

Mark 15:34
“My God, My God,
why have you forsaken me?”

IT'S GRIM DOWN THERE

As I was walking my dogs this morning, I read the Halloween signs in the front yards as I passed them by: Spooky, Watch Out, Boooo, etc. We see this each year, the friendly scary signs, but one in particular grabbed my attention and I meditated on it throughout the whole morning. Placed directly on the ground, the sign read, “It’s Grim Down There”, with an arrow pointing down beneath it.

How true are those words?

As a world, we want to focus on going to heaven, indeed, we may believe we are good enough, and entitled to go to heaven. I wonder if many of us think of hell at all. Life is hard enough these days. We just want the good stuff, to be comforted with a shiny life after death. We cannot bring ourselves to contemplate the hard answers because of what they may yield, especially if we are unsure of where we will go when we die.

Nevertheless, we must consider it and if not for us, then for those who do not know the love of God and are not saved.

Some religions will tell you there is no hell, that there is only heaven. Others offer a time of opportunity after death, where you can be *prayed* out of hell. Some do not make overt comments about there being no hell, but rather wave it off as though it is a myth. We draw upon images of heavenly realms, based on the fact that a loving God could not, would not, create so bad a place as hell.

But if that is so, then we miss God’s plan for the world, for us. We miss the truth of God, the justice of God, the grace and mercy of God to give us chance after chance to turn to Him and be saved *while we live*. We miss His plan, not just for this world, but also for the world to come, and in doing so, we limit our understanding of Him, our expectations of Him, and His expectations of us while we live.

We mistake a loving God with a God of the universe who would have to go against plans laid from before the foundations of the world, designed to provide man with salvation by sacrificing His son, but then dispense with hell simply because we cannot conceive of it.

Mark 15:34 reveals that, during Christ’s crucifixion, God turned His face away from Jesus when he cried out “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” God’s choice, in this instance, was

that He either turn His face away from Jesus on the cross for our salvation, or else turn His face away from us for eternity.

When we go to Genesis 3:23-24, we see the gulf of that eternity open when Adam and Eve reject God's sovereignty. In that instant, they go from being in perfect fellowship with God, to eviction from intimate fellowship with Him. God's grace provides opportunities on earth to get back into relationship with Him, but separation from fellowship with God forever is hell, and just as we cannot conceive of the majesty and glory of heaven, nor can we conceive of the torments of hell, the separation forever from the presence of one's own creator.

For some of us, the possibility of an eternity separated from God begins right now, hanging by the thread of grace, unless we turn, repent, and are saved. Immediately the gates of heaven will open to us for all eternity. However, if we are in a state of rejection upon our death, then we enter hell for eternity. Sounds narrow-minded, doesn't it? It is hard to talk about hell without coming across as someone trying to goad you into turning to God using fear tactics.

But consider this -- for there to be no hell, God would minimize Christ's sacrifice, and obviate His plan of salvation. There is a purpose in God's plan for hell. Hell is simply a fitting consequence for rejecting Christ's giant sacrifice for our sins. In that crucifixion, in that brief moment in time, God's attention was diverted from exercising His merited wrath upon us, and levying it instead upon His one and only son Jesus, on our behalf.

If you are saved, you will understand the concept of hell. However, is there someone you know, who needs to know how grim life will be for them after death without the salvation of Jesus in their heart?