

SHOULD I BE AFRAID OF HELL?

We should only be afraid of hell if we fail to take advantage of the salvation earned for us by Jesus on the cross. If, however, we choose to ignore Jesus, then we have good reason to be afraid. Hell is a terrible failure in the proper use of this short life.

It's not popular to talk of hell these days. Many of us, even in the Church, have reinvented a sweet toothless Jesus who is more to our liking. God, indeed, is a God of mercy but mercy applies to our time on earth. Jesus in His mercy keeps giving us another chance, and yet another chance. Death, however, is the end of our chance to accept Jesus. Our true God is also a God of perfect justice.

In the Gospels Jesus warned us at least a dozen times about the reality and dangers of hell. We need to carefully follow the Way as outlined by Jesus. The Epistles say all people would automatically end up in hell if it were not for the grace earned for us by Jesus. We cannot be good enough on our own to deserve heaven. That's a heresy condemned by the Church long ago. We need the help provided by Jesus in His Church, His Sacraments, and His Holy Word. The possibility of salvation, even for pagans, depends somehow on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, in some way mysteriously united with our obedience and good deeds. Unrepentant mortal sin at death cuts off this grace.

God does not want anyone to go to hell. He is so passionate about that that He died for us. The problem is, nothing imperfect can possibly be part of perfect God or even be in His intimate presence. That would make perfect heaven imperfect. That's impossible.

So.... Should we be afraid of hell? Damned right we should, especially if we are not serious about living in God's grace as best we possibly can and trusting the merits of Jesus to make up the difference.