

# (Romans) the Wrath of God

by Brian Brodersen

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*Brian Brodersen's sermon explores the biblical doctrine of God's wrath, emphasizing its relevance and necessity in understanding the gospel and sin's consequences.*

**Duration:** 48:05

**Scripture:** Genesis 3, Exodus 12:1-13, Matthew 25:31-46, Mark 9:42-48, Luke 13:1-5, Romans 1:18, Romans 3:23

**Topics:** "Gods Wrath", "Gospel Message"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of suppressing the truth in unrighteousness and how it leads to rebellion against God. He emphasizes that everyone, throughout history, has engaged in this behavior. As a result, all people have come under God's wrath. However, the preacher also highlights the good news of the gospel, which offers a way to escape judgment by being covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the importance of sharing this message with compassion and love, as God's judgment in the present time is indirect, allowing people to experience the consequences of their actions.

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## Transcript

Let's turn tonight to Romans 1. I'm going to pick up in verse 18 or actually be studying verse 18 tonight, but we'll read through verses from 16 through 18. In verse 16, Paul had said, For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it, in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

And then as we move on, verse 18, he says, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. So, so Paul says, he says he's not ashamed of the gospel because in the gospel is this message of this righteousness that God provides for us, this righteousness that he provides for us, this righteousness that he will accept, this righteousness that gives us a standing before him. And Paul now goes on to show the absolute necessity of the gospel, because the only other alternative to the gospel is the wrath of God being poured out upon all ungodliness and all unrighteousness.

And that basically puts everyone in the human race in the same sinking boat of judgment. And so tonight we want to talk a little bit about this whole subject of the wrath of God. This certainly is not a popular subject and you don't hear much about it today.

And I think one of the reasons why the church is so, you know, quite frankly, filled with sin today is because we've left off this vital topic of the fact that God hates sin and he judges sin and he has displayed his wrath in the past and he will display it in a big way in the future. And he's even displaying it in a variety of ways currently. And we will look at all of that.

Were it not for Christ, all of us would have to suffer the wrath of God against sin. One of Paul's motives for preaching the gospel was his knowledge of God's impending judgment of sinners. In writing to the Corinthians in the second epistle, the fifth chapter, the 11th verse, he said this, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

So part of what motivated Paul to get the gospel to people was his understanding of judgment that was coming. Now, I suppose that there is nothing about the Christian message that is more objected to than this doctrine of the wrath of God against sin. Now, people are, you know, even if they're sort of agnostic or even maybe all the way over in the atheistic camp, you know, they will still sometimes have a bit of allowance or tolerance for, you know, a God of love.

But boy, when you start talking about judgment, you start talking about the wrath of God, this is something that just gets their ire up. This is something that just gets people so angry, so upset. I think it's particularly important in our day that we understand what the Bible has to say on this subject.

And that's really that's the issue right there. I want you guys to lay hold of that. And I know that many of you already understand that.

But but we need to it's what the Bible says is really the main issue. And unfortunately, today, people are making the mistake of looking in the wrong places and going to the wrong sources for answers to these kinds of questions. We've got to go back to the Bible.

What does the Bible say? Don't go to the philosophers and ask them about this. Don't even go to the church necessarily, because you can find many in the church that will deny the whole idea of the wrath of God. We have to go back to the Bible itself.

What does the Bible say? You know, one of the things that you can find in the church today, believe it or not, in denying this idea of the wrath of God, what they will say, some people in the church world today, they will say, well, you know, this idea of wrath, this was something that was sort of imposed upon the Christian religion by Paul. And and they will even, you know, paint Paul in a very negative light. And they will try to sort of juxtapose Paul over against Jesus.

And quite often what they will do is they will say, well, you know, all that wrath and judgment and all that that was Paul brought that in because of his rabbinical background. And basically, these guys loathe Paul. They hate him.

They reject everything that he has written, but they do so by saying, no, we just, you know, we want to hear what Jesus had to say. And we're going to put our stock in the words of the Lord Jesus. And we're not going to pay any attention to what Paul has to say.

You know, giving the impression that Jesus, of course, talked only about love and Jesus was tolerant of all kinds of things and turn the other cheek and love one another and all of that. And of course, Jesus did say that. But I don't know if you realize this or not, but the reality is Jesus spoke more of judgment than any other person in the scripture.

Jesus was the one who painted the vivid pictures of wrath and hellfire. And Jesus was the one who talked about the flames that were never quenched and about the the outer darkness where there's weeping of gnashing and gnashing of teeth. That's all comes from Jesus himself.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 25. He said, when the son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Then he will say to those on the left hand, depart from me. You cursed into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. Those are pretty straightforward and pretty harsh words, but they come directly from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You can read similar things in Mark chapter nine, verses 42 to 48, Luke chapter 13, verses one through five. You have coming directly from the Lord Jesus warnings about judgment. Now, the interesting thing about verse 18.

Paul says for the wrath of God is revealed and literally the wrath of God is being revealed currently, presently now, as we look at the revelation of the wrath of God, there is a past revelation, there's a present revelation, and there's a future revelation of the wrath of God, and that's what we want to talk about. For a moment in the past, as we look into the past, where do we see God's wrath revealed? Well, it all begins back in the very beginning. It begins in the garden as man breaks God's commandment.

You notice that God doesn't simply overlook the transgression. He doesn't say, oh, you know, you guys, I told I told you not to do that. Now, look, let's try it again.

You know, he doesn't do that. Why doesn't he do that? Because God is just. He's perfectly just and he's righteous and his word stands sure.

And he gave Adam a clear warning and instructions that were, you know, there was no ambiguity in the instructions that God gave. He said in the day that you eat this fruit, you will die. And that, of course, is what happened.

And so we see God's wrath began to be revealed immediately upon sins and entrance into the world as judgment comes upon Adam and Eve, as the curse of sin falls upon them and upon their posterity and upon the very planet itself that we live on. And you remember they were driven out of the garden and no longer allowed to live in the garden and also, in a sense, banished from God's presence, although God would still meet with them. But then time passes and men multiply on the earth, and we find that the next demonstration of God's judgment comes at the time of Noah, where God destroys the whole world.

He destroys the entire population of man and beast upon the earth. And, of course, we all know the story of Noah there recorded in Genesis six through nine and how that judgment took place after Noah comes forth from the ark and the earth is repopulated and people are gathering and assembling together. Once again, you remember they attempt to build a tower that will reach to the heavens.

And in this attempt to, again, sort of overthrow God or replace God, God brings the judgment of this dispersion. He judges the world by confounding their languages and scattering them all over the planet. That was a judgment at the Tower of Babel.

We find that there is a judgment recorded further on in Genesis, a judgment upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. You remember the story there, perhaps in Genesis 18 and 19, as the men of Sodom have given themselves over to homosexuality and all kinds of vileness. And Ezekiel, the prophet, tells us about Sodom that there was fullness of bread and there was idleness of hands.

And it was basically a culture that was just sort of living entirely and completely to indulge the flesh. And then we know the story of what happened, how the Lord sent the angels and the fire and brimstone raining down upon Sodom. And the next great demonstration of God's wrath is poured out upon the Egyptians.

We read about that in the book of Exodus, as God brings down His judgment upon Pharaoh and upon the land of Egypt. And in doing so, He liberates the children of Israel. And then we find that God brings a judgment upon the Canaanites.

And Joshua is God's instrument of judgment. What the flood was to the people in that generation, Joshua becomes God's instrument of judgment upon those Canaanites. And then we see that Israel, even after they've come into the land and received all the promises of God, as they've rebelled against God, then of course they experienced God's judgment with the Assyrian captivity, the Babylonian captivity, and many of the other things that followed after.

And ultimately, the final manifestation of God's judgment in the past was the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. That was the final manifestation of God's direct judgment upon people. Each one of the judgments that I just mentioned were a direct judgment by God.

Now, we have a judgment that's occurring presently, but it's not a direct judgment. It's an indirect judgment, and that's basically what Paul more or less lays out in the remainder of this first chapter. You see, presently, God is not directly judging like He did in the examples that I just gave you.

God's judgment today is indirect by allowing men to live as they will, and then also allowing them to reap the consequences of their behavior. And that's pretty much what the remainder of chapter 1 talks about. How men did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so God gave them over to a debased mind to do those things that are not fitting, being filled with all unrighteousness, and all of this kind of stuff that does go on and has gone on.

So that's what's happening presently. Now, there's a future judgment that's coming where God will once again directly judge the world. Now, this is something that I think is important for us to know and to have a grip on these days, especially since we've been having these catastrophic kinds of things going on as of late.

And, you know, one of the most common questions that people are asking is the question, Is this a judgment from God? Now, that's a, you know, it's a tough question to answer. A lot of times people, you know, jump real quickly with an answer. Oh, yes, of course.

What else could it be? And then there are others, you know, that would just deny it completely. No, no way. But I think as you look at the Scripture and as you look at the history, I think that what we would have to say is that we cannot make an absolute statement that any of these things are actually a judgment from God.

There would be all kinds of things that you would have to also answer, you know, to draw that final conclusion. Things like, well, why would God judge this place versus, you know, judging that place? I

mean, I can think of numerous places. I know we hear the stories now of what a wicked place New Orleans was.

But I myself, I think I could find a few places more wicked. So if God judged them, why hasn't he judged these others? So, you see, it starts getting into this thing where it really comes down to how can we make a final call on this? And I think the best way to look at it is to see that these are not necessarily a judgment from God, but they're certainly things that God is allowing to occur in the world for the purpose of getting people's attention. And that's exactly what's happening, isn't it? People are waking up to the, just to how tenuous life is.

You know, life, the brevity of life, just how quickly your whole life can be taken away from you. And people are starting to ask questions. I got a phone message on the way over.

I had a, you know, my little envelope was there, and I thought, oh, I'll check and see who called me. And a friend of mine just landed in Mississippi this morning, and he told me the moment they got out of their vehicle, they were greeted by a group of people who began to tell them all about, you know, the tragedy that they had experienced. And they, in turn, began to share the gospel with him, ended up praying for him.

He said they were totally open. And him and I were in New York City after 9-11, and he said to me, he said it's the same kind of atmosphere as there was in New York after 9-11, meaning that there's a tremendous openness on the part of people to listen to the gospel right now. So although I think we would be wrong in saying that this is a direct judgment from God, I think we would be absolutely right in saying that God is allowing these things to happen, and he's using it to wake people up to their need for a relationship with him.

Now, why do I say that you can't really call this a judgment from God? I say that because Paul said this in writing to the Corinthians. In the second epistle, the fifth chapter, he there said this, that God is not imputing men's sins to them, but instead he is offering them reconciliation. You see, we're living in the age of grace.

That's probably a good way to look at the age that we're living in. It's the age of grace. It's the age where God is not imputing men's trespasses to them, but he's offering them the free gift of salvation.

Not imputing, not charging them with their sin. In other words, to say that, well, the tsunami that took place, you know, and hit the coast of Thailand and wiped out those people there, well, you know, that was because they had all kinds of child pornography and all kinds of, you know, sin that was going on there. Well, God's not imputing men's sin to them right now.

And we have to realize that in all of these disasters, all these catastrophes, Christians have died as well. So, that's another dilemma. Now, how do you explain that one? If this is a judgment from God against wicked people, how come Christians are dying in the process of it? So, you see, it makes it difficult to be dogmatic about it.

But when we go back to looking at the scripture, that this age of grace is a time when God is not imputing men's trespasses to them, but rather, he's offering them reconciliation, we realize that that has been going on throughout the gospel age. That's what God's been doing. Now, the age of grace will come to a close.

And when it comes to a close, God will then actively begin to judge the world again. So, there is a current judgment going on, but it's an indirect one. It's from God allowing men to suffer the consequences of their deeds, their actions.

But in the future, God will once again, like he did in the flood, like he did in Sodom, Egypt, Jerusalem, he will once again actively step in and begin to judge the world. We call that the great tribulation period. Isaiah chapter 13, if you have your Bible, flip back to Isaiah for a moment with me.

Isaiah chapter 13 gives us a clear picture of that direct judgment of God that will come upon the world. Verse 9, Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light.

The sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and I will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, and a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. That's Isaiah's picture of what we commonly call the great tribulation.

Turn over to Revelation chapter 6 for a moment. Give you another picture of God's direct judgment. Revelation chapter 6, verse 15.

And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. And they said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath has come, and who is able to stand. So, wrath has been poured out.

It is presently being poured out, but in an indirect fashion. It will, once again in the future, be directly meted out by God upon the earth. So in the present time, as we see these things escalating, as, you know, who knows what else is going to happen.

But there have been quite a few things that have happened in the past year or so. Catastrophic kinds of things. Who knows how this will continue to go on, but you can look throughout all of history and find similar kinds of things.

You know, we talk about pestilence. And we've often heard, of course, that AIDS is in the category of a pestilence. And perhaps it is, but nothing like some of the pestilence that have already struck the earth.

You know, back in the medieval period in Europe when the Black Plague struck. And literally thousands and thousands of people dying daily. You know, we in our generation have not known anything like that.

But again, as you look back over all of those things, those things would not, you couldn't really find absolute biblical support for a judgment from God again, because quite often believers are swept up into all of that as well. But I want to point out one other thing to you regarding the wrath of God. You think about the things we mentioned, like the flood, like Egypt, like Israel, Jerusalem.

You think of men suffering, you know, consequences of their sin. You think of the future tribulation that's coming. But you know, the greatest display of God's wrath was not in any of those things.

The greatest display of God's wrath was in the cross of Jesus Christ. See, that's what was happening when Jesus was crucified. He was suffering the wrath of God.

Have you ever wondered why Christ was so brutally treated? He was brutalized. He was, you know, he wasn't merely put to death. He was brutalized in the process.

He was beaten beyond recognition. I'm sure many of you saw the passion of the Christ. And I'll tell you what, as gory as that was, it wasn't as brutal as the real event.

Because Isaiah tells us that Jesus was beaten beyond recognition. Now, even as brutal as it was in the film, you still could recognize him. But remember, Isaiah's word was that his visage was marred more than any man.

So he was unrecognizable as he went through that beating. And then, of course, the anguish of crucifixion. You know, crucifixion is to date rated as the most torturous and cruel execution imaginable.

The agony of it is, it's unthinkable. You know, the word excruciating is derived from crucifixion. Excruciate means taken out of the cross.

And when something is extremely agonizing, we use that terminology. Well, it's excruciating pain. That's the kind of pain that Jesus experienced upon the cross.

But not only the physical suffering, but of course, beyond that, there was that spiritual suffering. Where Jesus would cry out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Because at that moment, in some mysterious way, the father and the son were disconnected from one another. Because Christ was bearing the sin of the world.

And God could not remain in fellowship with him as he was bearing that sin. And so the wrath of God was poured out. You know, back in the Old Testament, you remember the whole sacrificial system there.

And they had the lambs and they were to take the lambs and slay them. And they were to utterly obliterate these creatures. They were to be totally consumed in the fire.

All of that was a visual image that God was seeking to communicate to the people of Israel about the price that must be paid for sin. This innocent animal was taken and was slain and then was just completely obliterated in the flames of judgment. This was to be a lesson.

God was teaching the people his hatred for sin and the absolute necessity of punishing sin. And then, of course, these were all just a type or a picture of what would happen to Jesus Christ and what did happen to him. Jesus was being punished in our place.

That's why he suffered so brutally. Now, I think that we just have a tendency as human beings to underestimate our sinfulness. You know, some maybe get close.

You really have realized that you are a wretch. But, you know, for many, that reality never sinks in totally. And, of course, for multitudes, there's not even an acknowledgment of that at all.

Many people today, of course, would deny that they're sinners. And even those that would admit they're sinners would not see themselves as worthy of any kind of destruction or being obliterated or any kind of punishment. Anywhere like what we're talking about here.

But that's because people have no concept of the holiness of God. When people will ask me, you know, how do you explain a God who would punish people forever? And, you know, there's a movement among evangelicals today to deny the eternal nature of hell. There are some good evangelical men, at least they have been good historically up until this point, who are now coming out boldly and denying that hell is an eternal kind of a punishment.

And, basically, what they're saying is that God could not punish people eternally. Now, they say, I just don't understand how God could do that. I can't philosophically get my head around that.

So, they're basically denying that that's what the Bible teaches. And they're saying, well, you know, the Bible talks about perishing and something that perishes, you know, it goes out of existence. But their arguments are, they're weak arguments.

Jesus, we read it tonight, Jesus said it here. He spoke of, you remember, those who will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life. So, a couple of things to think about.

Because what they say is, well, the punishment is not eternal. Well, if the punishment isn't eternal, then life isn't eternal either, because the same word is used for both things. But the other thing is this, and what they teach, this is a doctrine that actually is known as annihilationism.

They teach that after a period of punishment, the human soul will be annihilated. It will go out of existence. But here's the dilemma.

Jesus said that the punishment would be eternal. Can something that doesn't exist be punished? No, of course not. If it no longer exists, you cannot apply the word punishment to us.

Once it goes out of existence, there's no punishing. You know, if a guy is in prison awaiting the electric chair, but before you can get him to the electric chair, he dies of a heart attack, what do they do? Do they drag him out and stick him on the electric chair anyway? No, he's dead already. The law has exacted its ultimate punishment on him.

There's nothing else to do. So, if somebody goes out of existence, then you can't really, they can't experience punishment. Jesus said the punishment is everlasting.

The implication is that the person lives on forever. Now, when people present this to me, I'll just share with you guys what I share with them, and I think it really is the answer. Although people would say, well, that's too simple of an answer.

I think it really is the answer. The answer is this. I can't understand that for two reasons.

Reason number one is I do not have a clue, really, even though I'm a believer, I really do not understand the holiness of God. You know, I know that He is holy, studied about it, taught about it. I have an idea of what it is, but in actuality, I don't know what that means.

We get some glimpses in Scripture. Of course, He dwells in the light that no man can approach. But, you see, this is the problem.

I do not understand the holiness of God on the one hand, neither do I understand the depth of my own depravity. You see, I think that I'm not all that bad. But, you know, the Lord said through the prophet Jeremiah that the heart of man, all men, every man, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Those are strong words. Desperately wicked. And then ask this question, who can know it? The implication is no one can know.

You can't even know the depth of your own depravity. If God for one second would show you how evil you truly are, probably scare you to death. You'd probably die of a heart attack right on the spot.

That's the reality. Who can know it? We don't know the depth of our own depravity. We think that I'm not that bad.

I'm not as bad as that guy. But, believe it or not, under the right circumstances, you could be just as bad or even worse. So that's really the dilemma that we're in.

We do not really comprehend the holiness of God. If we for one instant got a picture, and of course you have many examples in the Scripture, whenever anybody got a real glimpse of God, you know where they went? They went straight to their face. On the ground.

Woe is me, I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips. That's Isaiah the prophet. He's a prophet.

Up until that point, he's pronouncing woe and judgment on everybody around. Suddenly he says, I saw the Lord. And I said, woe is me.

And he fell on his face before God. And that is the posture that each person takes who gets the slightest glimpse of the greatness of God, the glory of God. God is holy.

And because he's holy, he must punish sin. And it comes down to this. We either allow Christ to pay for our sins on the cross, or we pay for them ourselves in hell.

Those are the only two options. Either Christ pay for my sins on the cross, or I pay for them myself. But the problem with that, of course, is that I can never pay the price.

It is beyond my ability. It's beyond my reach. So what happens then? I have to suffer eternally.

Now notice, finally here in the 18th verse, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. All ungodliness and all unrighteousness. What are those two things? Ungodliness is any failure to live according to God's requirement in regard to our relationship with him.

Unrighteousness is any failure to live according to God's requirement in our relationship to our fellow men. So any failure whatsoever. If I fail to live up to God's requirement for me in my relationship with him, which is what? The main one.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Any failure to do that, or any lack of desire to do that constitutes ungodliness. I'm in trouble.

Any failure to love my neighbor as myself, or any disinterest in doing that constitutes unrighteousness. I'm in big trouble. You see, that's the whole point.

That's why Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. That's why Paul says, I'm a debtor. Because he said, I understand that no man has any hope whatsoever.

There's not even the remotest possibility that anybody's going to make it into heaven apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because everyone is ungodly, and everyone is unrighteous. And not only that, everyone has suppressed the truth in unrighteousness.

To suppress the truth means to push it down, to try to keep it down. And no, I don't want to hear that. And no, I want to do my own thing.

That's what we do. Now, maybe you've come to a place in life, or you did before you came to know Christ, where sinning was like breathing. You never even thought about it.

It was just second nature. But you know, it wasn't always that way. If you think back far enough, you'll remember a time when it was hard to sin.

I remember as a young, as a boy, you know, as I began to embark on my career of sin, I remember it was difficult to take those first steps into sin. Oh, the temptation would come, and I would sort of be drawn that way. Oh no, that, and all of the fear, you know, of what that might result in.

But what happens? You suppress it. You push it down. You listen to the crowd.

And pretty soon you find yourself doing that thing. You finally did it. And the next time the temptation comes along, there's still a fight, but it's not quite as intense as it was the first time.

And then the next time it comes along, the fight becomes less and less intense, and pretty soon you're doing this thing freely. You're not thinking about it anymore. It's not bothering your conscience.

Man, you're just, it's second nature. But it all starts with that suppressing of the truth. That's what everybody does.

Everybody does this. In the whole world, for all time, in every generation, this is what man does. He suppresses the truth in unrighteousness.

And it's because of this persistent rebellion against God that we have all come under his wrath. But the gospel, of course, is the good news. The good news that somebody else has paid the price.

Jesus Christ has paid the price for my sin. And all I have to do is come under the covering of his sacrifice, just like those ancient Israelites. You remember how God warned them that he was going to bring a judgment upon Egypt.

He was going to slay all the firstborn in the land. And he said to Moses, he said, this is what you do. You take a lamb, you slaughter it, and you put the blood over the doorpost of the home.

And when I pass through the land, when I see the blood, I will pass over you. I will not judge that house or those people in the house where I see the blood. The judgment of God is sure.

You know, we live in a world today. I don't have to really tell you this probably, but I'll just remind you. We live in a world today where people scoff at the idea of a judgment.

They mock that idea. They think that is so absurd. But you can bet your life, as sure as you're sitting here breathing tonight, there's a judgment that's coming.

And there's only one way to escape. It's by being covered by the blood of the lamb. Because that Passover lamb that shed its blood back in those days was, of course, a picture of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who would take away the sin of the world.

And when we come under the covering of his blood, that's when the judgment passes over us. And that is the gospel. That's the good news.

And that's the message that we have to bring to other people. Now, you know, I believe firmly in our witness to other people that we ought to follow Jude's order. Jude said this.

He said, Save some with compassion. And I think that our first approach to people in seeking to share Christ with them should always be the compassionate approach, the loving approach. We seek to appeal to them by the love and the grace of God.

But when a person resists that, Jude went on to say, Save others with fear, hating even the garment that's spotted by the flesh. You know, there comes a point when you need to look at somebody right square in the eye and say, Pal, you're going to hell. That's the reality.

You're going to eternal damnation. And as much as people scoff at that today and mock it and all of that, you know, God's word has a way of piercing through people's hearts. And you still hear testimonies today of people that it was that sort of a thing that caused them to begin to quake in their boots and eventually brought them around to receiving Christ, the reality of the fact that there is a judgment that's coming.

This message, although I don't, you know, I'm not advocating we go to a strictly hellfire and brimstone approach to things, this is a message that needs to be brought back into the church because this is part of the message. There are so many today who don't want to say anything negative. You know, and you've got these guys on TV and they've got the tens of thousands of people sitting out in the audience and they've got these, you know, people viewing them all over the country and sometimes around the world.

And they're actually saying, when you ask them, when you really get down to it, they're saying, well, you know, we don't want to say anything negative. We want to have a positive message. Well, you can do that, I guess, but you're going to have to give an account for it someday because our message is a double-edged sword.

It is a positive message, but there's a negative side to it as well. God loves people, sure, and He demonstrated His love by Christ dying for us. But if we refuse that love, then the only other alternative is the judgment that Jesus bore for us has to be poured out upon us because we haven't received what He did on our behalf.

The greatest sin, Hebrews chapter 10 tells us, the greatest sin is to trample underfoot the Son of God. That's the height of sin as far as God is concerned. It's more serious than anything that anybody could ever do.

To take the precious blood of Christ and to count it as an unholy thing, to say, that blood means nothing. God said that is an insult to Him. Insulting God, that's not anything anybody wants to do, at least anybody in their right mind.

But, of course, we have received God's grace, and that's really what this whole epistle is about. It's about the grace of God. But before Paul gets to the grace part, he first of all shows us the need for grace.

You know, I don't appreciate God's grace unless I realize how wretched I really am. You remember the great hymn, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. You know, the guy who wrote that, he was a wretched guy, truly.

He was a wicked man. Not only was he a slave trader, but he was a vile, corrupt, wicked individual, and Christ had mercy upon him and saved him. John Newton rescued him from the pit, put him into the ministry.

He wrote that song, and it's been sung by successive generations since he wrote it in the 1700s. But he hit the nail on the head. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

That's what we have to see in order to really appreciate the grace of God. I've got to see my own state. If I think that I'm not too bad, you know, I'm doing all right.

You know, I guess I need a little bit of help from God to get there, but, you know, I haven't been that bad. Then I don't appreciate the grace of God. But once I understand the depth of my own depravity or even get just a little glimpse of it, I'm singing right there with John Newton, Amazing Grace, that God would save me.

What an amazing thing. And that's what he does. And that is why Paul said, that I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

It's the power of God to salvation. That's why Paul said, with everything in me, I want to preach the gospel to you because he knew that this is the remedy to man's great dilemma, the dilemma and the disease of sin. And so we'll leave it at that and we'll pick up next week and we'll look at this case that he builds here in the remainder of the first chapter showing the total and complete condemnation of the human race beginning with the obviously wicked but going right through the moral, upright kind of a person at least from the human standpoint and even to the religious man showing ultimately as we move along that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Lord, we thank you for your grace and it is, Lord, nothing less than amazing that you saved us, Lord. That you, the holy righteous God who cannot look upon sin and ever approve it. Lord, that you made a way to retain your righteousness and to still forgive us.

That you sent your son, Jesus, to die in our place, to bear our punishment, to endure your wrath so we could be saved. And Lord, I pray for myself and I pray for each of us that the reality of that, the wonder of that, the glory of that, Lord, that somehow by your spirit that would be impressed upon our hearts. Lord, that we would find ourselves walking around in amazement truly that you saved wretches like us.

Thank you for doing that, Lord. And Lord, use us as we understand the reality of your wrath. Use us, Lord, to speak to others that they might come out from under the judgment and be saved through the blood of Christ.

In his name we pray, amen.

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