

DEAL BREAKERS

5. What the Hell?

Start off with feedback from Sunday's message. What did those that were there - or those that have caught up online - take away from it? What encouraged them, what informed them and what challenged them?

Read John 3.16-21

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

- Jesus emphasises a loving God giving eternal life to those otherwise condemned to perishing. What does this mean for us? Does the concept of understanding the issue in terms of life vs. death, instead of heaven vs. hell, make sense to you?
- Can you identify with either of the two wrong assumptions Philip outlined: "The human soul is eternal" and "The duration of hell is eternal"?
- Read Luke 3.16-18. The idea that Hell is about the 'burning up', or utter destruction and consuming, of those that stubbornly refuse to "come into the light", is called Annihilationism. Do you find this a helpful way of understanding the Biblical passages on Hell and judgement? Does it make sense to you?
- The Big Idea: "We can trust a God who is Perfect Love to be Perfectly Loving in all things – especially judgement." Do we find it easy or difficult to trust God with this? Do we tend to imagine that He's less than perfectly loving when it comes to judgement? What would help us trust God more in this area?
- Thinking about issues of eternal life and eternal death reminds us how great the stakes are. Does this affect your motivation for sharing your faith? How committed are we to spreading the good news of God's offer of eternal life?

Break down into twos and threes. Pray that God would give us each a greater ability to trust Him to be perfectly loving in all things, especially judgement. Pray that God would give us fresh compassion for those around us – our friends, neighbours and colleagues – who haven't fully encountered the love of God in Jesus. Pray for two or three of them by name, that we would have opportunities over this Christmas period to draw them into the life and message of the church.