

There Is Wrath

by Ralph Sexton

The sermon warns of God's impending wrath and the necessity of true repentance and faith for salvation.

Duration: 36:54

Scripture: Job 36:10-14, Job 36:17, Job 36:22, Proverbs 29:1, 1 Corinthians 5:5, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Gods Judgment", "Moral Decline"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes a powerful service where people were deeply convicted about the consequences of God's absence. A little girl approached the preacher, pleading for the meeting not to end. Later, the preacher discovers the same girl weeping on her alcoholic mother's back. The preacher emphasizes that God's judgment can come suddenly and without remedy, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:5. He also highlights the moral decline in America and the increasing fear and danger faced by parents due to violence and kidnapping.

Transcript

Turn with me in the Old Testament, if you would, to the book of Job. Job chapter number 36. If you have your old Schofield Study Bible, it's page 593.

Job 36. I'll begin reading in God's Word at verse number 10. He opened also their ear to discipline and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

If they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge. But the hypocrite in heart heap up wrath.

They cry not when He bindeth them. They die in youth. Their life is among the unclean.

He delivereth the poor in His affliction and openeth their ears in oppression. Verse 17 says, But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked, and judgment and justice take hold on thee. Because, listen to this statement, there is wrath.

Beware lest He take thee away with His stroke. Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. One of the most difficult jobs that a pastor would ever have would be to preach to his own church family a message about impending judgment.

The most difficult thing that anyone would have to do is to talk to a friend, someone that you know, someone that you're around, and say, I know you're my friend, I know who you are, but I need to tell you that there is judgment coming. That is not what any person would want to have a discussion with a friend or an acquaintance. But nevertheless, the responsibility falls upon the pulpit and the under-shepherd that when you're praying and you're getting along with God, it doesn't matter if you're talking to your best friend, it doesn't matter if you're talking to your blood relatives, it doesn't matter if you're talking to people you fish with or play golf with, it doesn't matter if it's people you enjoy going out to eat with.

If God puts a burden on your heart, you're mandated by a holy God to walk to the pulpit and say, Thus saith the Lord. Revelation chapter 3 and verse number 20. We dealt with that verse yesterday.

Behold, I stand at the door and what? And knock. But apparently, when we go through and review that verse, and we read that verse, that that door that's being knocked on is the door of the church. It's the Lord Jesus Christ knocking on His own church door.

At that time, it was the church at Laodicea. It's the church that didn't want to be serious. They were blessed.

They had financial wealth. They had opportunity. They were at the center of art and culture, trade and commerce.

And yet, they got away from God and they grew cold. This was a center of Christianity near the cities of Heropolis, near the city of Colossae, a place historically prosperous. And yet, when they had been blessed by God, and God had anointed them and made them a place, the sea of the bishop was there, the council was there, and yet they took all their blessings and their blessings became a curse.

And when those blessings become a curse, then God says, I will warn you. I will warn you again. And because I'm longsuffering and merciful, I will warn you again.

And if you do not repent for the saved person, it says in Revelation, to repent and do your first works. For the unsaved person, God warns us that today is the day of salvation. Every person in this auditorium, it doesn't matter if you're in the balcony, it doesn't matter if you're in an overflow chair or watching on the closed circuit TV or on the internet joining us, it doesn't matter where you are.

If you can understand one thing tonight, and that one thing is, I am going to live forever. And I will live forever with God, or I will live forever away from God. One of the great dangers is to be sitting in the house of God lost.

Sitting in the house of God, saying religious words, knowing when to say amen, knowing to carry a 1611 Bible because it's the inerrant, infallible Word of God, knowing to have Christian friends for associates and for fellowship, and yet at the same time, all of your working with God is in the head and not in the heart. God's Word declares that there is wrath. What are you saying, Pastor? I'm saying that when I read these Scriptures, God's reiterating and He's emphasizing for every one of us to know that if I'm saved and I'm born again, to Him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, is what? Sin.

And if I'm God's, if I've been saved, if my name's recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life and I'm born again and I sin, then what is the next thing that's going to happen to me? I'm going to be chastised. If I'm a child of God, if you can go out of this place tonight and you can sin, you can transgress against God's Word and God's way and God's walk, and you can do that and you do not get corrected or chastened, then you have

never been born again. Only saved, born again people receive chastisement.

Those that have been bought with the blood of the Lamb, and when you've been saved and you've been born again, and you've been bought into the family of God, we've not reached sinless perfection. You can backslide. You can grow cold.

You can drift. You can get away from God. But the first day you backslide, the first day you drift, you're going to have a chastisement, you're going to have broken fellowship, you're going to start losing your joy, and you're going to have the correcting, loving hand of God applied to your life.

And the way you know you're saved is because you know it's not right to do what you're doing. Let's go to the other side. If you have never been saved, you've never been born again, you say, what do you mean by that, Brother Ralph? You can be a church member.

You can be sprinkled. You can be baptized. You can learn catechisms.

You can memorize religious root. You can go through religious ritual. You can take the Eucharist.

You can celebrate Holy Communion. You can go to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. You can be filled with religious activity, religious vocabulary, and never have been saved by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Religion is not what we need. We need the saving grace of God. So if I have entered into this life, and I'm at this point, and I go to church, and I'm a pretty good person, but I've never ever been saved, I know that if I were to die tonight, I immediately have an anxiety.

If I were to die tonight, I'm immediately afraid, because I do not know where I'd spend eternity. It's not what my grandmother said that I said when I was five years old. It's not what my daddy said that I said when I was seven years old on the way to school.

I'm an adult now. I know right from wrong. I have to know what God knows.

Does God know that my name is in the Lamb's Book of Life? Does God know me? When I walk into the judgment throne room, would a holy God look at me and say, Depart. I never have known you. There really is a group of people that attend religious services every week in America.

And the devil has done a marvelous job of deception. And the job that he's done is that he has inoculated them with religion so that they never ever will be born into the Kingdom of God. How do you keep from getting the flu? How do you keep from being infected with some deadly disease? They make a vaccine.

And that vaccine contains a little bit of the deadly disease. It contains a little bit of the flu. It contains a little bit of the deadly disease.

And so what the doctor does to save your life or to prevent you from getting the flu is he takes you into the office and he takes an alcohol swipe and he cleans a place on your arm and then he injects a little bit of that medicine. That medicine has a little bit of the flu in it so that your body will immediately begin to make antibodies to fight off that flu. And then three months later, five months later, you encounter the flu with all of its power and all of its strength and your body has already manufactured the resistive power to hold off the flu and to keep the flu from penetrating into your bloodstream and taking over your body.

Now, the devil has gone to work in America since the Second World War to take America down an intoxicating pathway of prosperity and good living. A news reporter said last Thursday on one of the morning shows they were talking about all of the children being killed in America. The terror that mom and dads are going through just to go to the mall, just to go to the grocery store.

That kids are being kidnapped. And the predator, you're afraid to let the child play in its own yard. And they were saying, what's going on in our country? And then another comment was made by a commentator about the moral situation in America and the drifting of the academic world and then the loss of morals and values in our land.

And they said, what we need to do is we need to find out what our parents were doing in the twenties and the thirties and the forties. And they said, you know, that would be a good research project. Maybe we could find out something they were doing so we could do it today.

And I kept yelling at the television, what happened in the twenties and the thirties and the forties is they went to church and they feared God and they had God on the throne and they had mamas and daddies that loved God and they taught their children, this is the way, walk ye in it. There is a way that seemeth right unto man that leads to death and destruction. Ladies and gentlemen, the devil would like to inoculate you with a little religion so that when you come into the house of God, whether it be Trinity Baptist or any other church, you think, you know what, I'm better than those people that don't go to church.

I've got a Bible in this hand. I'm taking notes. I'm shaking hands.

I'm smiling. I'm writing a check. I'm giving tithes.

I'm giving offerings. I'm doing charitable deeds. I'm going on a missions trip to paint a building.

I'm working over in the nursery to help. I'm willing to usher. And at the same time, you're in the house of God.

You've got a form of godliness. But if you died right now in the house of God, you have no hope of ever seeing God Almighty. You say, well, Pastor, you don't understand.

They baptized me. They sprinkled me. I took holy communion.

I've been a church member for 30 years. I was preaching in Kannapolis, North Carolina. And Mrs. Leona Barnett and her husband were faithful to that tent meeting.

They started with us up at the camp meeting when the revival fires were breaking out. We moved to Pastor Bobby Utley's church and stayed for several weeks. And they literally took the walls out of the back of the church.

And then we outgrew the church and we rented a tent. And the revival fires just kept burning. And that precious couple came every single night.

And Mr. Barnett was actually crippled and he had double crutches that he had to walk on. And I can see him pulling himself in under that tent every night. One week.

Two weeks. Three weeks. Four weeks.

Five weeks. And they would sit in those folding chairs right on the right-hand side. And night after night, they were there.

And I knew they were godly people. I knew Mrs. Barnett loved the Lord. Every other night, she brought me a coconut cake or a seven-layer applesauce cake or homemade brownies or a coconut pie or a lemon meringue pie.

I knew she was spiritual. I mean, she knew what it took to keep the preacher going. And she kept loving on me.

Night after night, they would be there faithfully. And one night, we had been praying on Friday night. Brother Squire Parsons, if you remember, he wrote a song about that Friday night we tried to close.

Five Little Pennies. Remember? And we tried to close. And that little girl came that night and she said, please don't close.

And she had heard those preachers talking about having enough money to rent the land again and it was so expensive. And she gave me five little pennies. And her dress was dirty.

Her face was dirty. I didn't know it at the time. I found out after the service.

But a next-door neighbor, Kathy, actually picked up that little girl and brought her to church because her mother is an alcoholic. Her daddy is not in the home. And every time they would leave out to go to church, they'd find that little girl down the road, playing in the road a block away from home.

And the mother passed out. The front door opened. Little toddlers there.

And that woman and her husband finally just picked up that little child and wiped her face off and put her in the car and said, go to the tent meeting with us. They knew the mother would still be unconscious when they got back. And so they took that little girl.

And while they were there, that service broke out and there was a great sense and gripping conviction that what would happen if God pulled away? What would happen if there was no more grace? What would happen if there was no more mercy? What if God backed up and left out? What if this was the last night we would ever have life? What if He'll never speak again? What if He won't talk one more time? What if this is it? What if this is it? And people began to weep. And you could hear moaning and groaning and weeping. And that's when that little girl came down.

And she got ahold of my leg and hugged my leg. And I looked down at her and I said, what's the matter? And she said, please, don't close this meeting. Please don't close this meeting.

My mommy's not saved. My mommy's not saved. She had enough discernment and knowledge to know it wasn't right what she had to live in.

She knew that something wasn't right. She had heard those men talking about renting the property and renting the tent. And she gave me five little pennies.

And I remember I tried to give them back and she said, no, just don't take the tent down. And the mommy comes. And don't take the tent down.

Well, you know what you'd have done? You'd have sold your house to keep that tent there for another week. And we did. And we went on another week.

But it was in that next week that Mrs. Barnett in one of those powerful services, and there was a deep sense of conviction and weeping. And one of those services on Friday night, five nights, a penny per night, that that little girl had given her five pennies, a number of grace. And the fifth night from that service, that little girl gave those five pennies.

I'm up preaching and the altar begins to fill up before I got through preaching. People were weeping and calling on God. And I looked over and did a double take.

There's a woman in the altar. And I look and there's a little girl and she's laying across that woman. She's laying on her back.

And she's just crying her eyes out. And I'm wondering, no, that couldn't be that little girl. And I look again.

And finally, I walked off the platform and I walked down there. And sure enough, that was that little girl. And she was weeping on her mother's back.

I got down on my knees beside that woman and I said, ma'am, could I help you? Why are you kneeling here? She raised up in the odor of alcohol and knocked you back, Clifford. She said, I've drunk all day long. She said, I had a fifth of vodka.

I've had a fifth of liquor. She said, I can't get drunk. What's wrong with me? She said, it won't work anymore.

She said, I'm about to lose my mind. I can't get drunk. Why can't I get drunk? I said, ma'am, it could be that little girl that's hanging on your back has got the ear of a holy God and God wouldn't allow the liquor to work so you could hear the good news that Jesus died for you.

Boy, she began to weep and to cry and to call upon the name of the Lord. And God saved that precious lady. People kept coming.

People kept weeping. And all of a sudden, I saw Leona Barnett get out of her seat. And I saw that elderly, snow-white haired lady come walking down the aisle with a hulking step.

And Kim, she went around on the piano side and knelt down. And I kept preaching and I thought, my goodness, Ms. Barnett's really burdened for someone. The color had drained out of her face.

I couldn't imagine how she was so broken-hearted for someone. And when I walked over there and walked by her, I heard this coming out of the altar. She was going, Oh, God! Would You have mercy on a hypocrite? Oh, God! I don't want to go to hell off a church field.

Oh, God, have mercy on me. I mean, you could have knocked me over. You see, you need to understand something tonight.

You can fool your husband. You can fool your wife. You can fool your children.

You can fool your preacher. But you can't fool the Holy Ghost of God. Oh, when God's working and God's moving and revival's breaking out, the Holy Ghost begins to walk in among the flock and the family of God.

And God begins to grab ahold of your soul and begins to turn the x-ray of heaven on to find out what's the relationship between your heart and a holy God. Mrs. Barnett began to weep and to cry. I couldn't believe it.

I literally, it just took my breath for a moment. I couldn't believe it. And I began to just listen to her weeping and her crying.

Later that night, testimonies broke out. Around 10 o'clock at night, yes, people were still there. About 10 o'clock, people started testifying.

And they just started saying, I want to tell you what God's done. I want to tell you how I got saved. I want to tell you who got saved.

I got saved at Cannon Meals today. I was down in the break room and the Holy Ghost of God moved in. I was over at the high school this morning and God got in the school and I didn't know where to go.

And I went down to the gym and begged God to save me. I got saved at McDonald's today. I got saved over at the restaurant today.

Testimonies breaking out. People getting right with God. Mrs. Barnett stood up and she said, I've been in church all my life.

She said, my sister went to the altar and got saved and my parents rejoiced. And she said, I went to the altar because my sister went to the altar. I wanted Mama and Daddy to be proud of me.

And she said, when I turned 12, they baptized me. She said, I was a leader in our youth department. I never missed an activity.

I held an office with the teenagers. She said, when I graduated from school, I worked in Vacation Bible School in our church. I sang in the choir.

I taught Sunday school. In my thirties, I was the missionary secretary. Later on, I was the church treasurer.

And I was the church clerk. And she said, I held just about every position there is. She said, for 60 years, I've been playing church.

And she said, every now and then, we'd have a service. And I knew God was moving. And I'd try to get it to go away and I'd twist and turn.

And I'd think, if they'll quit singing, I'll get outside and that won't bother me anymore. And she said, sure enough, I could get outside and it'd sort of go away. And she said, if they'd have another service a year or two later, I'd sit there and cry and wipe tears.

And I'd think, if I go to the altar, what will everyone think? They'd think I'm a leader in the church. They'd think I'm the best Christian in this building. What would they think? And I'd try to send it away and it'd go away.

But she said, the night Brother Ralph, when I was sitting over there, the Holy Ghost came by my chair. And He said, Leona, this is the last time I'll ever speak to you again. I'll never come by your chair again.

I don't care if you live to be 150, Leona. I'll not be by anymore. This is your last opportunity.

It is appointed unto man once to die. And after that, the judgment. The Bible says clearly in this passage that there is wrath.

Yes, there is a God of love. Yes, there is a God of compassion. Yes, there's a God of mercy and longsuffering.

But there's also a God of wrath. And that God of wrath is still on the throne. And Leona Barnett encountered that last opportunity to do business with God.

God definitely states that He has wrath. And He also states that He always will not hold back that wrath. Go with me to the book of Proverbs, if you would.

There's a verse of Scripture in Proverbs chapter number 11. Look at Proverbs chapter number 11 and verse number 21. Listen to the phrasing of this verse.

The hand join in a hand. The wicked shall not be what? Unpunished. If your husband is holding your hand and he's saved and you're not saved, the wicked's going to be punished.

You're holding your mother's hand, your father's hand, they're saved and you're not, you're going to be punished. If you're walking down the road with a Christian friend and you're a lost friend and a truck runs off the road, one's going to go to heaven, one's going to go to an eternity without God. Though hand in hand.

There's also the theory in this verse of conspiracy or working and planning together. Let me give you another verse, if you would. In Proverbs 16, verse number 5, every one that is proud in his heart, listen to this, every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.

God cannot imagine how you could sit hard-hearted and be proud when He had sent somebody through that loves you enough to warn you that there is wrath and it's coming. He said, if you could be hard-hearted and be proud when that's going on, He said, then your sin now takes a level up. It now becomes an abomination.

Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. But mercy and truth, iniquity is purged by mercy, by truth, iniquity is purged. Now listen to this part.

By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil. A few months ago, someone said, I'd come over to your church and visit, but somebody at work said, you're always trying to scare people into getting right with God. I said, well, let me just remind you of what the Bible says.

The Bible says that some people will leave evil by the fear of God. I don't want to go to hell. I don't want God to judge me for my own proud, wicked ways.

And I'm not going to let pride step in front of that. Does that mean that I'm going to read the Scripture and I'm going to tell the truth? Yes. Because there's a second reason.

I've got to give an account to a holy God. So what we're all facing is that God wants you to know that there is wrath and that this wrath is coming. Now, if you read this first verse that we read out of Job 36, it says, Beware lest he take thee away with his stroke.

Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. He is a God of love. But God's stroke can interrupt at any point along the way.

Here I am, I Corinthians 5.5. I'm on the rebellious Christian side right now, okay? I Corinthians 5.5. I'm walking in rebellion. I'm walking against life. I know I shouldn't be doing the things I'm doing, saying what I'm saying, going where I'm going.

I know God saved me, but I'm walking in disobedience. I've knelt on this altar many times. I've prayed many prayers.

But I'm walking in disobedience. And the Bible says to him that knoweth, right? I Corinthians 5.5 says, If I refuse to repent because other people are looking at me and other people can stumble over me because I say I belong to Jesus, I say I go to church, I say I'm a Christian, he said, I'll deliver that one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. That's what the Bible says.

I didn't make that up. I Corinthians 5.5. God said, I'll let you walk. I'll be merciful.

I'll be long-suffering. But somewhere along here, son, if you keep walking this path, my stroke will happen just like lightning. And I'll change your world.

God's stroke may be sudden. When we read through the Scriptures, it talks about that He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Do you understand that that verse connects to the verse that I just read? Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee, and shall be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Do you understand? God's trying to get people to understand. He is patient. He is kind.

He is long-suffering. But if you're living loose, and you're bringing hurt and harm to the body in the name of Jesus Christ, you're walking a dangerous walk because anywhere along here, God could say, I've warned you. I've told you.

You know better. You'd rather have your personal pleasure than to have My approval. And His stroke would then be appointed.

Now, who may expect God's stroke of judgment? Who may expect the wrath that God has stored up? Job 36, verse 6, He preserveth not the life of the wicked. He preserveth not the life of the wicked. Job 36, verse 13, But the hypocrite in heart, God says, if you are pretending and you're not doing right, He said, you're actually keeping up the wrath that's coming.

You're saving it up. Not only is it going to be bad, it's going to be very bad. Not only is it going to be painful, it's going to be very painful.

Not only is it going to be horrible, it's going to be very horrible. You're actually making God. You're forcing Him.

Now, listen to this. You're forcing God to keep His Word. And God said, if you intentionally walk the walk of a hypocrite, you're keeping up what I have to do.

He knows what we're listening to. He knows what we're seeing. He knows when we're gossiping.

He knows when we're spreading rumors. He knows when we're sowing discord. He knows when we're playing games at the foot of the cross.

He knows who's saved and who's not saved. You want to have a revival in Asheville, North Carolina, you just let the church clean up. Just let God's people begin to pray for biblical holiness to get clean again.

How does the world know we're any different from them? We look like them, act like them, talk like them, dress like them. How do they know we're any different? Only till we have that hunger that I'd rather be like Jesus than anybody on TV. I'd rather be like Jesus than to be more popular than any other group of people in this town.

I'd just rather hang out with Jesus. There is wrath. There's people in this building that are not saved.

You're church members, but you're not saved. There are people in this building that have made a profession of faith, but you're backslidden on a holy God. You're living in this world and there's not a lot of difference.

And God had this service so that when you go stand in front of Him and He takes off His chastisement belt and He says, I have to do this, and you're saying, God, I'm sorry, don't do it. God, don't do it. I'll never do it again.

And He's going to look at you and say, but you've got My name. You've got My name. You're My daughter.

You claim My name. I have no choice if you're My child. Would you bow your head for just a moment?

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