

Calvin Coolidge was known for his dry wit and the fact that virtually nothing seemed to upset him or disturb him. Before Coolidge became President of the United States, he was a senator in the Massachusetts State Senate. Apparently one of Coolidge's responsibilities was to decide which bills would be presented to the Senate... and in what order. Another senator from Boston was very insistent that a bill affecting his district should be called for a vote immediately. Coolidge told him he didn't think the bill was that important. Coolidge's refusal and his manner so infuriated the other senator that he angrily told Coolidge "You can go straight to ****" and he told him exactly where he could go. Unperturbed, Coolidge looked up at him and responded, "Senator, I've looked up the law on that... and I don't have to go."
(<http://www.calvincoolidge.us/humor.html>)

Our sermon series this month is entitled: "Hard Questions".
And our question this morning is: "Will God Send People To Hell?"
And the answer is: yes.

In Matthew 10:28 for example, Jesus says: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One WHO CAN DESTROY both soul and body in hell."
In other words: God will send some folks to hell.

In fact, in our text this morning, we're told of two distinct created beings that God will very deliberately send to hell:

1st - there are angels God sent to hell. They are often called Fallen Angels or Demons.
2 Peter 2:4 tells us that "... God did not spare angels when they sinned, but SENT THEM TO HELL, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment"

Jude 1:6 tells us essentially the same thing:
And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home— these HE HAS KEPT IN DARKNESS, BOUND WITH EVERLASTING CHAINS for judgment on the great Day."

God sent them to hell!

But what had these fallen angels done wrong?
What had they done that was so evil - so wicked - that God came down in righteous judgment upon them?
ANSWER: God had trusted them with His most precious possession. Their job had been to protect the world He'd created, and especially Adam and Eve whom He had created in His own image.

But they had betrayed that trust.
They had joined with Satan to take possession of that creation and to destroy the man and woman with whom God had shared His special gift of life.
They CHOSE to follow Satan and so they shared Satan's fate.

Isaiah 14:12–15 (NKJV) speaks of Satan's condemnation by God:

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!...For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."

The Bible tells us that Satan's objective (and the reason why he would fall) was that he intended to destroy and damage people like you and I, because we were made in God's image.

In fact, Revelation 12:10 tells us that "...the accuser of our brothers (the devil), who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."

Now notice that the promise in Isaiah 14:15 said that

"(Lucifer) SHALL be brought down to Sheol..."

It hadn't happened yet.

Well if Satan hadn't been cast out in the days of Isaiah, when DID it happen?

Well, it happened when Jesus died on the cross.

Hebrews 2:14b-15 says that Jesus "shared in (our) humanity so that BY HIS DEATH he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

When Jesus died He destroyed Satan and his power.

Then Revelation 12:7-9 tells us of a battle that took place following Jesus' resurrection...

"...there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels (God's angels) fought against the dragon, and the dragon (the devil) and his angels fought back.

But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."

So II Peter is telling us that God deliberately SENT the fallen angels to Hell.

God sent them there because they chose to rebel against Him.

He sent them there because they deliberately hurt his people and His creation.

It's always a really bad idea to hurt that which is precious to God.

God takes it kind of personal.

But the main focus in II Peter 2 is not the fallen angels.

The angels are just examples Peter used to show the nature of God's judgment.

In addition to the angels, Peter mentioned God's condemnation of the people who died in the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

"For IF God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into

gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment... (then He goes on to describe all the others that have suffered from God's punishment) if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to HOLD THE UNRIGHTEOUS FOR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, while continuing their punishment." 2 Peter 2:4 & 9

In other words, the punishment of the angels and of evil people, cities, and nations throughout Scripture were ALL proof that God WILL send folks to Hell.

So who is God going to send to Hell?

- False Prophets (II Peter 2:1)
- False Teachers (II Peter 2:1)
- Spreaders of heresy (verse 1)
- Those who follow the corrupt desires of sin (verse 10)
- Those who despise authority (verse 10)
- Blasphemers (verse 12)

These are people who actively seek to hurt the church.

Now, they wouldn't paint themselves that way.

In fact, they would often describe themselves as very dedicated "Christians".

They do what they do because they are trying to save the church from itself.

But God condemns them because they teach false doctrine.

They don't think what they teach IS false doctrine.

They teach heresy.

The Greek word we translate as "Heresy" actually means "Opinion".

For example, if I were to preach my OPINION from the pulpit without having a good Biblical reason to back it up... I could very well be preaching heresy (opinion).

The thing about heretics is that they not only want to present their "opinion"... they want it accepted as fact. They want others to approve and agree to their heresy. And if you don't accept their heresy as "fact" they'll get a little annoyed, even angry. And that annoyance and anger will lead them to hurt God's church.

ILLUS: Some time back Jeff Faull was hired at a church that was running about 150 to 200. Jeff soon found out there was a Wednesday Night Bible Study at the church where the teacher was teaching that Jesus was NOT God in the flesh. That Jesus was only a man sent by God.

And the Eldership knew about this. But they were afraid of confronting him because he'd threatened that if he wasn't allowed to teach what he wanted, he'd leave the church and take others with him.

Jeff spent the next few weeks explaining to the Eldership that this was heresy and that if they didn't confront it they would be condemned by God for looking the other way. In time, the Elders came around and confronted this man and told him he could no longer teach the Bible Study..

The man became visibly upset and he again threatened that if he was not allowed to teach his opinion (heresy) he would leave the church and take folks with him.

The Elders stood up as men and shut down the Bible study.

And the man and his family left the church... and took one other family with him.

The church has since blossomed from a small congregation to a huge one.

Did you notice that the heretic teacher threatened to hurt the church to get his way?

"I'M LEAVING AND I'M TAKING OTHERS WITH ME"

That's the kind of people God will send to hell.

These are the kinds of people who demand to get their way and if they can't get their way they'll split the church to prove they're right.

They're just like the fallen angels who followed Satan.

They seek power and position.

They are filled with pride and self-righteousness.

They WILL get their own way no matter what the cost.

And God will send them to Hell.

Both the Fallen Angels and the Heretics who hurt the church will go to hell because they CHOSE to rebel against God.

But there are others who will go to hell because they made a different kind of choice.

This last group will go to hell... because they haven't chosen to belong to God.

Jesus tells us about this in Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Again in Luke 13:24 Jesus said "MAKE EVERY EFFORT to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to."

Essentially, Jesus is telling us "Make a choice".

There is a way that goes to heaven and you have to deliberately choose to take that road.

But there's another way that leads to destruction/ hell, and lots of folks choose that one.

Now Jesus WASN'T necessarily saying those who choose the "wide gate and broad road" are heretics. And He WASN'T SAYING that the folks who take that path have deliberately sought to hurt His people/ church

In fact, these folks might be very nice neighbors.

They're what I call "Nice Pagans"

They might donate to charities.

They might be fun to be around and contribute to society.

They might even be nice to stray dogs and help little old ladies across the street.

BUT they haven't chosen God in their lives.
They go to hell because they haven't chosen to go to heaven.
These folks don't so much get sent to Hell... as they just end up there.

But why?
Why would these folks end up in hell?
The answer is simple: they'll go to hell, because they'll go with the one they belong to.

If you belong to God... you go with Him.
But if you DON'T belong to God... you belong to Satan and you end up going where he's going. And the Bible is very clear on the fact – you don't want to go there.

ILLUS: Let's say you folks decide to send me and my kids on vacation to Hawaii.
Now, tell me, who gets to go on that vacation?
Me... and my kids.
Why do my kids get to go with me?
Because they BELONG to me.
But they have friends that would like to go. Can they come too?
No? Why not?
Because they DON'T belong to me.
They may be very nice kids. They might obey their parents in everything. They might be straight "A" students. I might even like them a great deal.
But they don't get to go on this trip... because they don't belong to me.

In the same way, they only folks who'll get to go to heaven are those who "belong" to God.

But why don't I belong to God to begin with?
I mean... haven't I been made in the image of God?
Why do I have to deliberately CHOOSE to belong to Him?

Well, the problem is – our sins alienate us from God.
ILLUS: Some time back someone was telling me about a friend of theirs. They were riding along in his car and all of a sudden his friend pulls out some Meth and begins doing drugs in right there in his car.
He didn't know his friend was doing drugs... but the friend did it right there in front of him. It was his friend but he could not allow those drugs in his car. He explained to me that if the police pulled him over HE could be arrested for having them in his car and he wasn't going to let that happen.
His friend's choice to do drugs alienated him from the man I was talking with.
And that friend is not going to be riding in that car again.

Our sins alienate us from God.
We don't get to ride in His car... unless we deal with our sins.
AND WE'VE ALL SINNED.
All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

And everybody knows they've sinned.
They know they've messed up... failed... fallen short.
That's why so many folks struggle with shame and guilt from things they've said or done or thought.

None of us DESERVE to go to heaven - our sins would lock us out.
And since we don't deserve to go to heaven... there's only one other place to go.
Hell.

But you know, I've read the book... and the book says you don't have to go to hell.

There is a small gate, and there is a narrow way, that leads to life but few there are that find that gate and choose that way. But that gate is there for a reason. God put it there. God built that gate, and He built it with two pieces of lumber and 3 nails.

There's beautiful saying that goes this way:

1 Cross
+ 3 Nails
= 4 Given.

CLOSE: Essentially, God knows folks choose the wide gate and broad path. God knows that people reject Him and choose to live their lives their own way. So, right in the middle of that broad path God firmly places the cross.

ILLUS: A famous preacher named Adrian Rogers once recalled hearing about a nightclub that was called "The Gates of Hades". The story goes that a newcomer to the city was looking for this nightclub and stopped a policeman to ask directions. It so happened that there was a church on that same street called "Calvary Church" and when the man asked the policeman for directions to the "Gates of Hades", the cop replied: "If you want to get to the Gates of Hades, you'll have to go past Calvary."

Most of you here are Christians. You've already made the choice to belong to God and you've deliberately sought that gate and that way that leads to life. But you've got lots of "nice" friends, relatives, and co-workers who've chosen a different gate and different way... and they'll end up in hell.
They need to hear what you know so that they can make that choice for themselves.

But if you're here this morning and you haven't made the choice to belong to Jesus, we offer a time of invitation for you to accept God's gracious gift of love.