

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

The Gap
“Why Hell?”
Week of May 7, 2017

CENTRAL TRUTH: All receive what they actually choose, either to be with God forever or without God forever.

GETTING STARTED

One of the things that troubles people most about Christianity is the teaching that God is a judge who sends people to hell. How can we possibly reconcile the concept of judgment and hell with the idea of a loving God? They just don't seem to go together. The understanding of hell, for both Christians and non-Christians alike, is crucial for understanding our own hearts, for living at peace with God, and for knowing the love of God.

1. Are you convinced there is a hell? Why or why not?
2. What do you know about hell? How do you picture it? And, for what reason(s) do you think people go there?

GOING DEEPER

3. Read Romans 1:24, 26, 28, as well as the quote by J.I. Packer below. According to Rom. 1:24, 26, 28, God's judgment on evil is to allow us our hearts' deepest desires (*“gave them up”*). And what is our deepest desire? It is independence from God—we want to choose and go our own separate way. How is hell God granting us what we demand and desire?

“Scripture sees hell as self-chosen . . . Hell appears as God's gesture of respect for human choice. All receive what they actually chose, either to be with God forever, worshipping him, or without God forever, worshipping themselves.” —J.I. Packer (“Concise Theology”)

4. Understanding the doctrine of hell is the only way we can fully know the true scope of the costly love of Jesus. How is that so? What happened when God forsook Jesus (Matthew 27:46) that reveals the depth of what Jesus did for us?
5. What do you say when people ask, “How can God be loving if he sends people to hell?”

TAKING IT HOME

6. Where do you think you are headed after you die? Why? Have you trusted Jesus to save you? If not, what is holding you back? Discuss it with the group.

If you have trusted Jesus to save you, is there anyone you know who has not? How can you begin to talk with him or her about these things? Ask the group to pray for such an opportunity.