

## **The Danger of Hell**

Jesus warns us about hell three times in Matthew 5:21-37. If, as Tim says this week, it is Jesus himself who has been obedient to the law on our behalf, then why would he warn us of hell? Shouldn't salvation mean that we are safe and don't need to worry about it anymore? Jesus' warnings about hell reveal at least two important facts to us about humanity's adoption as the Father's children in Jesus:

1. **We are always in danger of the delusion that we can be God.** In Deuteronomy 30 the Lord called Israel to live the faithfulness of the Triune Life and they failed. In its delusion Israel thought that they were doing a good job of it, but in Matthew 5 Jesus reveals that we are all delusional and are not doing a good job. Only the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can refrain from calling others fools (v. 22) and never exploit others for their own pleasure (v. 28). Only God never resorts to the verbal manipulation that John describes in his article this week.
2. **We are really, actually included in God's life.** Since we can't be God, and can't independently live the Triune Life, the Trinity has adopted our human nature into the Father's relationship with the Son. This is who Jesus is—he is our inclusion in the real, actual life of God. This means that hell remains a real possibility. Not as a punishment for wrongdoing but as the natural misery of being really included in God's life and yet believing and living as though we are not included.

Jesus' proclamation to us in Matthew 5 is this: "In me you are the Father's child! Believe this truth of your belonging so that you can become what you really are and not suffer the hellish pain of fighting your true identity."

*~ Jonathan Stepp*