

Hebrews 6.7-8

Near Unto Burning

The difficulty of truth is its starkness. We don't always like the things that simply cannot be avoided and are often painful as well. This is the case with today's passage. It is a painful truth that we must acknowledge and deal with, for attempting to avoid it only endangers us and the ones we love. God is a God of love and mercy, but He also is a God of wrath. His wrath is beyond our ability to comprehend, the terror of that reality alone destroys us, let alone the truth of it unpacked and laid bare. His wrath is reserved for those who are not found in Christ and who thus have no advocate, no substitute and certainly no excuse. They are those who have opted to stand on their own two feet and deal with God man to man, as it were... they will find to their everlasting sorrow that they have not a leg on which to stand.

I. THE HEART IS BAD

Jeremiah 17.9

- a. NOT the seed
- b. NOT the care
- c. Bears briars and thorns instead of good fruit
- d. Important to note that the object of all this is STILL those inside the church who are exposed to the truth but persist in sin and rebellion. They are false, they are NOT converted but instead are pretenders; but they are given EVERY opportunity and EVERY outward help, the word is lavished upon them and the exposure to real Christians with good fruit is nearly constant.

II. BAD EARTH

- a. The earth (or the heart) is here like unto the grave. Remember that the word used to bear is the same word in the greek to bear out a body for burial. The fruit of the grave is decay and sorrow. So, too, is the fruit of sin.
 - i. Cold

- ii. Foul
 - iii. Dark
 - iv. Hopeless
 - v. Sorrowful
- b. No amount of good work can make the grave produce anything else. So too with our sin. Left to our own devices and efforts, our lives will always produce ruin and misery. Only the mercy of God can overcome our natural tendency to sin and draw us to life. Only the mercy of God can raise the dead.

III. FOREST OF THORNS

- a. They hinder all good growth - so, too, does sin hinder all good produce of righteousness. Further they will choke out existing good fruit and good plants by encroachment.

1Corinthians 15.33-34

- b. Briars and thorns grow in bunches. All heaped together, they will kill everything else but

themselves are not seemingly harmed by their own damaging effects. The ungodly are attracted to one another and their evil grows and multiplies in the swamp of their wicked influence.

Proverbs 1.10-16

- c. They are refuge for the most wicked of deeds, large sins are more easily produced in the company of small ones. The more comfortable you become with the small deeds, the more easily the great sins find a foothold.

- d. They wound and maim - the word for thorns is <tribolos> it is derived from two words one meaning point, spike or dart the other meaning three. This is the sand goat head, like the caltrop of ancient roman warfare, it always has a sharp spike pointing upwards and will maim anything that steps on it... this is the reality of our sin. We cannot, WILL NOT escape without great harm.

IV. What to do with them?

- a. Thorns embedded will fester and rot - so too does unconfessed and unrepented sin... it will fester and rot the soul.

- b. Those with sense and mind will draw out the thorn from the flesh. Those with spiritual sense and understanding will draw out the sin and repent.
 - i. We should never be comfortable with our sin.
 - ii. Never be OK with it,
 - iii. never excuse it
 - iv. Certainly never make way for it
 - v. We should hate it
 - vi. We should seek to destroy it
 - vii. We should fence our lives away from it
 - viii. We should have things in place which will prevent us from indulging in our vices

V. THREEFOLD CURSE UPON THIS GROUND

- a. Time is in play
 - i. Presently rejected

- ii. Prepared for cursing
- iii. Finally reserved for total destruction - this is the same manner in which we deal with thorns. We pull them, leave them to dry and will eventually burn them.

b. Rejected or reprovved, they are disallowed by God and have no part in the inheritance of the saints. It is currency NOT accepted in the heavenly exchange. The only produce is wickedness and vice and God is not blind to it regardless of how man thinks he gets away with his secret sins. Partly because the impact is so terrible on the true church, partly because of the offense of the effort... they are also to be rejected by us...

2Timothy 3.1-5

Jude 4-19

c. Near to being cursed

- i. The approach of the doom is slow and ponderous. There is still time to repent!

There is still time to turn from your sin and call out to God for mercy...

- ii. If there life there is hope, this is an always true thing. We cannot ever know who is utterly rejected of God and who is merely being shaped for repentance and must always approach the question with fear and with the prayer for mercy on our lips.
- iii. If the present course is unchanged, the cursing is sure doom and will certainly come... but so long as life endures, there is the potential for and the possibility of repentance. This is our aim and our hope in all of our interaction with the lost. Aim them at Christ, aim them at the hope which can only be theirs in HIM. For nothing else will deliver them from the wrath to come.

John 15.5-8

- iv. This doom is CERTAIN if repentance is not made, if mercy is not sought. Do not think that you will escape

Hebrews 10.26-31

- d. End is to be burned - In the end there is no possibility of escaping the wrath of God if you are not found in Christ.
 - i. No amount of "good deeds"
 - ii. No amount of religious fervor or outward faithfulness
 - iii. No amount of anyone else's good or your own pedigree
 - iv. No other god can deliver you from the hand of God
 - v. No saint, no angel no demon can help. You will fall into the hand of the living God and He will either preserve you or He will cast you away for eternal destruction.

VI. HELL IS ETERNAL

- a.No one escapes the judgement of God

Revelation 20.11-15

b. This fire is not ever to be quenched

Matthew 18.6-11

Matthew 25.41-46

c. Prepared for the devil and his angels

i. Those of the rebellion of heaven

ii. But also, perhaps those of this world who have been agents of Satan, knowingly or unknowingly. Perhaps those who serve only themselves, seeking only their own way can be rightly thought of as the angels of Satan...

d. Righteous fire and Holy indignation

Isaiah 66.14-16

Isaiah 66.22-24

e. Hell honors the righteousness of God. Those who hate God OUGHT to be punished forever. For God is the greatest good and best of beings. There is not one thing about Him which is not perfect and worthy of praise... even His wrath.

f. Today is the day of escape, TODAY is the day of mercy. There is NO promise of another. Flee the coming wrath and fly to Christ. Seek mercy you will NOT be rejected if you cry for mercy.

2 Corinthians 5.21-6.2