

Subject: *God's Wrath and the Gospel*

Scripture: *Romans 1:18-19*

The subject of God's wrath is not a popular topic these days. It never has been. On July 8, 1741, Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon in Enfield, Connecticut. His subject was "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." You're not likely to hear a sermon like that in our modern age. Has God changed? No. His attributes are always the same and God's wrath is one of His attributes or perfections. A. W. Tozer wrote: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." If we are not careful we will have a concept of God that is not true because it is not Biblical. We must remember the wrath of God and never forget it.

1. The REALITY of God's wrath

Paul is only 18 verses into this Epistle to the Romans and he has mentioned two very serious themes: the righteousness of God (vs. 17) and the wrath of God (vs. 18). These are not popular concepts, but they are Biblical and they are important truths we need to understand. The bad news is that God is righteous and we are not. The bad news is that God is angry with sin and judges it. But that bad news is what makes the good news really good news.

The wrath of God is real. You may ignore it, you may dislike it, you may disagree with it, you may reject it, but you cannot change the fact—God's wrath is real. Regardless of what you may think or feel, God's wrath is real.

A. W. Pink said: "It is sad indeed to find so many professing Christians who appear to regard the wrath of God as something for which they need to make an apology, or at least wish there were no such thing."

Charles Spurgeon said: "Some there be who sit in judgment upon the great Judge, and condemn the punishment which he afflicts as too severe. As for myself, I cannot measure the power of God's anger; but let it burn as it may, I am sure that it will be just."

The wrath of God, what does that mean? God's wrath is not an emotional outburst of anger. It is not when God is in a bad mood. God's wrath is His constant and righteous anger against sin. His wrath is His holy hatred of sin. God opposes sin with all of His being in every person, place, and time in which He finds it. He hates sin in all its forms: vile sins, wicked sins, and respectable sins. He hates sin in Satan, Pharaoh, Jezebel, and Judas, and He also hates it in Moses, David, Peter, and modern-day Christians.

2. The REVELATION of God's wrath

Our text in Romans 1:18 states that the wrath of God "is revealed from heaven." God has given plenty of evidence that His wrath is real. God has revealed His wrath against sin in many ways since the beginning of time. God's wrath was poured out in the worldwide flood, upon Sodom and Gomorrah, upon Israel and other nations.

Jeremiah 10:10 *But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.*

God revealed His wrath when Jesus came to earth because He had more to say about Hell than anyone else. He spoke more often about hell than about heaven.

Matthew 10:28 *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

But God is not quick to anger and quick to punish. The Bible says He is slow to anger.

Nahum 1:2-3 ² *God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.* ³ *The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.*

In the Book of Jonah we see God's wrath restrained. God threatened to destroy Nineveh but spared them when they repented of their sins. In the Book of Nahum we see God's wrath released. God destroyed Nineveh when they returned to their wicked ways and hardened their hearts toward God. God's wrath is slow, but it is sure.

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* God's wrath is a present reality for all people who do not are not committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

All unbelievers deserve God's wrath and are constantly exposed to it. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2 that sinners are by nature "children of wrath." Jonathan Edwards said: "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God."

3. The REASON for God's wrath

Our text says that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold (hold back, suppress) the truth in unrighteousness. Ungodliness is a lack of reverence for God, devotion to God, true worship of God. Unrighteousness is lack of conforming to God and His will. Romans 3:10 says there is none righteous, no, not one. All people by nature choose to live ungodly and unrighteous lives.

God is angry with sinners not only because they sin, but what's even worse, they suppress the truth about God and choose to live in their sin. People choose to reject God and His truth so they can live the way they want to.

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 ¹¹ *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:* ¹² *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* The choice people face is not truth versus error, but truth versus pleasure in unrighteousness. Jesus said this is the reason why people are condemned in their sins.

John 3:19-20 ¹⁹ *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* ²⁰ *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*

4. The REFUGE from God's wrath

Romans 5:6 *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

Romans 5:8-9 ⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 ⁹ For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; ¹⁰ And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me / Let me hide myself in Thee
Let the water and the blood / From thy wounded side which flowed
Be of sin the double cure / Save from wrath and make me pure*

Nahum 1:7 The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

The wrath of God is bad news, but there is good news. Jesus died in our place and for our sins. God poured out His wrath on Christ, so that we might be justified and forgiven. The Bible word is propitiation. Christ died as our propitiation, the sacrifice that satisfied God's holiness and righteousness and took away God's wrath against our sin.

The good news is that you can place your faith where God has placed your sins. You can escape the righteous wrath of God by being in Christ.