devotional: If God is just and sinners are guilty, someone must pay for our crimes. The glorious truth is that Jesus Christ already did! While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He took the punishment we deserved. The courtroom scene that should terrify us becomes our greatest hope because Jesus stood in our place. When we understand what we've been saved from—eternal torment we deserved—the gospel becomes unspeakably beautiful. This should compel us to share Christ with urgency and compassion. People need to understand their guilt to appreciate grace. Let the love of Christ constrain you to rescue souls. You have the answer to humanity's greatest problem. Will you share it today?

Reflection Question: Does my understanding of what Christ saved me from motivate me to share the gospel with others?

Weekly Challenge: Pray daily for boldness, carry gospel tracts everywhere, and start at least one spiritual conversation. Ask: "If you died tonight, are you 100% sure you'd be in heaven?"