

God Is Not Safe

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon emphasizes that God is not safe, highlighting His immense power and the seriousness of idolatry and pride in humanity's relationship with Him.

Duration: 48:19

Topics: "God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a powerful revival experience where God's presence was felt and sinners were delivered. The speaker describes a moment when a blacksmith prayed boldly, challenging God to keep His covenant promises. As a result, the whole house shook and people were prostrated on the floor, experiencing God's witness in their hearts. The speaker also shares a story of a young man who initially mocked the revival but was convicted by God's presence, even as he tried to escape it by going to a bar and a dance hall. Ultimately, the young man yielded to the Lord. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the return of Jesus and the judgment that will accompany it.

Transcript

The title of the message is, God is not safe. Tozer is a man that had a relationship with the Lord. I remember one thing I read on Tozer that there would be times where for hours he would lay prostrate on his face before the Lord, not praying, not worshiping, just adoring.

And a man who can do that becomes a man or a woman that begins to have an understanding of this God that is so awesome. He says, Among the sins to which the human heart is prone, hardly any other is more hateful to God than idolatry. For idolatry is at the bottom a libel on his character.

The idolatrous heart assumes that God is other than he is, in itself a monstrous sin, and substitutes for the true God one made after its own likeness. Always this God will conform to the image of the one who created it, and will be base or pure, cruel or kind, according to the moral state of the mind from which it emerges. Here he's bringing out the aspect that an idolatrous heart is more than a situation of where we go and we take something, we mold it, we shape it into an image.

It's more than that. It is the aspect of the distortion of who God is. And so we have to see that idolatry has a deeper meaning than sometimes what we give it to be.

And so accordingly, according to a person's view of God, will be whether this idol will be base or cruel, such as we looked at and I brought out in that other message, or whether it will be something that is greater or whether it will be something that is like God. You see, even the Romans and the Greeks with their gods, many times their concept of God is greater than our concept of God. Because so many times we reduce our God to something of such little power.

And at least Zeus and Apollos and all these gods had power at least. So many times we make our God less powerful than what the idols are of the past. And we serve the true and living God.

I believe that one misconception that has happened in the church where we have taken God and making Him an image that is obtainable for us to comprehend, that we have made Him a gentleman. And you know, I'm going to show you in this message that He's not a gentleman. I'm going to shatter that illusion because it is not true.

He is not a gentleman. He never desired to be a gentleman, never wanted to be a gentleman. That is because we try to make God something that we can comprehend in a way that we can deal with.

So we say, well, He's a gentleman. You know, He deals like a gentleman with people. But He doesn't.

That's not His purpose to deal like us with a gentleman. First thing I want to look at is when you go into Hebrew thought, they did not pronounce the name of God because the name of God is YHVH. Jehovah Witnesses, they try to take that, but you know, actually they don't go back to the Hebrew.

They go back to what would be more German translations where it's JHVH. That's where you get Jehovah from. But you see, in the Hebrew, it was YHVH, which made it impossible to pronounce because guess what? There's no vowels.

So you could not pronounce the name of God. The Jews had it like that because the name of God was so holy, their concept of God was so awesome that we were not allowed to pronounce it. So what they would do is they would call Him Lord or they would call Him God, but His name was unable to be pronounced.

That's why we really have no idea of what it is. We put vowels in there. Jehovah Witnesses, they make it up and they put in those particular vowels trying to say that's what it is and it's just not true because we don't know.

It was never revealed to us. But there is the aspect that the name of God was so revered that they could not speak it. And so I want you to think about this God.

And I want to show you how this God is not safe. And we have tried to make Him a safe God. And we have tried to make Him safe in a way that we can handle Him and we can control Him somehow in our thinking, but He is not a safe God.

Go to Genesis. I'm going to go through a bunch of scriptures and I'll just rattle them off to you, chapters mainly, that you can do your own little homework with it and eventually we will come to a verse that we'll look at together. But in Genesis 1 and 2, what goes on is the creation.

We have no concept of power like that. No concept. Where God goes and speaks and it comes into existence.

You see, man has never done that. Anything man has created, he has had to sit down, dig the stuff out of the earth somehow, form it, mold it, shape it, and somehow out of it build the things that we have today, no matter what it might be. It has had to be built with the hands of man.

Man does not have even the creative ability to speak for it to come into existence. But yet God is such an awesome God, such a powerful God, that He spoke and it came to pass. We have no point of reference, no point of reference to such power.

None. I mean, if we took all of the atomic bombs that we have and all the nuclear weapons and blew them up at once on this planet, we might be able to destroy the planet or at least really rearrange its surface. But yet we could not change the cosmos, all that exists.

It's impossible. We can't do it. It is not with us.

But you know, one day God is going to speak another word and it will cease to be. So the same God that with a word can create it will be the same God with a word that will stop it from existing. And then once again, those saints, those people that are with Him, will see Him create.

So all the theories they got, evolution and so on, which is just a farce. We all know that. We don't even need to get in that.

But you know, with all the theories, we're going to see how it really happens. One day we will watch Him. All the saints will stand behind Him as the word comes out of His mouth and instantly is created.

How many times for all eternity will we be with Him that He will make a new heaven and a new earth, that again and again and again He will show His splendor and His magnificence and His creative power. And every single time it will be more splendid than before and it will be more glorious. We'll stand in awe of this power because even all the angels combined and all the demons combined and all of creation combined can't even come close to the magnificence of the power of God that with a word can create.

You see, that's not a safe God. That is not a safe God. If we but really understood this concept alone, just in creation, we would be so awestruck with Him and we would deal very differently with Him because we would understand He's not one to be trifled with.

Somebody with that kind of power isn't somebody to be trifled with. You know, we can be on the streets out there and you can have this young kid with a gun in his hand and come up to you and point it in your face. You know, he has a particular power about him now that he can pull the trigger and take your life.

And so, in one way, we're going to give a certain amount of respect to this young boy because he thinks he has power and in one way he does. He has the ability to take a life. How much more is it that we should have an awe of God? And he even told us this.

Why should we fear man who can destroy the body when we should fear God who can destroy both body and cast the soul into hell? The power of God is so much beyond what we've ever thought. That's not a safe God. That's not a safe God.

You see, the church can come to a point and flirt with sin because they don't understand God's not safe. They don't comprehend that. And we've reduced them to manageable terms.

Genesis 5-9 speaks of the situation of Noah and the ark. Here's God being a little more tame. And what does he do? He speaks and he opens up the floodgates on humanity and destroys all of humanity except eight people.

That is not a safe God who looks at humanity, sees humanity gets so wicked and will not submit to the preaching of righteousness which was what Noah was doing, that he was a preacher of righteousness. They would not listen to it. And God chose to destroy all of humanity.

That's not a safe God. You see, we can sometimes make Him a gentleman. That was not nice.

It was not a nice thing He did. We're going to look at some other things that go on. That was not nice.

It was not a nice God to destroy all of humanity. But whoever said He was nice, He never went to us and said, I'm nice. That's not His purpose for existence, to be nice.

I'll explain myself as this goes on. Genesis 19 speaks of another thing where God was not safe. Here was another time where humanity was growing in wickedness.

And He spoke a word and He rained fire and brimstone down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities. That is not a safe God who has the ability. So you see, with one word He spoke all of heaven and earth into existence.

With another word He destroyed all of humanity except eight. With another word He spoke a city or a surrounding group of cities. You see, His power is not some power that is able to speak great things into existence but cannot be honed to laser straight, in essence, that can accomplish the finest work.

So His power is able to be magnificent in the huge, but yet able to be powerful in a much smaller scale. And so here His power is manifested in destroying a city and the surrounding cities of it. But you know, what was the sin? So many times we refer to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah as homosexuality.

Homosexuality was part of the sin, but you see, that was not the true sin. The real reason why God destroyed that city. I see homosexuality as the end product of a society that has gone astray from God.

It is some of the basest things that man can do. Some of the most detestable things. It is the only sins that are truly against nature.

You see, man gets really, really, really low when he even sins against nature, and that which is natural. But that's not the real issue. Ezekiel 16, verses 49-50 says, Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom.

She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned. They did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before Me.

Therefore, I did away with them as you have seen. So the sin of them was that they were proud. Do we understand how wicked pride really is? I mean, we don't comprehend it.

Pride is such a subtle sin. I mean, it is so subtle. It creeps in so easy.

And you know, the most ugliest form of pride that exists is the pride that takes place in religion, in Christianity, where we become pietistically proud. Aren't I spiritual? Look at how much I pray. Look at how much I read.

Look at how much I know. Look at how much I do. Look at this.

Look at that. All these things that we go through. And that becomes some of the most gross, most detestable to God.

Because when we should be actually humble and broken before our God, which is a very positive thing here, we become haughty and self-exalted. But yet with a word, with a word it was destroyed. That is not a safe God.

He is not a safe God. Now, it's not a safe God in Exodus, beginning in the seventh chapter, and it goes on. It's not a safe God who can take the most powerful nation in the world and bring it to its knees.

And God did it piece by piece by piece. He could have taken Egypt and brought it instantly to their knees. He could have done it just with one word.

But here is God methodically dealing with Egypt, bringing Egypt to its knees for a two-fold purpose, to try and show Egypt that their gods are no gods, but to try and show Israel that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lives and is able to deliver. So there was a many-fold purpose in this. But that is not a safe God that can bit by bit by bit destroy a nation.

But yet, history has shown time and again, God has brought nations to its knees. Time and again. Not just Egypt, but nation after nation, supposed Christian nation after Christian nation, when people forsake the commandments and the laws of God, eventually, the judgment will come upon them.

But you know, America does not understand. America does not understand. You see, we have a real problem we face.

There's a lot of dead babies out there that are crying for justice. Their blood is screaming for justice. I don't even know if America is able to be spared of judgment.

I don't know. Only God knows that. Only God knows that.

I don't know. I don't know where that line is. As what God went to Jeremiah and told Jeremiah, He says, don't pray for the children of Israel anymore.

Your prayers will not be heard for that. I will judge them. Where that point comes, I don't know.

But what a terrifying place where God says, I have been tolerant. I have bore with you. I will bear no more.

That is a horrifying thought. And that is just the bloods of babies besides all the people of the streets that have been slaughtered and all the drugs and the crimes and the sexual sins and the abuses in the homes and the atrocities. We can't see it.

We can't see it. Can you imagine, but for a minute, what God is able to do being omniscient, knowing everything, seeing everything. And He looks down upon humanity and He sees the atrocities that go on just in this neighborhood, in the homes at night.

The things that go on. We don't even see. We don't even know.

The things that cry out for justice of God. And America does not even comprehend, nor does the church comprehend who we have to deal with. But see, equally as much, we don't understand the tolerance of

God.

It's mind-boggling if we could but see for one second what He sees. We couldn't handle it. We could not handle it.

I mean, we have a hard enough time handling our own sin, much less if He let us see but a second, but a flash, of what He looks at. And we'd go insane because we could not take the extent of it. Only the shoulders of God are able to bear with that.

I think it's a terrifying thought that God brought a nation to its knees bit by bit. But yet, the Berlin Wall came down in a day. In no time, Russia was brought down.

But yet, we think that we're in America and we somehow equate God and America together. We just don't understand. In Numbers 16, you have a very interesting situation that goes on to see how God is not safe.

This is the story of the rebellion of Korah where there's a group of people who rebelled against the pastor. Moses was filling a multifaceted situation. He was pastor, and he was also being the leader of the people on a political basis and on a military basis, so he wore many hats.

But ultimately, he was to be the spiritual leader, which is what he was, and he went and showed the people the worship of God. And what that was is God communed with him. He revealed it to the people of God.

And so he wore many hats, but ultimately he was their spiritual leader. Korah and his people rebelled against the pastor. Now, I bring this out because it is such a dilemma in our country.

I mean, it's such a dilemma. One-third of the majority of all churches, depending on denominations, one-third of the churches that are open and looking for pastors because they have forced the pastor out one way or the other. Either they've rebelled, they voted him out, they made his life so miserable that he resigned, or whatever.

One-third of the churches. And every church that has forced out one pastor is twice as likely to force out another because they have learned and come to a conclusion that the pastor is a disposable commodity and we can find another one out there. Because God doesn't come down and judge the church instantly because of that, we think that it doesn't happen.

Why did God judge in this way at this time? Have you ever thought about that? Why was the judgment so quick? Something happened when Israel left Egypt. The moment they started on their journey, it says that there was a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of smoke by day that led the people. The very presence of God.

The Holy Spirit was there. And it says it did not leave them until they crossed over into the Jordan and the Promised Land. So the presence of God was there as a testimonial constantly before the people of God being with them.

They built a golden calf and there was the whole time this pillar of fire and this pillar of smoke. The whole time. Everything that they did.

Every rebellion that went on with them. Here was this constant pillar of fire and this pillar of smoke that was there. A constant testimony of the presence of God with the people.

But when the presence of God is there, He is quick for mercy. He is also quick for justice. And so we find the situation where at one time when they begin to rebel, it says that fire came out from the Lord.

And I believe it came out from the pillar. And it came out and it burnt the outward skirts of the people. Killing them.

Because instantly, because God was there, judgment was there. You see, we have the New Testament example of it. Ananias and Sapphira.

The Holy Spirit was powerful in the midst of the church. Powerful. And because He was powerful, these two people were smoke-dead.

That's not a safe God. Do we really want Him close? I mean, do we really want Him close? I mean, you have other examples of it. Aaron's sons that were smoke when they offered strange fire before the Lord.

God was near. But you know, there was another situation that happened. Israel started sacrificing pigs in the temple.

And nobody died. The glory of God had already departed. It had already long left.

So judgment was not quickly executed. You know, when you go to the revivals of Finney, Finney has many, many examples he refers to of preachers that were smoke-dead because they rose up in rebellion against Him. I mean, just phenomenal things that happened.

They would come to His service and they would be critical and condemning of it. And they'd go back to their hotel room and they'd die in the night. I mean, just phenomenal things.

Why? Because God was quick to judge. Because He was also quick for mercy. He was present there also to judge.

Do we want Him? Do we really understand what the manifest presence of God means in the church? Do we really comprehend that? He's not a safe God. I want to take a couple of minutes and I want to look at Jesus now. Jesus was God incarnate in flesh and blood.

He was absolutely God, 100%. But He was absolutely flesh. He voluntarily took upon Himself the form of flesh and blood.

That's what Philippians 2 speaks of and the glory of that situation. I will be honest, I don't comprehend it. And I'm not even going to pretend to try and explain it.

Somehow, God was able to voluntarily limit Himself of omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience and take upon Himself the limitedness of human flesh voluntarily, but yet still keep a totally and completely divine character and having the total attributes of love and mercy and truth and all the other things that would still be in the character of God. And so I'm not going to tell you how that works. I have no idea, and nor does any theologian on the planet who has ever existed.

We might write books on it, but we really don't comprehend it because we don't know how such a thing works. But here was God Almighty with the people. For 30 years, He was silent.

He held back everything. John the Baptist comes on the scene and revival breaks out. You see, that's what happened.

John the Baptist, God used to bring revival. For 400 years, there had not been a move of God in Israel. And now God begins with John the Baptist preparing the way.

Jesus comes on the scene and He steps into revival and the revival continues now through Jesus. The revival, when you look in the book of Acts, takes a little break. Jesus dies on the cross.

Everybody's disbanded. The day of Pentecost begins and the revival starts all over. And that's what the book of Acts is.

The movings of the Holy Spirit amongst the church in a powerful way. That's what God desires to do again. I want you to think about this.

Here's Jesus. He just gets done praying and He gets done sweating drops of blood. He's in the garden.

And all of a sudden, Judas comes into the garden with a band of soldiers and they walk up to Jesus. Here they come up to Jesus and Jesus makes a statement. He says, Whom are you seeking? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

And Jesus goes and says, I am He. And the account is that they were all smote down backwards. They were all knocked to the ground.

Instantly slain in the Spirit, in essence. And they got back up to still take Him. To me, that's mind-boggling.

They didn't know who they were dealing with. They had no concept. No idea.

I mean, I'd be terrified. I'm going, Who is this? I just got knocked on my butt and He just looked at us. But they still took Him.

Because you see, ultimately it was a plan of God. Their minds were blinded to the truth. But what do they do? They go up and they go to grab Jesus and the apostles wake up and they come running and Peter in his enthusiasm that goes astray, he picks up a sword and he goes and he cuts the ear of the high priest's servant off.

And what did Jesus do? He reaches down, He goes and takes the ear. Full of blood. The man's head bleeding.

Puts it back on his head and heals him. And the blood's still there. And they still took Him.

They had no idea. I mean, these people had no concept. I want you to hear what it speaks of in Matthew 26 and verses 51-53 of what happens.

With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out, and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Put your sword back in its place, Jesus said to him, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? Do you know what Jesus was saying right there? Peter, don't you understand? Don't you know who these people are dealing with? I have the ability to destroy heaven and earth right now with the Word.

Right now. The Father's put at my disposal twelve legions of angels. I don't even know what one legion could do.

But I'll tell you what, twelve legions is kind of overkill. We don't understand. They did not know.

When you look at statements like this, you see how Jesus was voluntarily, by absolute choice of His own, going to the cross. Power we just don't understand. That's not a safe Jesus.

He is not safe. He is not safe. Getting real personal.

You see, that's what's interesting. He can deal on the big scale with creation. He can deal on the scale of destroying a world or destroying a city or destroying a nation.

But here's this God that's not safe that in Acts 9, here's this rebellious man that thinks he's right with God and he's riding along to slaughter some Christians and have them thrown in jail and God knocks him down. That's not a gentleman. Don't tell me a gentleman knocks you down.

It just doesn't happen. You see, we have to reorient how we think or we have to redefine what a gentleman is. That is not nice.

He was not nice. He took Paul, knocked him to the ground, and then what did he do besides? He blinded him. That was not nice.

But who said he was to be nice? He wasn't concerned about being nice to Paul. That wasn't the issue. He was not being safe.

I want to take you on a little journey and I have a couple more issues to deal with before I come to the conclusion with this. I want to take you to probably one of the most powerful revivals I've ever read about. It was the Hebrides Awakening that took place in 1949 through 1953 in the Hebrides Islands, which are off the coast of Scotland.

Many believers had a great sense of expectation as a whole. But as a whole, the people in the area were resistant to the Gospel. A deacon said to him, that is Duncan Campbell that night, Mr. Campbell, God is hovering over and He is going to break through.

Yet the meeting was completely ordinary. Still, the deacon was confident and said to Campbell, Do not be discouraged. God is coming.

Already I hear the rumblings of Heaven's chariot wheels. They battled without a breakthrough until Campbell felt led to ask the blacksmith to pray. And after praying for 30 minutes, the blacksmith closed with these bold words, God, do you not know your honor is at stake? You promised to pour floods on dry ground and you are not doing it.

God, your honor is at stake and I challenge you to keep your covenant engagements. And then the whole granite house shook like a leaf. Campbell then related, I saw a dozen men and women prostrated on the floor.

They lay there speechless as God gave witness to their hearts. He had taken the field. The forests of darkness were going to be driven back.

Sinful men were going to be delivered. We knew something had happened. And then when we left the cottage at three o'clock in the morning, we learned what it was.

Everywhere, men and women were seeking God. As I walked along the county road, I found three men on their faces crying to God for mercy. There was a light on in every home and no one seemed to be thinking of sleep.

The thing that's so phenomenal about this revival is that as God visited the church simultaneously, He moved upon the world. It's like the dove swept through the church. And as He swept through the church, He swept through the multitude of people and instantly woke them up in their homes or went out on the fishing piers or whatever.

Everywhere, people were under great conviction of sin. Atheists and communists were slain helplessly under the awful conviction of sin. They prayed for hours that they might find peace of mind.

Drunkards standing at the saloon trembled, dropped their beers upon the floor and cried to God for mercy to save them. Businessmen who never darkened the doors of a church. School teachers correcting their papers.

Housewives in their homes. Even herring fishermen upon the sea were all gripped with deep conviction of sin. People felt strange, so maternally compelling, to go to the church where they could find relief.

They felt wonderment and misery alike. The hills were soon black with people streaming to the churches from all directions. There was a young man, a rebellious young man.

He went into the church to mock the revival. And he goes into the meeting and all of a sudden the conviction of God falls upon him. And as it falls upon him, he's sitting there and he says, No, I will not let this get me.

I'll go across the street to the bar and I'll drink it away. And he runs across the street to the bar. And he goes up and he says, Give me a beer.

And the man slides a beer into his hand, he goes and grabs it, goes to pick it up and as he picks it up, his hand starts to shake. And he looks down and he sees five other men with beers in their hands and their hands are all shaking like this. And one man drops it, falls to the ground and begins to weep and bawl his eyes out.

This young man drops his beer and says, No, I won't let it get me. And he runs out and he runs down the street to a dance hall. He goes into the dance hall and he grabs a young woman and starts dancing with her.

As he's dancing with her, she begins to melt in his arms and she falls on her knees and begins to weep and cry for her sin. Soon he succumbed. He could not resist it anymore.

And he yielded to the Lord. Not a safe God. Not a safe God.

I want to bring out two final points. It's not a safe God who one day is going to crack the heavens and come back. I struggle with the situation of His return.

And the reason why I struggle with it is because I understand but a fraction. I know that when He returns, it is going to be glorious for the church. It is going to be sorrow.

Like we've never known. Millions, more than likely billions, will instantly be judged by God. We don't even comprehend it.

But yet, we need to pray for it because what it is, I see the book of Revelation as a love letter to the church. I see it as a statement of God that He's going to shake the earth in a final way to the point that those who will be saved will be saved. Those who won't, won't.

They'll be the dividing line. And God can, in perfect justice, judge those wicked and save those who would be saved. A final time.

And He will bring to an end this time of wickedness to bring about justice. You see, that's not a safe God that's going to crack those heavens. What foolhardiness that they will array themselves against God to fight against Him.

What arrogance. They don't know who they're dealing with. They have no concept of it.

Even the devil who saw Him on the throne has been so blinded by his own pride that he doesn't even understand who he deals with. But now the most terrifying thing. 2 Corinthians 5.10 says, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

This God who spoke heaven and earth in existence, every person will stand before. That's not a safe God. People don't know, man.

When you see kids out there and they put those shirts on, no fear, or they put it on their cars, they have no idea. They don't comprehend. But the majority of church does not comprehend.

How many Christians comprehend? How many Christians that are out there and they're compromising with sin don't comprehend? They don't understand. This is not a safe God. This is not a safe God.

C.S. Lewis wrote a set of books, an analogy about Christianity called The Chronicles of Narnia. Wonderful story. These children, they walk through this magical wardrobe to go into this land of Narnia.

And in it, it's an analogy of Christ and of the world and of what would go on and of his death and so on. And Christ is portrayed as a huge, magnificent lion. It's Aslan the lion.

And the children have lost their way. They don't know how to get back home. And so the only way they'll be able to get back home is they must find Aslan.

And so the guide is trying to bring them to Aslan. And they spoke of him as this huge, magnificent lion. And the kids go in fear, saying, Is he safe? And the guide says, No, he's not safe.

But he's good. This is what we really have to see. This God is not safe, but He is good.

He is good. And this is what we have to hope. And that's why we can believe the Scripture.

And that's why we can put our faith in it. And that's why we can believe it and trust it and put our entire life, everything that we have into it, because this God that is not safe is a God that is good. I will stand before

that same white throne that sinners will stand before.

And they will hear, Depart from me. But I will stand before Him, and I believe that when I first see His face, I'll fall down, I'll weep, I'll tremble, I'll be terrified before Him, and also now hear these astounding words, Enter into the kingdom, thou good and faithful servant. And there'll be a strength that'll come into me that'll allow me to stand before Him.

Sheer grace that would empower me. Because when I first behold Him, the terror in my natural, just as a fallen person that now stands before God, will be so overwhelming until He allows me to have the strength to behold Him to those who believe He will be good to. Even though He is the same awesome God, the same powerful God.

Turn to Lamentations, the third chapter. Jeremiah, just a... Boy, talk about hard ministry. Here's messages of nothing but woe and sorrow and judgment.

But yet within the midst of it, there's always these glimmers, these hopes, these promises. The sweetness of God breaks through the justice of God. In America, we have made God like man.

We've made Him a God of mush. But, you know, there's been other times where they made Him a God of cruelty. Both extremes are wrong.

He is a God of justice, He is a God of mercy. One is not more important than the other. They all make up the attributes of God.

But here in Lamentations 3, this is just a phenomenally wonderful section of Scripture, especially when you look at what Lamentations is speaking about and what Jeremiah spoke in the 21st verse. And when he says this, Yet I call this to mind, and therefore I have hope. But he just spoke judgment.

He just spoke judgment. And he says, Yet this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope, because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning.

Great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, The Lord is my portion, therefore I will wait for Him. The Lord is good to those who hope in Him, to the one who seeks Him.

It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord, because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed. I mean, there again, we don't understand the justice of God and the tolerance of God to hold back His wrath until we came. Do you see the gift of God that He came to you? The gift of God is so phenomenal.

So phenomenal is the gift. This God, who has all the right in the world and in His own existence to destroy all of humanity, because He is just, yet bears with us, draws us, calls us, that He would bring us to a point of repentance. And then calls us to a place that we might not just repent, but walk with Him in intimacy, to know Him.

I mean, then He bears with us in our flightiness, that we might learn to be stable and walk with Him and know Him more and more and more and see more of His beauty, more of His splendor, when we have no right. He's good. Good beyond our comprehension.

Good beyond our comprehension. When you have a God of such awesome power and you have a God of such justice, we have to look at something here that is so astounding within the promises of God. And I

want to take a couple of minutes on this.

God came to reconcile man to Himself. This phenomenal act of reconciliation, such a basic foundation of Christianity, such a basic truth, that is what Luther brought back was justification by faith and reconciliation before God. The basic doctrines.

So astounding. So astounding. Salvation by grace.

Just astounding. But what is reconciliation? Reconciliation, the word means to exchange. What it comes down to be, it says, is to bring into a change of relationship.

I am at war with God in my sin. To be reconciled to God is that when I repented and asked for forgiveness, the relationship was changed. One of being at war, now to one of being a family member.

How astounding. At war, an enemy of God, and then a family member. You can't get more radical in the situation.

I mean, not a slave. A family member. An adopted child.

Astounding in the beauty of what he brings out here. And so reconciliation includes two particular things, and this would be included in justification. It would be forgiveness.

That God is a God in His goodness to forgive us when we truly repent. And then He does another thing. He makes a declaration over us of righteousness.

What it is, is I am guilty in my sin. I deserve damnation and the justice of God. But because I repent and I ask for forgiveness, He reaches out and He touches me and He makes a declaration, I declare you clean and righteous by my choice.

Astounding. But I want to take you to a situation now. Turn to John 21.

Church, God is for you. I mean, God is for you. God is for you.

This God who is so awesome, who is so magnificent, is on your side. I want you to see an act of reconciliation. And this is just one that became very important.

God did it after He rose again from the dead to the apostles and to the disciples and visiting them and teaching them. Reconciled them to Himself. But here is a sweet, tender one that is specifically put in there that we might understand it in our own lives.

How often do we play Peter? How often are we like Peter where we deny Him and we're weak and we're not what we should be? How often is it that sometimes we have the concept of God as not being good? That sometimes He's cruel and He's mean and He's hard and He's a taskmaster and He's just going to grind me to dust. But He's good. I've got to remember He's not like man.

When people wrong us and we've done wrong, what do we do? We want to somehow get even. We want to somehow have justice. I'm glad God's not crying up there for justice.

I'm glad He's not. I'm glad He cries for mercy. He longs for mercy, not for justice.

But here's the story of Peter in the 15th verse. Jesus comes on to the scene. And before I touch on this, you know, it's so interesting.

The first person that recognized Jesus on the shore was who? No. It was John. John was the first one to recognize.

After John recognized Jesus, Peter went and clothed himself and jumped into the water. Have you ever thought of that? Why is it that John was called the one who Jesus loved? I believe that John had such a tenderness for the Lord, such a love. He was the one who leaned his head on the breast.

And you know, there's a tenderness of love that becomes so deep in our hearts that allows our eyes to see more clearly. I believe it was that love, that passion that John had for Jesus that allowed him to see Him first. That's another thought.

In the 15th verse, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you truly love Me more than these? Yes, Lord, He said. You know that I love you. Jesus said, feed My lambs.

Again, Jesus said, Simon, son of John, do you truly love Me? He answered, yes, Lord. You know that I love you. Jesus says, take care of My sheep.

The third time He said to him, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was hurt because He asked him the third time, do you love Me? He says, Lord, You know all things. You know that I love you. And Jesus said, feed My sheep.

And then He went on to tell him about His death and how He would suffer for him. Jesus was reconciling Peter to Himself. It hurt.

It hurt His heart that Jesus would ask it again. The first time He says, feed My little lambs, then feed My sheep, then feed My sheep. He says, if you love Me, then I want you to live it out.

And this is how I want you to live it out. Take care of them little babies. I guarantee you the devil wants to destroy them.

And the only hope is that you bring them in and you make them disciples. Just don't let them be converts. You establish them and then you go and you build My church.

You establish My church for me. If you love Me, this is what I'm asking. He was reconciling him.

We cannot have a ministry of reconciliation, a ministry that can reach out to a perishing world to reconcile them, help them be reconciled to God, unless reconciliation has been full in our lives. You will find shortly after this, Peter becomes the one that stands up and has the boldness to preach to those people, many who might have cried 50 days earlier, crucify them to Jesus. And now Peter's up there preaching to many of them and 3,000 get saved.

The transformation of a man because ultimately he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but there was reconciliation that went on to prepare the man. And I challenge you as Christians, have you allowed the work of reconciliation to be complete in your life? Because many times it's not complete in our lives because we know God is awesome, and sometimes we become so fearful of always doing wrong, we can't do anything right we feel, and we're walking around with guilt and condemnation as this God that's going to be out to get us. Are we walking in the freedom that He gives? He wants us to walk in repentance,

that broken heart that we can repent quickly.

But He wants us to walk in forgiveness as well, that when I do repent, I can get back up, and I don't have to beat myself over the head, I'm good for nothing, I'm good for nothing, I'm good for nothing. Is that the work of God? Is that there the nature of God that has been revealed? He is not a safe God, but He is a good God. And every action that He has done, hard as it might be for us to comprehend it, has been actions of love for humanity.

Even the destruction of the world in Noah's day. Even the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Things that we don't comprehend was actions of justice and actions of mercy that He was doing.

We can never reconcile people to Christ until we have been reconciled and we work through the aspect of forgiveness. God, You have forgiven me. I'm not talking about justifying sin.

That we deal with sin. When we do genuine repentance, there is genuine forgiveness. There is genuine forgiveness.

And it becomes a time that we don't beat ourselves over the head, that we know what it is to walk in that forgiveness. And when the devil brings it back on us, that we can turn to him and say, get out of my face, devil. His blood is powerful enough to cleanse me of all sin and to free me from all condemnation.

When it says in Romans 8, it says that there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, it's not referring to an emotional condemnation. It's referring to a judgmental condemnation. Those who are in Christ are free from the condemnation of a just judge damning them to hell and making them reap what they sow.

That they are free from it. That they've been delivered and now they have joy in their Christian life as a result of it. People who are beat down become very ineffective witnesses for the gospel.

Very, very ineffective. But you know who becomes effective? There's this woman. Jesus was meeting with a bunch of religious folk.

You see, He even loved the religious folk. He tried to save them. But He's eating with Simon.

And He's eating with Simon and He's sitting there reclining at the table and this woman runs through the doors and runs into the house and falls at His feet. And she begins to weep at His feet. She was a prostitute.

She was a wicked woman. And she's weeping at His feet and she took precious ointment and poured it on His feet and was wiping them with the hairs of her head. The religious people got all full of condemnation and became judgmental.

And He turns to Simon and He says, I want to ask you something, Simon. He says, when I came into this house, you didn't give me kiss, you didn't wash my feet, but this woman has kissed my feet and she has washed my feet with the hairs of her head. And He makes a statement, she has been forgiven much because she loved much.

When we understand the greatness of our sin, the greatness of our God, and the wonder of what grace really is, I guarantee you that woman ran out of that place after Jesus had to look in that face with tears streaming down it. A broken woman looked in that face and says, go in peace. And she probably ran out

of there the first time feeling clean.

The first time. And I guarantee you she wasn't quiet. I guarantee you.

That's what He's looking for in His church. That's what He's looking for. When reconciliation is complete, when we, like that sinner woman, understand how great that salvation is, that He has declared me clean and He said, go in peace, we can run out the doors of the church and be excited and have the zeal of God fill our soul because we're free.

We're free. We've been declared clean by God. We are now made righteous because of what He's done.

This awesome God who had the right to judge us chose to have mercy on us because we spoke His name. Cried to Him. In closing, I want to bring out this verse and then I'll bring it to an end.

In Psalms 107, verses 8 and 9, it says, Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness or His unfailing love, and for His wonderful works to the children of men, for He satisfies the longing soul and He fills the hungry soul with goodness. He satisfies, saints. He satisfies.

He satisfies. Our goal must become unbroken fellowship with God. That is our greatest privilege that He offers us.

God is big enough to be all that we need and to bring us in that place that we can have that type of relationship.

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