

2 Thessalonians (9): “Praying to God”

In our last two studies of 2 Thessalonians 2, we addressed three main points set forth by the Apostle Paul.

- 1. Giving thanks to God for our salvation (vs. 13, 14)**
- 2. Rendering faithful obedience to God’s Word in response to our salvation by His grace (v. 15)**
- 3. Prayer to God that He would comfort and establish our hearts (vs. 16, 17)**

We did not address this third matter in detail, so we will do so now, but only briefly. In the final two verses of our passage Paul set forth our responsibility to offer...

III. Prayer to God that He would comfort and establish our hearts (2:16, 17)

Paul wrote,

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.”

Paul wrote of his prayer to God on behalf of these Christians. Although Paul had written to these Christians of perilous times before them, He prayed that the Lord would enable them to experience His comfort through the knowledge of eternal life that He had freely given them through His grace. This confident hope should move them to order their lives in a manner that would please God. He desired that the work of God’s grace on their behalf would be shown forth by them through their words and their actions.

God the Father and Jesus Christ may impart this sense of well-being to the soul. For God loves his people and has designed their good and their glorious future. He has already given them the ground for receiving this comfort and their establishment in every good work and word, for He “loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace.”

Now it is important to see the larger context in which verses 16 and 17 are written. In verse 13 the apostle wrote that Christians ought always to thank God for He had elected them from eternity to be saved unto Him from their sin. He wrote, “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved.” We read in verse 15 that in response to this blessed grace of God bestowed upon them, the apostle commanded these Christians to be obedient to the Word of the Lord. He wrote, “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.” Then in verses 16 and 17 Paul informed them that the Lord would enable them to obey the things that God commanded of them. “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father... comfort your hearts and establish them (i.e. your hearts) in every good work and word.” God the Father and His Son would enable them to be obedient to His Word. Their obedience to their God was the appropriate response to God’s election of them. Their obedience of God was also proof to themselves that they were, indeed, the elect of God. **Greg Beale** wrote of this emphasis of the apostle in this passage:

It is *our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father* who will *encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word*. God and His Messiah give believers the ability to obey what they command them to do. This reiterates Paul's similar teaching earlier: "May the Lord make your love increase and overflow" and "strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy" (1 Thess. 3:12-13). Especially similar is Paul's command to "hold on to the good" (5:21), which is followed by the means to obey the command: "May God himself... sanctify you through and through (5:23; see also 5:24; Heb. 13:20-21).

When one knows that God is going to give the strength to obey, such knowledge does not lead to inaction but creates a desire to do what God wants. Paul knew this from his own experience of God's grace (1 Cor. 15:10), and he applied the same notion to other Christians (2 Cor. 9:7-8). Knowing we have the moral power to obey instills in us a desire to comply with God's precepts.

Those who have never embraced the gospel, however, have no desire to obey God because they have no moral ability to do so. They have no compulsion to rise up from their spiritual coffins to please and obey God. They are spiritually "dead in [their] transgressions" and are inspired not by God for good but by "this world and... the ruler of the kingdom of the air [satan], the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient." Consequently, they are dominated by their "sinful nature and follow its desires" (Eph. 2:1-3).¹

Now there are some true Christians who needlessly trouble themselves respecting their souls. They focus solely upon the sin of their own souls while they fail to look at what God has promised them and has secured for them in Jesus Christ. We are to be as Paul by praying that the Lord would bring comfort to the souls of these troubled brethren, that He would confirm them in their commitment to cleave unto Him in faith.

We now arrive to 2 Thessalonians 3. Paul began to conclude his epistle by asking prayer for him and his brethren that the Lord would bless the Word of God that they promoted and were proclaiming. And so, after the apostle told these Christians he was praying for them, he asked that they would pray for him. Let us read 3:1-5.

"Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, ²and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. ³But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. ⁴And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. ⁵May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ."

Let us consider precisely what Paul was asserting.

I. The command to pray for Paul and his companions. "Finally, brothers, pray for us" (3:1).

Although Paul had asserted very clearly and strongly the sovereignty of God in bringing salvation to His chosen people, Paul desired and required the prayer of God's people on His behalf. He did not regard the sovereignty of God to dismiss or discredit the use of means in accomplishing God's work in God's world. God has decreed that He will accomplish His work of salvation in history, but that He

¹ Greg K. Beale, *1-2 Thessalonians*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (InterVarsity Press, 2003), pp. 231f.

would do so through the means of prayer. God must act in order that His Word would be advanced. God must be petitioned by His people if they would have Him act through them and in their midst.

If Paul was in need of prayer in order to be used of the Lord, do not we also? Let us be faithful and obedient to pray to the same end that Paul commanded this church.

A. They were to pray for the ministry of the Word of God (3:1)

They were to pray to God respecting two great needs for Paul and his companions.

1. They were to pray for God's blessing upon the ministry of His Word. Again, verse 1 reads, "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you..." Paul desired that God would cause His Word to "speed ahead", or perhaps understood better and simply, "that the Word of the Lord runs." The Word of God is described as a "runner" and the need is for this runner to run fast. Perhaps the idea of Psalm 147:15 was in mind: "He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly." The Word of God is personified as a runner that God had dispatched to take forth a message of salvation to many hearers.

2. They were to pray that God's Word would "be honored." This speaks of people hearing and receiving the Word of God with great regard and with much appreciation. The Holy Scriptures describes times and places when the Word of God is not regarded highly by people. We read in Isaiah's prophecy,

Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth is fallen in the street,
And equity cannot enter. (Isa. 59:14)

But God would have His Word highly regarded. He brings people to honor His Word when He uses His Word to transform powerfully hardened, rebellious sinners into humble, compliant, and obedient Christians.

It is clear that when Paul first preached at Thessalonica there were spectacular results. Many were speedily converted. It is this kind of free movement of the word of God that he has in mind. With this he couples the idea of the word's "being glorified" (i.e. honored). Men are led to glorify the word when they see what it does. There may also be a glance at the idea that, when the word is operative in the way spoken of, it displays its glories before men. Both verbs are in the present subjunctive, and the significance of this continuous tense should not be overlooked. Paul is not looking for a single striking manifestation of the word, but for its continuous swift advance, and for its continual arousing of admiration.²

But Paul had left the region up north and the word had not much success through him in Athens or in the early months of Corinth, at least to the degree that it had formerly. The Lord Himself appeared to Paul in Corinth to encourage him in the work, perhaps to prevent his discouragement (Cf. Acts 18:9f.). Perhaps he was asking the church at Thessalonica to pray for the word to run swiftly and be honored because he desired a similar work of God's salvation to be seen in his present ministry of the word as he had seen in his earlier ministry among them. Again, he wrote to them, "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, *as happened among you.*"

² Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (William. B. Eerdmans, 1959), p. 244f.

We read that the Word of God is very powerful and an effectual means of bringing people to salvation. For example, we read in Hebrews 4:12f,

¹²For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

But the Holy Spirit must wield the Word of God as a sword, if it is to be effectual to the salvation of sinners. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. Paul wrote, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:17). We must pray that the Lord summons the

B. Paul asked that they pray “that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men.”

We might ask if there is difference between “wicked” men and “evil” men. The word translated as “wicked” is translated by the other major English translations as “unreasonable.” It bears the idea of being out of place. In other words, these men were “improper, and so, unrighteous.”³ They were also “evil”, which speaks to their bad temper toward the Lord’s servants.

Apparently Paul was not requesting prayer to be delivered from evil men in general, but he is suggesting the need of deliverance from a particular situation with what he was enduring. He is probably referring to Jewish men in Corinth who had been opposing him and seeking to do him harm. Paul was asking for prayer that He would deliver him from these men.

But so it is, sometimes Christians find themselves being opposed directly by unreasonable and evil men. What are we to do? We are to pray that the Lord would deliver us from such men. There are times when we need the Lord to intervene in order to rescue us when we are in great danger.

Paul told them to pray for deliverance from these evil men, “For not all have faith” (3:2). These men have no true faith in the Lord. But actually, the word “faith” in the Greek text is preceded by the article, “the.” Paul was saying that not all men have “the faith”, that is, a knowledge of and commitment to the Christian faith. This would seem to be further evidence that the “wicked and evil men” were Jewish men in Corinth who rejected the Christian faith.

II. The faithfulness of the Lord to establish His people. (3:3)

In contrast to these unfaithful men, Paul wrote, “*But the Lord is faithful.*” This is a very important and foundational matter in our understanding of our God and how we relate to Him and how He relates to the world that He created. Paul was asserting that the Lord God would be faithful to all of His purposes and all of His commitments. When we speak of the Lord as faithful, we are really touching on one of His very important attributes. This is the attribute of His *immutability*. When we say that **God is immutable**, which means that our God is unchangeable; or stated positively, “the Lord is faithful.” Let us give consideration to this important doctrine.

God is immutable, which means that our God is unchangeable, and unchanging. It is clearly stated in numbers of places in Holy Scripture, and it is everywhere illustrated in Holy Scripture. For example, Malachi 3:6 states, “I am the Lord, I do not change, and therefore you are not consumed, o sons of Jacob.” And so thankfully the sons of Jacob, the Israelites at that time in history, could thank God they were still alive and existing because God did not change.

In addition, consider these verses. We could multiply their number, but we will cite these

³ Ibid, pp. 245f.

Psalm 102:25. “Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. ²⁶They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. ²⁷**But You are the same**, and Your years will have no end.”

Numbers 23:19. “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”

1 Samuel 15:29 -- NASV. “He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man, that He should change His mind.”

When we say that our God is immutable, we are saying that God never changes whatsoever. He is always the same, and this means that God does not change in His essential being, and God does not change in His purposes or commitments. God is faithful to His covenantal commitments to the human race, because God is immutable; God changes not.

Now immutability is one of God’s incommunicable attributes. A common way that Christian pastors and theologians have categorized God’s attributes, or His essential traits, are into two groups: those attributes that are communicable and those attributes that are incommunicable. God’s incommunicable attributes are those that are true to God alone, attributes that cannot be mirrored by the Christian, or, nor can they be characteristic of the Christian. Immutability is one of God’s incommunicable attributes. We are changeable, that is, mutable, and we cannot be immutable. God is unchanging, that is, He is immutable, and He cannot be mutable. And therefore, the Creator/creature distinction is sharply seen in this attribute of God’s immutability. And so **Arthur Pink** said of this trait, immutability:

“This is one of the divine perfections which is not sufficiently pondered. It is one of the excellencies of the Creator that distinguishes Him from all His creatures. God is perpetually the same: subject to no change in His being, attributes, or determinations. Therefore God is compared to a rock (Deut. 32:4, etc.) that remains immovable, when the entire ocean surrounding it is continually in a fluctuating state; even so, though all creatures are subject to change, God is immutable. Because God has no beginning and no ending, He can know no change. He is everlastingly ‘the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning’”

And that of course is taken from James 1:17. And Arthur Pink is right.

Now God is immutable in a number of ways or arenas. **First**, God is immutable in His *essence*. God’s nature or essence is never changing. God has always been God and will always be God. There never has been change in, essentially, who He is. God is immutable from eternity. Even unto eternity, God has never changed; He has never evolved, developed, improved or diminished with respect to His essence. And therefore we exclaim and rejoice before our God, as did the Psalmist, “Before the mountains were brought forth or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.” (Psalm 90:2) God can never develop, nor can He suffer loss. When God described Himself, the best He could say was, “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14).

Secondly, God is not only immutable in His essence, but God is immutable in His *attributes*. God’s attributes could no more change than God’s essence can change, for God’s attributes are His essence. His attributes are who He is in truth. The creation of this world and the unfolding of the history of mankind brought no change to God. Now again, I quote **Arthur Pink** about this.

“[God’s] power is unabated, His wisdom undiminished, His holiness unsullied. The attributes of God can no more change than Deity can cease to be. His veracity is immutable, for His Word is ‘forever settled in heaven’ (Psa. 119:89). His love is eternal: ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love’ (Jer. 31:3) and ‘Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end’ (John 13:1). [God’s] mercy ceases not, for it is ‘everlasting’ (Psa. 100:5).”

And so God is unchangeable in His essence, God is unchangeable in His attributes, and **thirdly** God is immutable or unchangeable in His *counsel*. In other words, God’s will does not change. Now when we speak of God’s will as taught in Scripture, we must speak of it in two senses. First, there is **God’s will in precept**, or law, what God desires and wishes man would conform his thinking and his life to. And then secondly, there is **God’s will of decree**, that is, what God has determined from eternity whatsoever will come to pass in history. And so God’s will of His decree, that is, His purpose does not change, but God’s will of precept may change as God wills. And so, although God Himself is unchangeable, and His overarching goals and purposes that He has determined would occur in history never **change**, nevertheless the manner of God’s dealings and the details of, say, His laws or expectations of His people may vary in history.

For example, God may choose to change His laws, depending what God is attempting to do in various stages of history. We read when God exalted His Son to be the believer’s High Priest, it necessitated a change of law. Hebrews 7:12 reads, “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.”

Another example in the way that God may change His laws is in the area of the prescribed diet for His people. I think this is a good illustration. In the beginning, after God created mankind, God restricted their diet to be vegetarian only. We read in Genesis 2:9, “And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.” But later after the flood, we read of God speaking to Noah. “So God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.’” That is Genesis 9:1-4. And so, here, God gave His law to Noah and the generations after him the restriction of their diet was that they were to be sure that all animals they ate would be bled properly and completely before consumed.

But the Lord changed His law once again regarding the diet for His people when He gave His law to His people through Moses. Then God declared that His people could not eat anything except that which God permitted, and so God gave an extensive, detailed list of clean and unclean foods, which He imposed upon His people as their diet. And this is listed for us in Leviticus 11. Leviticus 11:1ff,

“Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, saying, “These are the animals which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth: Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud-- that you may eat. Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They are unclean to you. These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers-- that you may eat. But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which is in the water, they are an abomination to you. They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall

regard their carcasses as an abomination. Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales-- that shall be an abomination to you.”””

And so, foods like lobsters and clams were forbidden then. Now I'll continue reading with Leviticus 11, just to show again the variety of the clean and unclean animals.

“““And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind; every raven after its kind, the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe [whatever that is], and the bat. All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you. Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those that have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. But all other flying insects which have four feet shall be an abomination to you.”””

And so I read that lengthy list to show you the very clear instruction as to what was allowed and what was forbidden by God; God had changed His law respecting the diet for His people.

But once again God changed His laws of diet respecting His people in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus abolished the former distinctions between clean and unclean animals, and He allowed, once again, for God's people to be free to eat any kind of diet, provided that God is thanked for His provision. We read of this change that took place in Mark 7:14-19.

“And he called the people to him again and said to them, ‘Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.’ And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, ‘Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?’ and then Mark adds this parenthesis, this explanation, (Thus he declared all foods clean.)”

And we see this carried out in the rest of the New Testament. We read of Paul's instruction regarding this matter of diet in Romans 14.

“Receive one who is weak in the faith but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat. Let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has received him. Who are you to judge another servant, to his own master he stands or falls. Indeed he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another, another esteems every day alike; let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord. He who does not observe the day to the Lord, he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks. And he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself and no one dies to himself.”

That was Romans 14:1 through 7. And then Paul also wrote to the Colossians, the church at Colossi, “Let no one judge you in food or in drink or regarding a festival or new moon or sabbaths which are a shadow of things to come but the substance is of Christ” (Col. 2:16).

And so, God may change the ways in which He deals with people in different times in history but His essential being is unchanged and unaffected. His attributes, which are his essence, do not change and God's eternal purposes that he has decreed from eternity do not change.

Now I might say this, our Pentecostal friends commonly err in failing to make this distinction between the unchangeable essence and the unchangeable purpose of God and the changeable manner in which God commands, leads, and uses His people. They argue that because God is immutable, that is unchanging, that means that all of God's spiritual gifts that were available and operative in the first century are also available and manifest themselves today. After all, they argue, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever", quoting Hebrews 13:8. They are confusing the immutable essence and nature of God with the changeable manner in which He deals with people. They offer a false argument. Just as God changed diet laws, God has changed in His dealings with people regarding revelatory gifts, but they misunderstand what immutability means. And so God may change in the manner that he deals with people but his intentional purposes do not change. His counsel does not change. God is immutable in his counsel. For as we read, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). It must be so, for as Job wrote, "But God is unchangeable and who can turn him back? What God desires, that He does" (Job 23:13). And Psalm 33:11 reads, "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

And so, first, God is immutable in his essence. Secondly, God is immutable in his attributes. Thirdly, God is immutable in his council, in other words, his will does not change. And thankfully, ***Fourthly, God is immutable in His love for His people.*** Here are the words of **John Gill** (1697-1771) on the matter,

"God is unchangeable in his love and affections to his people. His love to them is from everlasting to everlasting. Without any variation in his own heart, how ever different the manifestations of it may be to them, he ever rests in his love, never alters, nothing can separate from it – he is love itself, it is as unchangeable as himself, the same today, yesterday, and forever. Afflictions are no evidence of a change of affections to them though God may thoroughly chastise them, and as they may think, severely. Yet God deals with them but as children and like Ephraim, they are his dear sons and daughters and pleasant children in whom he takes the utmost complacency and delight. Chastenings are rather proofs of his sonship, not arguments against it. God's rebukes of them are rebukes in love and not in wrath and hot displeasure. Though God visits their transgressions with a rod and stripes he does not utterly nor take it all, take away his lovingkindness in Christ from them."

Gill was right. He then cited a number of passages to substantiate this (See Jeremiah 31:18, Hebrews 12, Revelation 3, Psalm 89.) And so, our God thankfully, is immutable.

But how different is God from us? God is unchangeable, but we are always changing. Paul wrote, "Not all men have the faith, or, are faithful." God's purposes never change but we are a fickle people. God accomplishes all his will, for His will will be done. We can not seem to get through a day without having to change our plans, accommodate our wishes and adjust our intentions. But God is faithful. And so the people of God, those who know Jesus Christ in truth as Lord and Saviour, may rest in the immutability of our God. We take confidence in God's promise that he has given to us, for he does not change. We may read and believe God's word, for his counsel does not change. We live in a world and universe in which everything changes, our God remains the same.

God's promises are true and they are unchangeable respecting us. God declared, "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed but my kindness," God declares, "shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed," says the Lord, that has mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:10). Therefore, if you are a Christian, you truly know the Lord Jesus as your Lord and Saviour,

consider how faithful your Lord is to you because of his immutability. Consider the words of this hymn entitled, "One is Kind Above All Others":

One is kind above all others,
Oh how He loves,
His is love beyond a brother's,
Oh how He loves.

Earthly friends may fall and leave thee,
One day kind, the next day grieve thee,
But this Friend will ne'er deceive thee,
Oh how He loves."

Then I am reminded of the old hymn, "Jesus Never Fails,"

Earthly friends may prove untrue,
And doubts and fears assail,
One still loves and cares for you,
One who will not fail,

Though the sky be dark and drear,
Fears and strong the gails,
Just remember God is near,
And He will not fail.

In life's dark and bitter hour
Love will still prevail,
His everlasting power,
Jesus will not fail.

And then the chorus goes this way,

Jesus never fails,
Jesus never fails,
Heaven and earth may pass away,
But Jesus never fails.

So the Christian may read or sing those words with peace in his soul for he knows God is true. "But the Lord is faithful." God will not fail, for God is immutable in His essence, immutable in His attributes, immutable in His decrees or council. God will accomplish all that He has promised His people for He changes not.

And I might close with these words from **Arthur Pink**, and let's speak to the non-christian for a moment. Please give attention to this.

"Herein is terror for the wicked, those who defy God, break His laws, have no concern for His glory, but live their lives as though God existed not, must not suppose that when at the last they shall cry to Him for mercy, He will alter His will, revoke His word, and rescind His awful threatenings. No, God has declared, "Therefore will I also deal in fury. Mine eyes shall not spare, neither will I have pity. And though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them" (Ezek. 8:18). God will not deny himself in order to gratify their lusts, for God is holy,

unchangingly so. And therefore, God hates sin, eternally hates sin. Hence the eternity of the punishment of all who die in their sins. And so the divine immutability, like the cloud which interposed between the Israelites and the Egyptian army has a dark as well as a light side. It ensures the execution of His threatenings as well as the performance of His promises.

And so we close, Christian, take to heart the unchangeable mercy of God. Non-Christian, take to heart the unchangeable wrath of God upon sin and sinners. Come to Christ in faith.

May the LORD give strength to his people!
May the LORD bless his people with peace! (Psa. 29:11)
