

# God's Wrath Satisfied

by David Downs

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's wrath and the sinfulness of our hearts in order to grasp the significance of the cross and the need for repentance and faith.*

**Duration:** 1:10:18

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:45

**Topics:** "Wrath Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing our sinful nature and the need for salvation through Jesus Christ. They highlight that our purpose in life is not found in motivational speaking or self-help methods, but in understanding the wrath of God and the atonement provided by Jesus on the cross. The speaker urges the audience to prioritize the message of the Gospel over trivial matters and distractions. They also warn about the consequences of worshiping anything other than the true and living God. The sermon references Ephesians chapter 5 and describes the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as the ultimate expression of God's wrath and the satisfaction of His justice.

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## Transcript

Matthew chapter 27, we're looking at verses 45 through 56. And the topic of the sermon deals with God's wrath being satisfied. One thing I've discovered is that people don't take their sin seriously.

They don't take the cross seriously, because they don't take their sin seriously. And because they don't take their sin seriously, they don't take the wrath of God seriously. Many, many people, the majority of people that I speak with, will all proclaim their own goodness.

They will all declare, I am a good person. Just ask someone, do you think of yourself as a good person? Just about 100%, there may be some that don't, but just about 100% of the ones that we've asked that question will say, yeah, I'm not perfect, but I'm a good person. And as a result, because they don't take their sin seriously, they don't take the wrath of God seriously.

I've even had people tell me, well, what kind of church is it? Is it a church that's going to make me feel good, or is it one of those hellfire, fire and brimstone, wrath of God type churches? And I said, we're a Bible church, so when we come to the wrath of God, we preach the wrath of God. When we come to the love of God, we preach the love of God. And in the cross, you have the greatest display of both the wrath of God and the love of God.

You see, the love of God will be meaningless to you unless you understand the wrath of God. And the wrath of God will be offensive to you until you understand the wickedness of your sin. You'll never grasp the meaning of the cross until you come face to face with the depth of your depravity.

You have to acknowledge and understand and confess that you are a wicked, hellbound, iniquitous sinner. I want you to see that the wrath of God is a very biblical teaching. Because, think of it this way, if you have a diamond and you throw it in the snow, it's hard to find, isn't it? But if you took a diamond and rolled out a big pad of black, black, black velvet and put that diamond there, it'd be easy to find, wouldn't it? Because of the contrast.

The cross is the diamond of God and your sin is the black velvet. Your sin has to be understood clearly or you will not understand the cross clearly. Look back in Matthew chapter 3. Matthew chapter 3. I just want to do a quick survey of this issue of the wrath of God.

And John the Baptist is preaching and look down at verse 7. John the Baptist says in verse 7, Matthew 3.7, But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? The Bible speaks very clearly about the wrath of God to come. Flip over to the book of John. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

John chapter 3 as well. John chapter 3. And many people know John 3.16 about the love of God and God demonstrating His love toward us. But let's read a little bit further.

The same sermon in John chapter 3, but now drop down to verse 36. He who believes in the Son, John 3.36, He who believes in the Son has everlasting life. Now hold on before we go any further.

What it means to believe in the Son is not simply to give mental assent to a list of facts. The demons have that kind of belief. Belief in the Word of God is a commitment to Christ.

Yes, it is believing facts. The Gospel is a factual, historical story. The Bible gives an historical record, not a mythological story.

The Bible is a historical, accurate, true record. And Christ is God in the flesh. He was born of the Virgin Mary.

He lived a sinless life. He worked real, actual miracles. He died on the cross in our place and actually, really, literally rose from the dead.

But those facts will not save you unless you entrust yourself to Christ. The word believe means faith and trust. It is a commitment of your life to Christ.

But watch what he says. Let's see in verse 36 again. He who believes, entrusts, commits himself to the Son, has right now as a present possession everlasting life.

If you are born again, you have right now, you possess everlasting life. We're not one day hoping to earn everlasting life. You have it as a present possession.

But watch what he says. And he who does not believe, those who have not repented and trusted Christ as their Savior, those who have not put their faith in Christ, believed in Him, trusted Him alone as their Savior, and the way you can answer that is just ask yourself this question. Why should God let you into heaven? If the answer to that is, well, I'm a pretty good person, then your faith is in yourself.

But if you understand it is because of the death of Christ, and the death of Christ alone, then your faith is in Christ. And you can only get to heaven by faith in Christ alone. The second question to ask yourself is this.

Has my life been one following Him? Am I a follower of Christ? The following Christ proves the reality of the faith in Christ. When you have genuine faith, you will follow. If you're not following Christ, you do not have genuine faith.

Let me give you an example. I'm a fireman. I knock on your door.

I say, your house is on fire. I was driving by in the truck, and there are flames and smoke shooting out of the top of your roof. And you were sleeping on your couch, and you open the door irritated that I've woken you up.

And you say, okay, okay, I believe you. Click, lock, and you go back to sleep. Do you really believe? Not at all.

You can tell the fireman you believe, but your actions prove whether you really believe. And just ask yourself, you might say, well, I've been around church for all of my life. Have you been following Christ all of your life? If you've not been following Christ, then your faith is a demonic false faith.

It is nothing more than believing a list of facts. Verse 36 in John 3 again, He who believes in the Son has everlasting life. He who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on you.

Do you see how important this is? Right now, if you are not a follower of Christ, committed to Him, trusting Him alone as your Savior, you're not waiting for the wrath of God. The wrath of God is already labeled on your back. You already have a big sticker that says, the wrath of God abides on you right now.

The wrath of God must be taken seriously. But people don't take the wrath of God seriously because they don't take their sins seriously. They just don't believe they're that bad.

I don't care what He says when He preaches. I just don't think I'm that bad. The problem is, you've changed the message to what I say when I preach.

What you should say is, I don't care what Almighty God says. I don't think I'm that bad. You are that bad and you are ten thousand times worse than you even have the slightest clue that you are.

When you sit down and ponder the depths and wickedness of the worst sinner in history, you are not scratching the surface of your own wickedness. You see, that's why God is furious at sinners. The wrath of God currently abides on you if you have not been born again.

Look over in Romans. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans. Romans 5. Romans 5. And look with me at verse 9. Romans 5.9. Well, go back to verse 8 because it gives you the picture of the love of God and the wrath of God.

5.8 God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still what? This is the point. This is the sticking point. Do you see? This is where you just can't get past this.

You think, well, it was nice for Christ to die on the cross, and I've made a few boo-boos, and there are wicked, godless preachers that will say you're nothing but a little booger head, but they will not declare you

a wicked sinner, lawbreaker, full of iniquity. They won't declare that. That is what God says about you.

That's what God says about me. Outside of Jesus Christ, that is what God says about every man, every woman, and every child in all of human history. When Adam and Eve sinned, the Bible says that sin was passed on to all of Adam's descendants.

Is there anyone who's not a descendant of Adam in here? Maybe if you're from Mars or something. But the reality is we are all descendants of Adam. And look what he says in verse 8. God demonstrated His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, in the act of nailing the nails into His hands, He is saying, Father, forgive them.

Father, forgive them. As the spear rams up in His ribcage while we are in the act of sinning, He is saying, Father, forgive them. Do you see how important this is? That we come face to face with our sin.

But watch what he says. Verse 8. God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for who? Sinners. He didn't die for self-righteous people.

He didn't die for you because you think you're a good person. Jesus said, I didn't come for the self-righteous. I came to call sinners to repentance.

If you stood before the Lord today and said, I'm just not that bad. I don't understand, Pastor Dave. I mean, yeah, you know, some cannibal, I can understand that.

Hitler absolutely deserves this. Saddam Hussein, no question about it. But I'm not that bad.

I mean, I've got friends and I'm better than my friends. I mean, you know, I don't sleep around very much or maybe never. Maybe you've kept yourself as a virgin and you think to yourself, well, I'm just not that bad.

I don't understand. Then you had better cry out to God that God would give you the sight to see your predicament. Let me give you an example.

I use one I'm witnessing all the time. You go to the beach and you have one of those blow-up rafts. And it's early in the day.

Nice, cool breeze. And the waves are nice. And you're just laying out on the water on your raft.

And you drift off to sleep. Little seagulls in the background. And pretty soon, you hear a honk on like a boat horn.

And you wake up and think, what's going on? And you cannot see land. And you realize, I've slept all day. And the sun is beginning to go down over the horizon.

And there's no land to be seen anywhere. And you realize your little raft that was nice and tight when you laid down on it is now starting to bow up and there's little bubbles leaking out the side of it. And then you look around and you see fins in the water.

And you realize that that band-aid you put on this morning has come off and there's blood going into the water. Are you starting to feel worried about your situation? And you see a boat going by. And you go down in between the waves and up and down.

What are you going to do? Maybe you can just barely see it. You are going to start screaming for your life. Save me! Save me! And every time the wave goes up, you're going to be screaming more and then it goes back down.

Screaming more and it goes back down. And if that guy comes to you and says, what are you doing out here? You have been caught in the current. You're over a hundred miles out to sea away from land.

Don't you realize you're in shark-infested water? And I can see blood in the water all around your leg. What are you sitting on? You're sitting on a little dinghy, a little rubber ducky that's leaking air. You would not say to him, well, I'm not that bad.

You just don't understand. I mean, I'm a good swimmer. And I bet you I could hold my hand over my leg.

And no, you wouldn't even think that way. The guy at the Coast Guard rescue boat said, get in the boat, man. And throws you the ring or pulls up alongside you and grabs you by your shirt collar and drags you up in the boat.

That is what we've got to see. That's what this is all about. Most people who go to church think of themselves just a few feet from shore.

My raft is fine and I'm enjoying it. And someone on shore says to you, oh, don't you want to be a part of our rescue boat team? And you're like, no, I'm pretty good. I'm fine.

You see, we're not seeing our predicament. We just don't see how absolutely deadly it is. Can you imagine a disease sweeps through Orlando and it is a disease that is 100% fatal.

And I walk up to your door and you don't know about the disease. And I say, here, quick, drink this. And you say, no, what do you mean drink? Drink what? I don't want to drink anything.

Oh, it's medicine. Well, in that case, I certainly don't want to drink it. You see, if you're feeling fine, and I come along and want to give you medicine, you don't understand you have a disease.

You're not going to take the medicine. But if I say to you, wait a second, there is a rare tropical disease that has swept through Orlando. Everybody in Orlando has it.

And there are 10 clear warning signs, 10 clear symptoms that you have this disease. And out in front, we've got the medical van. Come here, let me show you.

We sit you down. Yep, you've got the sweats. You've got the this.

You've got the next thing, next thing, next thing. All 10 symptoms. Now, are you interested in this medicine? You see, that's the problem.

People don't understand they have a rare tropical disease called sin. And it is 100% fatal. And the only cure is the blood of Jesus Christ.

Your good works will not remove your sin. Your self-effort will not remove the fact that you have this disease called sin. The only cure for your sin disease is Jesus Christ.

And that's what it says in Romans 5. Verse 9, Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from what? Wrath. Well, why do we need to be saved from wrath? Because God is angry at

the wicked every day. God's wrath is real.

And because God's wrath is real, that makes the cross so much more beautiful. So much more incredibly meaningful. And it makes us understand that our sin was so terrible that it required the Father to send His own Son.

It required God Almighty to take on human form, be born the Virgin, and die in our place as the only remedy. If there was some other way to get rid of our sin. If God could have sat in heaven and said, well, yeah, they're a bunch of little booger heads.

You know, they just mess up. You know, they made a faux pas. They've made some mistakes.

Maybe what they need is some motivational speaking. Someone will tell them that they've got meaning in life and purpose in life. We'll do a 40-day study on purpose.

And how things can be purposeful. No, no, no, that's not God's remedy. God's remedy is that we are wicked sinners, hopeless sinners, lost sinners, and the only remedy is the substitutionary atonement of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, bearing my sin in my place and feeling the full force of the wrath of God.

That's the only way that we can be saved. Turn to Ephesians with me. Ephesians 5. I'm just introducing the subject because I want you to see how important the wrath of God is so that you'll understand how important the cross is.

The sin of man deserves the wrath of God. And the wrath of God requires the cross of Christ. And the cross of Christ requires that you respond to that cross in repentance and faith.

But in Ephesians 5, look at verse 3. Fornication. That's all sex outside of marriage of every sort, even the Bill Clinton kind. All uncleanness.

Sexual immorality is dirty. It is unclean. It is filthiness.

Or covetousness. Watching all the commercials. Oh, I wish I had that.

I wish I had this other thing. Oh, I've got to get that new brand of sneakers. Oh, I just can't be happy without that new brand of car.

And I need my hair cut this way and I need this, that, and the next thing. Covetousness. Always wanting.

Let it not even be named among you as is fitting for saints. By the way, saints is saved people. It's not a category of saved people.

As though you somehow did super-duper good things and now you're above the rest of Christians and you're in this category called a saint. The Bible says you get saved and you are a saint. One old southern preacher said you're either a saint or you ain't.

Let it not even be named. Verse 4, Neither filthiness nor foolish talking or coarse jesting, comedy channel. Right? What's the comedy thing on cable? That they're just one foul joke after another, after another, after another.

Which are not fitting, but instead giving of thanks for this you know. Of this you can be certain. Mark it down.

For of this you can be certain that no fornicator, no unclean person, no covetous man, which is simply idolatry. It's putting all that junk, all the things of the world. I've got to have newer and bigger and shinier and I'll not be satisfied without another shopping spree.

He says no one who has that mindset or anything like that has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Then he warns you again in verse 6. Let no one deceive you. Stop letting people, stop letting false teachers deceive you with empty words.

When someone gets up and says all you need to do is bow your knee, cross yourself, take the supper, and man, you're in. What are you worried about? They are a deceiver. Anyone who says just walk down front and pray a prayer.

Lord, come into my heart. And then you go right back to your fornication. Right back to going to the clubs.

Right back to drinking. Right back to sleeping around and cussing and apathy and lukewarmness and no interest in the Bible. No interest in prayer.

No interest in evangelism. No interest in fellowship. The Bible says you can be guaranteed.

You are certain. Just mark it down. You have no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words. It is because of these things, the sins, the wickedness of man's heart, that what? The wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. If you're not obeying God consistently and fervently, you are a son of disobedience.

We were all sons of disobedience before we came to Christ. The Bible says in Ephesians 3, and 2, that's how we lived. We were caught up in the current of this world.

It's like you're at the beach in a rip current. You just lift your feet and it rips you out in a different direction than you want to go. All mankind has devoted himself to wickedness.

The Bible says in Genesis that the thoughts of your heart are only evil continually. Are only evil continually. And I know you are arguing with God about that phrase.

Stop arguing with God. Just sit down and write out your thoughts for a half an hour. Write out the thing like, what do I have to write this out for? Okay, that's evil.

Right? And just write out your thoughts. And just lay them on paper. Oh God, what is wrong with me? Even the good things you may have done are tainted with wickedness.

I'll use the example. Can you imagine that a young man is bright and as bright as expecting and she's right near delivery day. And he's out working in the yard in the manure.

He's spreading the manure. He's got his hands and knees and he's digging in the dirt and planting things and shoveling things. And she's like, Honey, I'm due, I'm due.

I'm rich. I mean, we better go now. And he jumps in the car, drives to the hospital, walks in and says, I would like to help with delivering the baby.

That's a good thing, but it's a bad thing. You see? He's going to be utterly useless in delivering the baby until he gets cleansed. You can't walk in dripping with manure and think you're going to go into a sterile surgery room and help deliver the baby.

And yet, people think they are dripping, they are stinking, their righteousness is as filthy rags. Their good works are a stench in the nostrils of God. They think when they die, they're going to stand before God dripping in their sin, stench covered with filth, and they're going to just walk right into heaven.

God says, no, no, no. It's a sterile environment. If God allows one sin into heaven, we will turn heaven into hell.

Let me give you an example of that. Let's say that there was some island in the South Pacific. And maybe because of the orbit of the satellites that had never been discovered and never been charted.

They were just maybe in a little blank spot, you know? And you're on an airplane. You get blown off course. And your airplane crashes.

And you swim up on shore. And there's, let's say, the plane has 400 passengers and 50 of you survive. And on this beautiful tropical island with every kind of fruit that you can find, bananas and mangoes and pineapples and just everything.

I mean, this is just an island paradise. The 50 of you are there. You know what will happen in 100 years or less? You will turn that island into Hawaii.

Organized crime, prostitution, gambling, every kind of covetousness, every kind of wickedness. And the proof of that is look at America. Here we come.

The pilgrims come to escape the persecution. The Puritans come over here. But that's not all.

And then the children. And then the children. And we have now turned America in a couple of centuries into the most wicked nation in this world.

We have been incredibly blessed by God. Mountains and prairies and oceans of grain. The beautiful seas on all of our borders.

And here we are living in absolute depravity. Just turn on the television. Go and turn on the movies.

Turn on your internet. Once your internet is saturated with not just 10 or 20 porno sites, but millions. Do you see how horrifying this is? And you say, I'm not that bad.

You're worse than you realize. You're a hundred times worse than you realize. You are a hundred thousand times worse than you have in your worst nightmare.

Jonathan Edwards, one of the greatest theologians in American history said, inside the hearts of unregenerate men, hellish desires rule. They reign. That's what's inside all of us.

We absolutely, desperately need the cross of Jesus Christ. Because God Almighty is angry with the wicked every day. We could go on and on about the wrath of God, but let's go back to Matthew 27.

We find that God's wrath on your notes, number one, God's wrath against sin is displayed in the cross. You say, God is not... I've heard guys on the radio say this. I've heard guys in conferences and seminars

say, oh, no, no.

Since the cross, God's not mad at anybody. Well, then why do we have the book of Revelation, which is written after the cross, and you have the constant threat of the wrath of the Lamb? Why did we just read in the book of Ephesians, which was written 30-some years after the cross, and Paul the Apostle says, do not be deceived with empty words. It is because of these sins that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

This is the Bible, and your wrestling match in your mind right now is not with me. You might say, oh, I can't believe that guy. I can't believe him talking about this.

I can't believe... Why did I waste my Sunday morning? I could have gone and listened to Joel Osteen. You could have. But in God's grace, He brought you here.

This is the grace of God because you are hearing the Word of God. And with your Bible open in your hand, it says in v. 45, now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. The sixth hour in Jewish time was 12 noon.

The ninth hour was 3 in the afternoon. So for three solid hours at high noon, there was darkness over all the land. Some of you will say, well, that was just a coincidental eclipse.

I'm not a science major, but let me ask you this. Have you ever heard of an eclipse lasting three hours? On top of that, we know that the Passover was the time where the moon was full. You can't have an eclipse where the moon and the sun are in different locations and the moon is a full moon.

This is not an eclipse. This is a putting out of the sun. It is God putting His hand over the night light, if you will, and just saying, alright, for now, I want to display my wrath.

We also know from the writings of Origen and Tertullian that this event was recorded in the annals of pagan writers in other countries. So, was it just a little local blizzard or a sandstorm that just sort of, oh, I can't see anything. No, not at all.

This is Almighty God. I believe that this was not just a local darkness in Jerusalem. It was not a local darkness in Israel.

It was not even a local darkness in the world. I believe God put His hand over the sun and this was a cosmic darkness. This was darkness throughout the universe.

For three solid hours, God put the light out and what we find in the Word of God is every time there is darkness in a situation like this, it is a display, it is a symbolic demonstration of the wrath of God, of the judgment of God. We saw that back in Exodus. We won't take the time to look there, but you'll remember there was darkness in Egypt.

And that was a plague. It was a judgment of God upon an idolatrous nation. You see, people have a problem thinking that God still deals with nations other than Israel.

They don't have a problem reading the New Testament and God did this with Israel and that with Israel and the next thing with Israel. But they forget about Egypt, which was not Israel. And God judged Egypt.

They forget about Nineveh. That God judged Nineveh first. He sent a prophet to them and there was a repentance.

But a hundred years later, God judged that pagan nation. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. That our nation is turned away from God.

We've turned our back on God. Families are disintegrating at an alarming rate. Illegitimate children are being born more frequently than legitimate ones.

Now, the little baby doesn't have anything to do with that. But it's not even a shame anymore. People are not even ashamed of their fornication and their sin.

The Bible says, there was darkness over all the land. It is as though God is saying while Christ is on the cross and all of our sin is being heaped upon the Son of God, all of our sin is being heaped upon the Son of God, that God is saying, look, I want everybody to understand this is my wrath being revealed against man's sin. We find in v. 46 about the ninth hour.

That's at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. After three solid hours of almost tangible darkness, we find Jesus cries with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani. That is to say, my God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? We find God's wrath seen in the darkness, and now we see God's wrath displayed in forsaking His own Son.

This is a mystery that Martin Luther said he took quite a significant amount of time away. He pulled himself away and immersed himself in this mystery. How can there be a forsaking of the Son of God by the Father? And he said after all of that study and thinking he was more confused, than when he began.

And this is one of those divine mysteries. We don't really understand how God the Father and God the Son can somehow... There can be a forsaking there. Because we know that within the Godhead, there can never be a separation.

So, it's a mystery. We don't understand fully, but we do know that look over in 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians.

In chapter 5. 2 Corinthians 5. He says in verse 20, Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ as the God we're pleading through us. Do you understand that's what God's doing right now? Do you understand that God is using my throat and tongue to plead with you? That He's trying to show you that you are a sinner. And you are such a sinner that you deserve the wrath of God.

And the wrath of God is so intense that the only thing that will satisfy the wrath of God is the cross of Christ. And the cross of Christ being the only solution, being the only remedy to our sin, you must respond to that. You cannot just have it on your building or hanging around your neck or dangling from your ear and just say, oh yeah, I believe in the cross.

Yeah, let's get on to other things. What time's the party tonight? You see, that's not responding to the cross. And God is trying to help you see that.

But He says, God is pleading through us. And as a result, we beg You, we implore You, we plead with You in Christ's behalf as His representative, as His preacher. And that's where you've got to determine, am I truly a preacher of the Word of God? That's why you've got to have the Bible in your hand.

Because on judgment day, you can't say, well, I sat and listened to this guy and I heard he was a false teacher. But after all, I mean, I just trusted him. God's given you a Bible in your language.

Read it. Study it. Be a Berean.

Be diligent about this. And that's why it's such a horrifying crime for preachers in our world today to get up and hardly ever open the Word of God. Hardly ever do nothing more than a little bit of hopscotch preaching.

They're not deeply digging into the text. That's a crime against God. It's blinding the eyes of the congregation.

And some, it was even illegal into the 50's to own a Bible. They slaughtered Christians during the Inquisition for having a Bible. God is saying He's pleading with you through us.

In Christ's behalf, that's why these guys who preach, they're monotonous. I don't understand some guys who just get up and mumble a few interesting, not even interesting, a few thoughts about stuff. There's no passion.

There's no fire. There's no pleading with people for their soul. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke with a loud voice.

The Bible says be reconciled to God. Be reconciled to God. And the reconciliation is only through Christ.

The reconciliation is only when you come in repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. It is only when you turn from your sin, acknowledging everything the Bible says about your life that is out of line with His Word, and saying, Almighty God, I'm not going to argue with you anymore. Your law is holy and righteous and good.

I believe it and it condemns me. And when the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit of God is doing His work, He's building that shame in your heart. He's building that understanding of your corruption.

It's called conviction. And as the Spirit of God pierces, He takes the sword of the Spirit and He unsheathes that sword of the Spirit and begins to slice and hack and cut you open and lay you bare and naked before God. Then you might cry out, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

You can't pray that prayer if you're self-righteous. You can't say, God, be merciful to me. I'm so good.

God, be merciful. Reward me. I'm such a good person.

You have to say, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. It says in verse 21, For He has made Him, this is 2 Corinthians 5:21, He has made Him who knew no sin. Jesus Christ had never, ever sinned.

He was the spotless, sinless Lamb of God. What an incredible thought. To be sin for us.

Underline that phrase. To be sin in our place. It's as though He took your rap sheet and said, I will pay your penalty for your crimes.

And you can have My perfect, pure righteousness. My sinlessness ascribed to you. And that exchange, that great exchange of our unrighteousness and receiving His righteousness and receiving His perfect righteousness is a free gift that comes when you repent and believe the Gospel.

But that's why the Lord God Almighty, the Father, turned His back on His Son. Because for those three hours on the cross, His Son was bearing our sin in our place. I was trying to think how to illustrate this.

And I thought, can you imagine, let's say some guy was wearing a football jersey. And he comes over to your house. And your beloved son, this guy comes to your house, steals everything in your house, slaughters your children, rapes and slaughters your wife.

And as he did that, the blood is splattering on his jersey, on his football jersey. And then someone else said, I will wear that jersey in His place. The sight of that jersey would be so offensive to you.

The sight of that would be horrifying. Your wrath would be against that. And that's what the Lord Jesus did.

He took our jersey of sin and went to the cross in our place. In our place, do you see? And so God turned His back on His Son. Back in Matthew 27, that's why the Lord Jesus cried out.

This was not merely some psychological thing. This was a theological issue. The Father had forsaken the Son because the Son was bearing our sin.

And He is of purer eyes than to behold sin. We find then in verse 47, some of those who stood there. Now, let me ask you this.

You are at the cross. You are, let's say, a Roman, maybe not a Roman soldier, but just one of the crowd, one of the Pharisees, one of the Sadducees, one of the Sanhedrin. And you are watching all of this go on.

You know that you have lied in order to condemn Him as the Son of God. You've got trumped up charges that you lied to Pilate and said, oh, He's the King. He's a threat to Caesar.

And you've trumped up these charges as kangaroo court. You've shoved it through the night. And now, He is saying things from the cross.

Father, forgive them. He is bearing the sin of the world. And He cries out, my God, why? And on top of that, and it was very clear in the minds of the Jews, we didn't go through all of the verses we could look at showing that darkness was a symbolic display of the wrath of God.

And all of these religious guys knew that. They knew their Old Testament. And then the light goes out.

The sun goes out for three hours. What would your response be? What should it be? Well, let's see what they did. Verse 47, some of those who stood there when they heard that said, this man's calling for Elijah.

And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with sour wine. The sour wine was not alcoholic wine. It was the normal drink that Roman soldiers and laboring men would drink.

It was very, very high water content, teeny tiny alcohol content. But the reason it was so popular is because the content of alcohol was enough to kill the immune system and make it very thirst quenching and good for them to drink. Wherever the Roman soldiers were, wherever anyone was working, there was always a big jug or whatever.

There was always a skin of this wine available. And it says, verse 48, one of them ran, took a sponge, filled it with sour wine. You remember from one of the other gospels, one of the seven sayings from the cross, Christ said, I thirst.

Now earlier, they offered him sour wine, but it was mixed with myrrh, which was a narcotic. And he refused that. Here, he received it.

And it says, they offered it to him to drink. And the rest said, let him alone. Let's see if Elijah will come and save him.

No, no, no, don't give him a drink. Don't give him a drink. He's calling for Elijah.

Let's see if Elijah comes and saves him. Can you imagine the hard-hearted blindness, the judicial blindness that has come upon these men that in the midst of the judgment of God, in the midst of pitch blackness, they're still mocking the Savior. This was not something done in a corner.

Three hours of darkness? That's unheard of. What would we think if, you know, the sun's shining bright at noon. It goes pitch black for three solid hours.

That would be news. Why did it do that? What was that all about? And you can imagine in those days, they tied that very clearly with the work of God, as we should in our day. But this judicial blinding on your notes is another display of God's wrath against sin.

He says the heart of this people has grown dull. Their ears are waxed over. Their eyes are blind.

And it is the judgment of God against them. This is the judicial blinding. And one of the best parallels that I can think of for this story is the story of the Sodomites in Genesis 19.

You'll remember in Genesis 19, the men that lived in the city of Sodom were godless homosexuals. And God said, I've had it up to here with them. I'm going to burn the whole city to the ground.

And America had better listen to the warnings of Sodom and Gomorrah. We then understand Almighty God is still concerned about righteousness. God is not asleep.

God is on His way. He's on His throne. He is in charge.

And He knows what our wicked nation is doing. And God was fed up with the wickedness of the Sodomites. And He sent the angels to get Lot and say, get your stuff.

We're getting out of here before I toast this place to the ground. And fire from God was going to fall from heaven. The Bible says that as they went in, the men of Sodom surrounded the house where the angels were.

And they're pounding on the door. The Bible says they were pressing on the door, and in the Hebrew, to the point of breaking the door down. And the Bible says that God judged those Sodomites by blinding them.

They went blind. Did they stop and say, wait a minute, I can't see anything. Uh-oh.

And the other guy, hey, I can't see anything either. What? We can't see anything? Maybe this is the judgment of God. Let's regroup and repent.

They didn't do that. What they did is the Bible says they wearied themselves trying to find the door. In the midst of God's judgment crushing down upon them, it didn't slow them down in the least.

And here we have three solid hours of pitch blackness. It didn't slow these mockers down in the least. They see the life of Christ.

They hear the words of Christ. They see the forgiveness of Christ. If they had known their Bibles, they would have known the prophecies about the Christ.

But instead, what did they do? Oh, let's mock Him some more. I can't quite make him out. It's really dark now.

My eyes, three hours, are starting to adjust a little bit. But I can't hardly see him. But how long has it been dark around here, Ralph? Oh, man, it's been three hours.

Oh, let's mock Him some more. And yet, some of you in the midst of your sin, in the midst of your rebellion, you have been told that God's wrath abides upon you, and you're sitting there mocking. Mocking God.

Mocking the Word of God. Mocking the preaching of the Word of God. Mocking the Son of God.

Well, that's the result of the judicial blinding. Look over in the book of Revelation with me. In chapter 9. Revelation chapter 9. And you can see this same insanity.

John Calvin speaks of it as a marvelous madness. Not marvelous like we would say, ooh, isn't that marvelous? But like something to marvel at. Like how can you be so insane that you would press on in your sin? You would press on in your wickedness after hearing the Word of God.

You would press on in your self-righteousness after seeing the cross and hearing of the wrath of God. Revelation chapter 9. And look at verse 20 with me. Revelation chapter 9 and verse 20.

It says that back in 13, the angel sounded. God sends an army of 200 million horsemen to bring judgment upon the people. By these three plagues, a third of mankind was killed by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.

Now here you are. You're in the world. The news flash.

News flash. One out of every three people in the entire globe is now dead. One out of every three people on the entire globe is now dead because of the judgment of God.

And then drop down to verse 20. But the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands that they should not worship demons and any worship of anything other than the true and living God in the right way is demonic. They should not worship demons of gold, idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, wood, which can neither see nor hear nor talk or walk.

And they did not repent of their murders or of their sorcery or of their sexual immorality or of their thefts. In the middle of the judgment of God living in a world that is under the wrath of God, they would not repent. Is that a parallel to our world today? Have you heard of AIDS? Have you heard of terrorism? Have you heard of the crime rate? Have you heard of homosexuality? Have you heard of the divorce rate? Have you heard of the out of wedlock immorality, etc., etc.? Is that not the judgment of God? That is called God lifting His restraining hand.

America is barreling with the foot slammed down on the gas pedal toward judgment. How many little babies have been chopped into pieces? 50, 60, we don't even know. I bet the count is probably double that.

These guys are such liars. You've got the morals of a dog that you would rip apart a little innocent baby. You're not going to report what it is.

You don't know how many tens of millions of children slaughtered in our nation and we think that things are okay. And then you've got some lame-brained, pabulum-puking preacher get up and just sort of make you feel good. I think you're a nice looking person.

Yeah, you're a good person. You've got potential. I can tell by the smile on your face you're a potentialized person.

And the angels of God are weeping in heaven. And the martyrs that have given their life to give us this book and to get the Word of God to America and to England and all over the world are saying, what are you doing? What are you doing? There's a world going to hell and we're sitting around squabbling over styles of music. We're squabbling over nitpicking nothing and stealing the Word of God from people.

It says in verse 50, Jesus cried aloud with a loud voice and yielded up His Spirit. This was a voluntary giving up of His Spirit. The final cry after this point, into your hands I commit my spirit, was it is finished.

It is paid in full. One of the seven sayings of Christ on the cross. God's wrath is seen in the death of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 50 on your notes. Number two on your notes. God's wrath against sin is satisfied on the cross.

It's displayed in the cross, but it's satisfied in the cross. Do you see? That if you will repent and believe the Gospel, Christ has borne the wrath of God in your place. There's no need for you to suffer the wrath of God.

There's no need. Why will you die? The prophet said, I am no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and repent and follow and obey. The torn veil.

Look what it says in verse 51. The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This was a veil that was 60 feet high, over 30 feet wide, and it was the veil that was between all of the people and the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was.

And the Ark of the Covenant was a box about four feet long, two feet, and there were angels engraved, golden angels on each side of it. There were rings on each end of the box where they could slide the poles to carry it when the Levites were to carry it. And inside there was Aaron's rod that had budded.

There was a pot of manna. And there was the Ten Commandments in stone. And that was where only the high priest, only once a year, and only with blood, could come in and he would then sprinkle the mercy seat.

He would take the blood and sprinkle that blood on the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. And he could only go behind that veil with that blood. In fact, there was a practice where the priest would have bells sewn on the hem of his garment, and he would go in with a rope tied around his ankle, so that if he dropped over dead because he didn't do it correctly, they could pull him back out.

The veil itself, one account that I read, said when they made the veil, they would test it by hooking it up to teams of oxen so that they could pull it in every direction to make sure it wouldn't accidentally rip. And here it is. It was made not of simply threads, but of threads that were braided into braided cords, and the braided cords made up the actual veil.

And it was torn from 60 feet up right down the middle by whose hands? Almighty God tore that veil. And there's a couple of reasons. One, as an act of judgment upon the empty, meaningless rituals that they were going through in Israel.

But secondly, and most importantly for us, was that now the way of access was opened into the Holy of Holies. The book of Hebrews says that we have access through the tearing of the veil which is the body of Jesus Christ. So we have access into the Holy of Holies through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, how did they know at the cross that the veil of the temple was torn? Acts 6 tells us that there were a number of priests who were converted. And those priests on Passover would have been in the temple going through their duties, offering the blood and offering the sacrifices. And as those priests are in there going through their normal duties, the temple veil into the Holy of Holies was ripped from top to bottom.

That was amazing. And it was seen and understood by at least, the Bible says a great number of priests. So we don't know exactly how many, but a large number of priests were converted when they saw that.

They must have known. There must have been those who saw and there was something in them that realized that this was a significant event. You realize everything in the book of Matthew, all two-some years that we've been in the book of Matthew have been building up to today.

Today's sermon about the death of Jesus Christ and the access we have through the one mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now is the day to turn to Him. Don't let another day go by.

Repent and believe the Gospel. We find the veil now. We have access into the Holy of Holies.

V. 51, the veil of the temple was torn into from top to bottom. The earthquakes and rocks were split and then the graves were opened. Now we find that the bodies of the dead believers were raised not at the cross, but after the cross.

The graves were opened at the cross, but the bodies were raised at the resurrection of Christ because it says in v. 53, coming out of the graves after His resurrection. So this is a little bit of a fast forward three days ahead. So the graves were split open and you'll remember the graves were in the mountainsides where the rocks, they were caves usually.

And as this massive earthquake comes and rips these tombs, these rock tombs, splits them apart. Why? Because they needed for the dead believers to somehow get out? No, that was not a problem for God. The reason God opened the graves is so everyone else could go and look in and say they're gone.

And then it says in v. 53, they went out of the holy city and appeared out into the holy city and appeared to many. So here these believers were raised at the resurrection of Christ. They go into Jerusalem.

So obviously these had been Jewish believers. Were they some of the great heroes of the faith? We don't know. Were they buried recently? Were they buried hundreds of years earlier? We're not clear on all that.

This is the only place in the Bible that this particular story is told. So we've got to take and tread lightly as far as being dogmatic on who it was that was raised. We know it says they were the saints.

Genuine believers. And it says they were those who were buried in that area. And they went and appeared to many.

Were they many that they had known while on earth? Maybe these were people that had died before the coming of Christ. When they went into the holy city, were they meeting friends that they knew? Or were they the great hearers and just the heroes of the faith and came into the holy city? As Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they just knew it was Moses and Elijah. We're not quite sure of all the details there.

But what's the point of this? Why would there be a local resurrection of believers at the resurrection of Christ? This is called a principle in Scripture called first fruits. First fruits. Look back in 1 Corinthians with me.

The first fruits principle was that when a farmer was growing his crops and then the very first fruits that came to fruition, the very first oranges on the orange tree, if you will, those were harvested and given to the Lord. And there was nothing else on the tree. And what the farmer was saying is, I trust God that He will have more fruit to come.

I'm going to give the first fruits in faith. So the first fruits of the resurrection, this is in 1 Corinthians 15. Look at verse 20.

But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by man also comes the resurrection of the dead through the Lord Jesus Christ. What this is saying is that the death of Jesus Christ is the means to our ultimate resurrection.

There is no resurrection if Jesus Christ did not die on the cross and then rise from the dead. If Christ is not risen, we are of all men most miserable, most to be pitied. Because our faith is vain.

Our hope is empty. And that doesn't mean that all the other false religions now all of a sudden become true. Because we know they're false.

They're not based on historical reality. Only the Bible has the prophecies. Only the Bible is the most reliable historical record in all of ancient history.

So, the first fruits. And the first fruits are the down payment. The guarantee.

It's as though God comes along and says, now I know you're concerned about your future resurrection. Will your body be raised and united with your soul in heaven? I'm going to guarantee that. First of all, my Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is going to rise from the dead.

Secondly, I'm going to have a whole bunch of saints rise from the dead. We don't know how many, but it says many. Maybe it was hundreds.

Maybe it was thousands. But it was local. And there were eyewitnesses who could say, yes, I saw whoever it was risen from the dead.

So, the veil assures our access to heaven. The tearing of the veil. And the resurrection guarantees our resurrection.

And then finally, we'll end with this. Number three on your notes. God's wrath against sin is escaped only in conversion.

Look back in Matthew 27. It says in verse 54, So then the centurion and those who were with him who were guarding Jesus. Now, these are the men who had nailed Him to the cross.

These are the men who had been with Him as His guards in the praetorium when they had the king's game. And they were smashing Him on the head with the staff and pulling His beard out by the roots and scourging Him. They were also the men who had been there for the trial.

Now, think of yourself. Let's take it instead of a bunch of Roman soldiers. Just boil it down to one.

The centurion. You're the centurion and you are watching. I mean, if you're a centurion in Jerusalem, the ministry of Christ was not done in a corner.

I mean, you'd have known about this. Then you have to go at night and arrest the guy. And Jesus says to you, Who are you seeking? And you as Roman centurion said, Jesus of Nazareth.

And He says, I'm He. And you, the Roman centurion, fall over backwards with your troops. You know, I mean, something's starting to sink in, right? You're seeing this mock trial.

You've been there all night for the mock trial. You've seen the lies. You've seen the unfollowed legal procedure.

You've seen the whipping and you've seen hundreds of these. But you don't see Jesus cursing. You don't see Jesus with a foul, hateful, I'll come back from the dead and kill you.

You know, He doesn't have none of that. He's saying, forgive them. While you're pounding the nails into His hands, Father, forgive them.

And then you see the cosmic disturbances. You see God put His hand over the Son. And now the Son's gone out.

You're especially alert because, oh, this might be a chance for someone to steal the body. But you're thinking, wait a minute, wait a minute. I've seen hundreds, maybe thousands of executions.

And this man, there's something about this. Something about this. This is the most miraculous event of the crucifixion right here.

Look what he says. Verse 54, they feared greatly. The centurion, those who were with him, saw the earthquake.

They saw the things that had happened. And they feared greatly. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

You will not be genuinely converted until your knees are knocking and you are trembling before a holy God because you are the lawbreaker. You are the one who is dripping with iniquity. You are the one who has acted ungodly as though God doesn't exist.

You are the one who has acted wholly self-willed, fervent in your sin. And then you realize you're going to answer to God. You're going to stand before a holy God and have to answer for those sins and that God is angry with the wicked every day.

And you begin to tremble and you begin to shake and you begin to be fearful. And then, as this Roman centurion, he feared. Now, the Romans were not known, these soldiers, were not known for being chicken lovers.

You know what I'm saying? I mean, these guys were battle-hardened. And a centurion was a lifetime recruit. He had worked his way up through the ranks to have authority over a hundred men.

It was going to take a lot to make him afraid. But when he saw Jesus and the events that were happening, it says they feared greatly. Do you fear God? I'll tell you who to fear.

Don't fear the guy who can kill your body. Fear God who can destroy both body and soul in hell. And then it says, he made a confession.

So there is fear and there is a confession. And confession is not sitting in a little box talking to a guy. Confession is an open declaration of the truth.

Truly, this was the Son of God. The Bible says in 1 John 4, if a man believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he is saved. This was a miraculous conversion of a hardened Gentile watching all of this, fearing, and now confessing.

On your notes then, what that says is v. 54a, true conversion begins with a terrifying fear. V. 54b, true conversion moves to open confession. V. 55, true conversion results in faithful discipleship.

Many women who followed Jesus, they've been following all the way from Galilee. Jesus said, follow Me and I will make you fishers of men. And then finally, v. 56 is a radical life change.

I won't go into all of the names, but just one. Mary Magdalene. V. 56, among these women was Mary Magdalene.

Let me show you just one verse. Look in the Gospel of Luke. Matthew, Mark, Luke.

Luke chapter 8. Luke chapter 8. And look at verse 2. Luke chapter 8 and verse 2. And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod, Stuart, and Susanna, and many others who had provided for him from their substance. Was there a radical life change in Mary? There sure was. You know, here's the dilemma that I find as I close.

Here's the dilemma. Someone is self-righteous. Oh, I don't need anything.

I'm doing good. When I stand before God, I'll tell them how good I am. They begin hearing the Word of God and hearing the Word of God, and the Spirit of God begins piercing and slicing and crushing them.

And they begin to think about all of the immorality and the lies they've told and the gossip and the slander and the selfishness and the self-will. And when the Spirit of God truly is at work, you know what they then begin to say? How could God ever save me? There's no hope for me. I am so wicked.

I'm so sinful. Oh, God, how could You ever look toward me in favor? How could You be merciful to me? I don't deserve to even mention Your name. Oh, Lord, there's no hope for me.

Now, that's where you want to be. Because when you're at that point is when you're like Mary Magdalene. Because you don't have seven demons.

And if God can save her, He can save you. With every head bowed and every eye closed. We've seen the wrath of God this morning.

Poured out on your sin. And that the wrath of God was satisfied in the cross if you turned to Him. But you've got to respond.

You will only escape the wrath of God if you turn in repentant faith. I plead with you. I implore you in the behalf of Christ.

I mean, I sometimes preach myself hoarse because I want to communicate to you the urgency and the pleading. I can't imagine the Lord Jesus Christ being half-hearted or apathetic about your conversion. I want you to be saved.

God wants you to be saved. Father, bring Your convicting work upon the hearts of these people. Let them turn in repentance and faith to You.

Let them not harden their hearts. In Jesus' name.

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