

and you know ...

Congregant Monologue

I've been thinking a lot about the sermon you preached, and I think about what you said about this church, and the walls of this church, how we've built up walls, how we have cut ourselves off from the world.

And what you said about distance and communication, and what you said about Hell, how the Bible says, in a lot of ways, that there is no Hell, and that through Christ all are saved, and yes, all of that makes sense.

~~Start~~

It makes me really sad that people left the church because of what you preached. Some of those who left are really close friends of mine. Those friends — I feel like they look at me differently than they used to look at me. I call them up, ask them to get coffee with me, and they don't. They're too busy. And before they hang up, they say they're praying for me like there was something wrong with me.

PASTOR.

~~...sorry to hear that, Sister Jenny~~

CONGREGANT. (*Nods, almost inaudibly says "thank you," maybe off-mic. Continues reading.*)

an' it makes me feel judged and bad and I think this is the thing you were trying to fix with your sermon, but in some ways it made it worse.

I don't know how to respond to them when they ask me questions that I don't have answers to. A lot of us are getting asked a lot of the same questions from the people who left and went to the new church that Brother Joshua started.

They point to other Bible verses where it doesn't sound like Hell is just a trash dump. Like for example, there's one where Jesus talks about your soul being burned in the thing you're calling a trash dump and it makes me wonder if it's a real trash dump then how does it burn a soul. It's as if you have a choice about how to read it.

And my kid asks me questions, about how what we believe could just so suddenly change. And when he asks me, then I get nervous because I see myself as leading him. I pick the church we go to, and so in a way I'm really responsible for his soul. Our lives are hard enough already, I don't need to be jeopardizing the spiritual well-being of my son.

And then this guy I was seeing, a guy I met last November in singles group, just last week he left and went to Brother Joshua's new church. He's been asking a lot of questions.

I try to defend you when he asks me about it. He says things like "Well if there's no punishment why should we be good?"

And I say, "We are good because we know that's right, because if we're just being good because we're scared of getting in trouble,

that's not really being good."

And then he says, "But if there's no punishment for being a sinner, isn't that a slap in the face to those who are good?"

But then I'm like, "That's not our problem — worrying about whether or not other people are getting punished."

PASTOR.

I think that's a very good answer, Jenny, I —

~~END~~

CONGREGANT. (*Takes the mic in her hand.*)

And then the guy, he asked me,

"What about someone like Hitler, if there's no Hell, then what about him. Where does he go?"

