

Great Themes in Discipleship, #7

Two Destinations: Heaven and Hell

(Mt. 7:13-14)

--CEFC 3/20/22

I want to begin by talking about choice—
that act of making a decision
when faced with two or more possibilities.

Everybody likes the idea of having a choice.

It's an American ideal;

it flows from our passion for personal freedom.

The freedom to choose is part of what it means to be an American.

It's as American as apple pie--

though I shouldn't limit it to apple pie,

for some people might prefer cherry or peach or French silk.

We want a choice.

When he introduced his Model-T in 1908,

Henry Ford said you could buy his car in any color you liked,

so long as it's black.

That didn't last long then,

and that certainly won't do today.

As consumers we seek out choice--

so we shop at supermarkets with 42 different kinds of breakfast cereal,

and 14 different brands of deodorant.

I'm sure you've seen the new soda dispensers

that offer you 120 different drink choices—

21 different soft drinks with seven different flavors—

you just have to push the right buttons

to get exactly the combination what you want.

It's almost overwhelming!

As consumers we seek out choice,

and as citizens we demand choice—it's our right--

beginning with the freedom to choose our leaders.

And it's no wonder that *freedom of choice* is such a popular political slogan,

whether it applies to getting an abortion

or where parents are allowed to send their kids to school.

When you think about it—in the largest sense,

the freedom to make a choice is part of what it means to be human.

To take away our ability to choose

is a denial of our human dignity. //

But perhaps it is ironic,

that though we cherish our freedom of choice,

none of us wants to be compelled to choose--

especially when we are given only two alternatives.

But that's exactly what Jesus does to us--

Jesus calls for a choice,

as he sets before us just two ways,
two roads with two very different destinations.

And he tells us that our life's destiny
will be determined by the choice that we make.

Please turn again in your Bibles to Matthew 7:13-14,
and listen as I read again those critical words of Jesus--

“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.”**

This passage comes near the end of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7--
certainly, one of the greatest and most searching presentations ever given
of the way human beings ought to live.

Jesus' teaching in this sermon penetrates the heart--
it exposes our false and selfish motives,
it calls for a quality of life
that has been fully demonstrated in only one human being.

We are tempted to sit back at a safe distance
and study it
and analyze it,
and admire it--

but Jesus won't allow it.

For Jesus the preacher calls for a response, a decision--

and there are only two ways that you can choose, he says,

and you must choose one of them.

There's no sitting on the fence.

"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."

You must choose one road or the other.

I want you to notice the four dimensions of this choice that must be made--

1. First, there is the entry point—the two gates.

There is a wide gate, and there is a narrow or small gate.

The wide gate looks inviting--

It's easy to find and easy to pass through--

nothing is required.

It's wide enough to accommodate anything you might want to bring with you.

But the small gate is different--

you have to look for it or you'll miss it,

and many people do.

You can't go in with the crowd--it's not that wide.

It's more like a turnstile you find at a stadium—

each person must go through one at a time.

And to get through, you can't bring along a lot of baggage--

no, everything has to be left behind if you want to get through this gate. /

First, there is the entry point—the two gates.

There is a wide gate, and there is a narrow gate.

You must choose, and you will choose, just one or the other.

2. Second, there are the two roads--

there is a broad road, and there is a narrow road.

The broad road is spacious--

one can wander and roam at will, with lots of room to do as you please—

with plenty of scope to express your inner self./

But the other road is a narrow road.

The word there suggests a cramped and confined road¹--

it makes for a difficult journey, with ditches on both sides.

You've got to pay attention and keep your head

if you want to stay on this road.

Listen to Deitrich Bonhoeffer's description of this path--

¹ teqlimme÷nh

“On either side of the narrow path deep chasms yawn.

To be called to a life of extraordinary quality,

to live up to it,

and yet to be unconscious of it

is indeed a narrow way.

To confess and testify to the truth as it is in Jesus,

and at the same time to love the enemies of that truth,

his enemies and ours,

and to love them with the infinite love of Jesus Christ,

is indeed a narrow way.

To believe the promise of Jesus that his followers shall possess the earth,

and at the same time to face our enemies unarmed and defenseless,

preferring to incur injustice rather than to do wrong ourselves,

is indeed a narrow way.

To see the weakness and wrong in others,

and at the same time refrain from judging them;

to deliver the gospel message without casting pearls before swine,

is indeed a narrow way.

The way is unutterably hard,

and at every moment we are in danger of straying from it.”²

Will you choose the easy or the strenuous journey?

the broad or the narrow road?

²*Cost*, p. 211.

3. Third, there is the company you will keep along the way--

on the one road are many, and on the other, there are only a few.

O, how we are attracted to large numbers--

a large number in a church means you are successful;

a large number of Twitter followers means you are popular;

and a large number of votes means you are powerful.

And if so many people are going that way,

well, it must be the right way, we say.

What do the polls say?

Aren't we all swayed by "popular opinion"? /

But on the other road

there are only a few.

They have forsaken the success and popularity and power they might have enjoyed

just so they could enter through that narrow gate,

and walk on that confined and constricted path.

Jesus asks, Are you willing to forsake the crowd to join them?

Will you choose to enter through that small gate,

with its narrow road, with only a few others alongside you? //

But why should you?

Why should you make that choice?

4. Finally, and this is what I want to focus on this morning—

people make that choice for that small gate onto that narrow road

which only a few travel on

because of the destination they hope to reach--

it's the road that leads to life.

The other road--it leads to destruction.

Destruction--disintegration, deterioration--

the destruction of our humanity,

the destruction of all relationship with God--

it is the destruction that is hell itself.

Hell is not a subject I like to talk about,

but it is a subject I as a Christian teacher feel compelled to talk about,

because Jesus himself talked about it.

And Jesus is my Teacher.

It is our Lord Jesus who, above all,

forces us to affirm the dreadful truth

that those who stand alone before God as sinners on the day of judgment

will face condemnation into a state of eternal punishment called hell.³

Listen to the words of Jesus—

To the religious hypocrites, Jesus declared,

“You snakes! You brood of vipers!

How will you escape being condemned to hell?” (Matt. 23:33).

³Various terms are used in the Bible to convey this reality with slightly different shades of meaning—e.g., Sheol, Hades, Gehenna, the lake of fire, and the Abyss.

Those rejected as subjects of the kingdom, Jesus said,

"will be thrown into the outer darkness,

where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8:12⁴).

Stressing the seriousness of sin, Jesus urged,

"If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell,

where the fire never goes out" (Mk. 9:43; cf. Matt. 18:8).

Hell is a place where **"their worm does not die,**

and the fire is not quenched," Jesus said (Mk. 9:48).

On that day of judgment,

he says that those who failed to respond to him

through his humble brothers

"will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Matt. 25:46)./

Hell is often ridiculed as a primitive remnant of a medieval age,

but Christian teaching about the eternal punishment of sinners

is rooted firmly in the teaching of Jesus himself.

He spoke of hell more than he spoke of heaven.

In fact, Jesus, who more than anyone reveals the love of God to the world,

spoke more about hell than any other person in the Bible.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we cannot be faithful to our Lord

and not speak of this stark reality. //

⁴Cf. also Matt. 13:42,50; 22:13; 25:30.

The apostolic witness of the New Testament

echoes Jesus' weighty words on this topic.

Paul speaks of a time of "**wrath and anger**" awaiting those who reject the truth (Rom. 2:8).

He declares that those who do not obey the gospel

"will be punished with everlasting destruction

and shut out from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9).

Jude presents the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah

"as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

Finally, the Book of Revelation speaks in these harrowing tones:

"If anyone worships the beast and its image

and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand,

they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury,

which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath.

They will be tormented with burning sulfur

in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever" (Rev. 14:9-11).

Certainly, in speaking of hell the Bible uses figurative language.

Jesus commonly used terms drawn from a place called Gehenna.⁵

Gehenna was the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem,

⁵Matt. 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:19; 23:15,33

where human sacrifice was once offered (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6).

It became the place where the city's garbage was burned—

a place where **"the worms that eat them do not die**

and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48).

Fire is a common image of hell—

an image depicting physical pain and suffering.

It displays the sense of God's righteous anger, his wrath,

poured out against all that opposes his goodness.

Jesus also used the image of darkness, **"outer darkness,"**

depicting hell as a banishment from the light of God's presence—

a place of alienation from God, a place of utter loneliness.

The foolish bridesmaids are shut outside the door (Matt. 25:10-12);

the wicked servant is assigned a place with the hypocrites (Matt. 24:51);

those improperly dressed for the wedding banquet

are thrown outside into the outer darkness (Matt. 22:13).

Paul speaks of those who oppose the gospel being

"punished with everlasting destruction

and shut out from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9).

In some of the most dreaded words of the Bible,

Jesus says to some who assumed they would be welcomed by him,

"I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matt. 7:23).

Nothing is left to them but loneliness and despair,

for hell is a place of **"weeping and gnashing of teeth,"**

a dark place, full of the hopeless remorse of self-condemnation. /

Hell as fire,

hell as darkness,

and third, hell is spoken of as a place of death and destruction—

a place devoid of the life-giving presence of God,

and a place of ruin and corruption.

John in the Book of Revelation refers to the lake of fire

as "**the second death**" (Rev. 20:14; 21:8; cf. 2:11; 20:6).

Destruction is what happens to the house built on sand (Luke 6:49);

it is what is prepared for the objects of God's wrath (Rom. 9:22);

and it is the destiny of the enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:19).

Destruction is where the wide road leads (Matt. 7:13), Jesus tells us./

This destruction doesn't mean that the lost cease to exist—

hell is depicted in the Bible as an eternal state.

Jesus himself affirmed this when he spoke of the Son of Man

separating, like sheep and goats,

two classes of human beings on the day of judgment,

and saying to the goats on his left hand,

"Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire

prepared for the devil and his angels. . . .

Then they will go away to eternal punishment,

but the righteous to eternal life" (Matt. 25:41,46).

Like a car that is "totaled" in an accident,
those in hell will continue to exist,
but they will be destroyed, ruined,
as human beings created as the image of God—
they will no longer function as they were created to do.
Their death—this "second death"—is some shadowy form of existence—
continuing on forever./

Hell as fire, as darkness, as destruction and death--
Yes, this is figurative, metaphorical language,
but these images were chosen to convey a certain reality.
And it is a horrific reality—a reality of wrath, of alienation, of corruption.

It is a reality that Jesus warns us about in the strongest possible terms,
and it is a reality, I would add,
that Jesus himself gave his own life to save us from.

As one writer on this subject has put it,
"Jesus Christ is the person who is responsible for the doctrine of Eternal Perdition.
He is the Being with whom all opponents of this theological tenet are in conflict."⁶

But doesn't this idea of an eternal hell seem a little extreme?

I mean, how can a loving God ever send anyone to hell?

⁶ W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (1888), II. 680. Cited in J. I. Packer, "The Problem of Eternal Punishment," *Crux* (9/1990, vol. 26.3), p. 19.

In one sense, God doesn't send anyone to hell,
people choose to go there.

As C. S. Lewis put it:

Sin is a human being saying to God throughout their life,
"Go away and leave me alone."
Hell is God's answer--"You may have your wish."

Lewis writes:

"There are only two kinds of people in the end:
those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,'
and those to whom God says, in the end, '*Thy* will be done.'
All that are in Hell, choose it."⁷

In that sense, hell is the ultimate testament to human freedom.

After all, if heaven is the place where God—as Father, Son, and Spirit,
is most fully loved and worshipped,
would those who reject him now really want to be there?

Not that people actually choose to go to hell;
they simply choose the road that leads them there—
that wide road that leads to destruction.

They choose to listen to the lie of the devil who whispers in our ears,
"You will not surely die."

And little by little, their hearts become hardened to the love of God
and their ears become deaf to the voice of God,

⁷ *The Great Divorce* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), p. 72.

and they refuse to humble themselves before the grace of God.

In the end, they refuse to receive the rescue that is found in the gospel of God.

In this sense, hell may be understood both as a culmination of the effects of sin

and as the confirmation of God's opposition to it.

It is both the inexorable result of human choice

and the active and deliberate judgment of God. /

We can understand this three-fold description of hell as wrath, alienation, and corruption

illustrated in the effects of the first sin.

Adam and Eve incurred the wrath of God through the curse--

that curse resulted in physical suffering (strenuous work and painful childbearing),

they were alienated from God (when they were cast from the garden),

and their nature was corrupted

(through the spread of sin and death to all their descendants),

and they became spiritually dead.

Fallen humanity continues to experience these effects

unless they are rescued by God's grace in the gospel.

Apart from that rescue, that state of wrath, alienation and corruption

will be confirmed, intensified, and made permanent

when at the judgment, God's verdict of condemnation is pronounced

and the sentence is executed in the on-going reality the Bible calls hell.⁸

⁸This present experience of wrath, alienation and corruption is sometimes referred to as an "inaugurated eschatology" of judgment, comparable to the inaugurated experience of salvation—with both a "now" and "not yet" dimension (cf., e.g., Moo, "Paul on Hell," pp. 93,94).

I know we don't like to think about it—I know I don't.

But as the ad on TV for Channel 4 News puts it—

“Truth is real.”

And we better deal with it. ///

But the good news is that there is, by God's grace, another destination.

For there is a road that leads to life--

life in the presence of God;

the life we were created to live--

real life—abundant life--life in all its fullness.

It's what we commonly call "**heaven**"—

but it's even greater than that—

it is much more than just sitting on a cloud with the angels playing a harp.

It's the hope of a new heaven and a new earth—

It's God's created world made new by his redeeming power.

And if the biblical language depicting the eternal state of the unbeliever

is as bad as it can be,

the language regarding the future for the believer is better than can be imagined.

Where once we were alienated from God as his enemies

and banished from his presence,

we shall be with him forever.

Where once we suffered the painful consequences of God's wrath in this fallen world,

we will be filled with an inexpressible joy.

And where once we experienced the corruption of sin resulting in death,

we shall enjoy a state of eternal blessedness,
fully pleasing to God in a restored, and even glorified, state of righteousness.

Heaven is the place where God dwells,⁹
it is the place where his presence is manifest,
and its contrast with hell could not be more complete.

Hell is a place of pain and suffering;
heaven will be one of unceasing joy,
like that of a wedding banquet (Rev. 19:7; Matt. 22:2; 25:1-13).

Hell is a place of destruction and death;
heaven will be one of everlasting life.

Hell is a place of darkness and lonely despair;
heaven will be one of glorious light and overwhelming love.

There **"the righteous will shine like the sun
in the kingdom of their Father"** (Matt. 13:43).

This new earth will have no need of sun or moon to illumine it,
for **"the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb"** (Rev. 21:23; also 22:5).
It will be a place of unimaginable splendor, greatness, excellence, and beauty,
as that new Jerusalem, which comes down from heaven,
is pictured with streets of pure gold
and decorated with every kind of precious stone (Rev. 21:18-21).

Heaven is where God dwells, in all his goodness, truth and beauty.

⁹Jesus often spoke of his Father in heaven (e.g., Matt. 5:16,45; 6:1) and he taught us to pray to him there (Matt. 6:9). Heaven is the place of God's throne (Matt. 5:35; Ps. 14:2; 103:19). Cf. also Solomon's emphasis of this in 2 Chron. 6:21,30,39.

There God manifests himself gloriously for all eternity.

And in the end, God will reunite heaven and earth, which are now separated,
for in that new world,

"the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.

They will be his people, and God himself will be with them

and be their God." (Rev. 21:3 NIV84).

In that Holy City, the New Jerusalem, **"the dwelling of God is with men,**

and he will live with them. . . .

There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain,

for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev. 21:2-4 NIV84).¹⁰

Evil will have no place in this new existence.

In that Holy City John envisions, **"nothing that is impure will enter" (Rev 21:27).**

We will be secure in **"the city with permanent foundations,"**

a "kingdom that cannot be shaken" (Heb. 11:10; 12:28).

The curse of God upon life in this world will be rescinded (Rev. 22:3),

and our work will no longer be toilsome.

We will discover the true Sabbath rest of God,

even as we actively serve the Lamb upon the throne (Rev. 22:3),

reigning over God's created order (Rev. 22:5; cf. Gen. 1:28).

The communal life of God's people there will be like a great banquet or wedding feast

where God himself is the host (cf. Matt. 22:1-10). //

¹⁰Cf. Graham A. Cole, *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom*, NSBT 25 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), p. 231, n. 4: "Ruin through Adam, redemption through Christ, regeneration through the Spirit and restoration of creation through the triune God."

And what does God make known when he reveals himself?

What is the essence of his nature,

the very substance of his character?

The Bible gives us various ways, and different words that seek to capture

the beauty of the character of God.

The one I would focus on this morning is love.

As John says, "God is love."

Jonathan Edwards¹¹ in the conclusion of his exposition of 1 Corinthians 13

speaks of heaven as "a world of love,"

for, he says, "God is the fountain of love, as the sun is the fountain of light."

And "therefore," Edwards writes,

"the glorious presence of God in heaven, fills heaven with love,

as the sun, placed in the midst of the visible heavens on a clear day,

fills the world with light."¹²

There this infinite fountain of love flows out forever.

"There this glorious God is manifested, and shines forth, in full glory,

in beams of love."¹³

In heaven love reigns—it reigns in every heart allowed to dwell there.

It is a holy and divine love.

"The saints in heaven love God for His own sake, and each other for God's sake,

¹¹Jonathan Edwards [1749], "Sermon Fifteen: Heaven Is a World of Love," in *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 8 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 366-397.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 369.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 370.

wholly and completely devoted to God's glory and the good of others.
This love is perfect in every way,
without any taint of selfishness or pride or sinful desire—
always sincere, never self-seeking.
It delights in the happiness of others, without a hint of envy or jealousy,
abounding in perfect peace and harmony—
without malice or revenge or selfish ambition."
It is a love that results in the sweetest of all joys.

Edwards continues:

"Every saint in heaven is as a flower in that garden of God,
and holy love is the fragrance and sweet odor that they all send forth,
and with which they fill the [arbors] of that paradise above.
Every soul there is as a note in some concert of delightful music,
that sweetly harmonizes with every other note,
and all together blend in the most rapturous strains
in praising God and the Lamb forever.
And so all help each other, to their utmost,
to express the love of the whole society to its glorious Father and Head,
and to pour back love into the great fountain of love
whence they are supplied and filled with love, and blessedness, and glory.
And thus they will love, and reign in love,
and in that godlike joy that is its blessed fruit,
such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
nor hath ever entered into the heart of man in this world to conceive;
and thus in the full sunlight of the throne,
enraptured with joys that are forever increasing, and yet forever full,

they shall live and reign with God and Christ for ever and ever!"¹⁴

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love" (1Cor. 13:13).

Heaven is a world of Love.

Does that not draw you?

Isn't that the most beautiful world you could ever imagine?

That's where this narrow road leads—to a world of love.

What are we to make of this talk of heaven—

this world of Love,

this sharing in God's own glory in Christ?

I'm afraid that for many of us, it is not too good to be true,

it is just too good to be imagined--

we quite literally lack the imagination to grasp it.

We are so this-worldly, so scientific, so secular in our thinking

that we simply cannot imagine something so glorious.

This is one of the reasons that C.S. Lewis thought fantasy

was such a helpful literary form for children--

it helped to expand their imaginations.

Somehow we have to expand our minds

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 386.

so that we can appreciate something of the love and glory that is to be ours.

How we need to dream sweet dreams of heaven!

We need to let this glorious love overwhelm us with its power and beauty--

it must become something that touches the depth of our hearts

and becomes one of the most powerful motivating forces in our lives--

to share in this glory of Christ

and to bask in the beauty of this world of love.

Only then can we echo the words of Paul,

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing

with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Only then will we be captured by the content of Christian hope,

that hope which gives the Christian reason to be so optimistic about the future.

As Augustine wrote at the conclusion of his magisterial treatise *City of God*:

"On that day we shall rest and we shall see;

we shall see and we shall love;

we shall love and we shall praise;

this is what will be at the end without end."¹⁵

Would that we all meditated on this glorious state

as did the Puritan Richard Baxter

in his wonderful treatise, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, published in 1649.

¹⁵*City of God*, 22.30.

He concludes:

“Be acquainted with this heavenly work,
and [you will], in some degree, be acquainted with God;
[your] joys will be spiritual, prevalent, and lasting,
according to the nature of their blessed object;
[you will] have comfort in life and death. . . .
[Your] graces will be mighty, active, and victorious;
and the daily joy, which is thus fetched from heaven, will be [your] strength.”¹⁶//

I come back to the choice that Jesus gives us--

a choice between two gates,
a choice between two roads,
a choice between two sets of companions,
a choice between two destinations.

But it's all one choice, you see--

for it is all a choice for or against him--
for or against Jesus Christ.

“Come, follow me,” he says, to each one of us.

For I go before you, enabling you to go where I have gone.

I am the way, the truth, and the life—

I will usher you into that glorious presence of God.

¹⁶*Practical Works of Richard Baxter, Select Treatises* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), p. 120.

Jesus demands a decision--

will you become my disciple, my follower, or not?

He doesn't say, "Consider me"

or "Learn about me."

or "Admire me."

Jesus says, "Believe in me--Trust me—and in trusting me,

you must follow me."

Contrary to the opinion of some,

the gospel is not simply a self-help strategy

for finding peace and happiness in this life.

The Bible presents the gospel as a matter of eternal significance.

In fact, it is a matter of heaven and hell,

for our eternal destiny hinges on our response to Jesus Christ.¹⁷

So I ask you,

What road are you on today?

You must choose.

I urge you, Choose to follow Christ--

follow him into the fullness, the abundance, the joy of the life he promises.

Say to him, "Yes, I will trust you;

I will follow you—for who else has the words of eternal life?" ///

¹⁷ cf. John 3:36; 5:24; 8:24

Prayer—

Open our eyes and our hearts—

What will it be—heaven or hell?

there are only two options—

and it all depends on where you stand with Jesus Christ.

If you have never put your trust in Christ before,

or even if you are unsure if you have,

I invite you to do it now—here, today.

IN a simply act of prayer—

Say Sorry,

Say Thank you,

and say Please

Tell someone—talk to me, or another church member—if you are a child, your parents,

but tell someone that you have set your heart on following Jesus

on that narrow road that leads to life.

Closing Song: *On Jordan's Stormy Banks*

Benediction:

Jude 24,25 To him who is able to keep you from falling

and to present you before his glorious presence

without fault and with great joy--

to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority,

through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Great Themes in Discipleship, #7

March 20, 2022

Two Destinations: Heaven and Hell

(Mt. 7:13-14)

I. Our love of choice, and the choice Jesus gives us—

A. The Two Gates

B. The Two Roads

C. Our Fellow Travelers

D. The Two Destinations

II. The Road to Destruction: Hell

A. Jesus on Hell

B. The Apostolic Witness of Hell

C. The Figurative Language Used for Hell:

1. Fire

2. Darkness

3. Destruction and Death

D. How can a loving God send people to hell?

II. The Road to Life: Heaven

A. The place where God lives

B. Heaven is "a world of love"

C. Heaven is a place of "glory"

Sermon Response:

Two Destinations: Heaven and Hell

(Mt. 7:13-14)

- Read Mt. 7:13-14. What most impresses you about the contrast Jesus makes between these two gates, two roads, and two destinations?
- How do you react to Jesus' teaching on hell as unending fire, outer darkness, and death and destruction? Why did Jesus think it important to speak about this reality?
- How do you imagine heaven (that is, the new heaven and the new earth)? How can you more fully appreciate heaven as "a world of love" and "a place of glory"?
- How can a longing for heaven become more of a reality in your life? Why would that be important?
- Do you feel that you are on that narrow road that leads to life? Why or why not? What should you do about it?