**Hell & Unrealistic Optimism**

After reading the book called Nudge, (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009), I am more self-aware of the real challenge of being self-deceived. They point out that it is well known that about 50% of marriages end in divorce. “But around the time of the ceremony, almost all couples believe that there is approximately a zero percent chance that their marriage will end in divorce” and likewise, “about 94 percent of professors at a large university were found to believe that they are better than the average professor” (p. 32). No wonder the Bible repeatedly says, “do not be deceived” (1Cor. 6:9, 15:33, Gal. 6:7, James 1:16).

I can easily see how this over-optimism spills over into our view of heaven and hell. “In 2003 a research group discovered 64% of Americans expect to go to heaven when they die, but less than 1% think they might go to hell”. Jesus seems to teach the opposite, when he was asked, “Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?” And He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:23-24). On another occasion he said, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Mat. 7:13-14). Have I become overly optimistic? Do I consistently choose the straight and narrow way? Is Jesus trying to check my over-optimism?

Jesus, who knows about the afterlife more than any, warns us about hell. He used the word 11 times out of the 12 times the word is used in the New Testament. He describes it as, “ …hell, into the unquenchable fire” … where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.” (Mark 9:43-48). “and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:42).

Conclusion: Let us faithfully learn and obey all the sayings of Jesus, this is discipleship. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” said Jesus. (Mat. 28:19-20). “All that I command you” is what follows baptism. Dan Peters