

We Were Children of Wrath

by Tim Conway

Tim Conway's sermon emphasizes the dire state of humanity as children of wrath and the necessity of God's mercy through Christ for salvation.

Duration: 1:06:35

Scripture: Ephesians 2:4

Topics: "Gods Wrath", "Repentance Faith"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of being children of wrath, emphasizing the desperate condition of mankind and the imminent wrath of God. It highlights the need for a hiding place in Christ to escape the wrath and emphasizes the power of God's love and mercy to overcome His anger. The sermon stresses the seriousness of sin, the impending judgment, and the necessity of repentance and faith in Christ as the only refuge from God's wrath.

Transcript

You can open your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 2 once again. The first three verses of chapter 2 calling us all to remember how these three verses fit. Back up in chapter 1, verse 16, Paul is praying for the Ephesians.

17, he desires that they would have wisdom and revelation of certain things, specifically concerning the knowledge of God. The specific things with regards to God that he wants them to know about is their calling, verse 18, their inheritance, verse 19, the immeasurable greatness of God's power toward believers. And he's going to tell us our desperate condition here in the first three verses of chapter 2. And then in verse 4, but God.

He's going to tell us what God does. What God's power does. What God's power, when it's ignited by mercy and love, what it does for us.

But he shows us the wretched condition of mankind. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked. I've entitled this series of five sermons How Dead is Dead? The Five-Fold Fallenness of Man.

Today is the fifth of the five. This is Christians. Christians.

You. That's the you. The Ephesian Christians.

That's us in this place who are Christians. This is the condition that God found us in. This is what we were before God saved us.

We were dead in the trespasses and sins in which we once walked. Us Christians here in this place, we followed the course of this world. We followed the Prince of the Power, the Air, the Spirit that is now at work and the Sons of Disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind.

We were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. Today is part five. Today is the fifth of how dead is dead.

Today we look at our deadness with relationship to God. We were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. We're getting in this lesson.

Paul is teaching us about the exceeding magnitude of the power of God. And I would call it this, the merciful power of God. Why? Because you know what we're confronted with today? We're confronted with the destructive power of God.

The wrath of God. But, God, He answers this. He answers this condition.

Verses 1-3, here's what we were. All the horrors and darkness and depth of man's deadness and devilishness and lustfulness, but God, God did something. Brethren, if there's anything about this chapter, it's that you can't do it.

You can't save yourself. There's no work you can do. We're in such a condition that we need God to arise up on our behalf.

And it takes such a demonstration of power. But, God, God's power ignited. You see it there.

Ignited by mercy and love. It has an answer to it all. Dead in trespasses and sins.

Dead in the world. Dead in the lap of the devil. Dead in our lusts.

But there's something else here. Wrath. Even think about those terms.

God's wrath or the wrath of God. Not a popular subject today to be sure. But here's the thing.

Of all that God is confronted with in saving us, this is the biggest obstacle of all. Because you see what God is confronted with? God is confronted with God. That's the issue.

We were by nature children of wrath. If all that God is confronted with in fixing all that is wrong with man, this is the most dying of all. God is confronted with Himself.

God's power to save comes face-to-face with God's power to destroy. God's love comes face-to-face with God's wrath. And if there's anything that we know about Scripture, mankind might have this idea we can just kind of sweep sin under the rug.

Don't buy that. Here's the biggest obstacle of all. The wrath of God.

If you're here today and you're lost, this is the kind of study... I was sitting there just thinking, I wanted to finish up with that song. I know we may have sung Hail Sovereign Love various times recently. I just feel

like coming to a message like this, we need to seriously be thinking about a hiding place.

What I've been exposed to in looking... I looked at every single occurrence of wrath in the Greek Old Testament, the Greek New Testament, 250 some odd times. You begin to get a feeling. You begin to get a horrifying sense.

It's kind of like when I was lost and I would go to a funeral. You want to shake yourself. You want to come out.

You don't want to think about death. It's kind of how I feel now as a saved person doing a study on wrath. It's kind of like you want to shake yourself, but you don't.

Because we don't want to run away from truth. For God to save a single sinner, God has to have an answer for His own wrath. And it shocks people.

Listen. Listen to the verse. We were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

That's everybody. If you don't have a hiding place, you're a child of wrath. That's everybody.

That's all the rest of mankind. Few there be that find it. Few are truly Christian.

This world is going to hell. This world is under the wrath of God. It is all-inclusive.

We were all by nature children of wrath. Mankind is born a child of wrath. He's conceived a child of wrath.

He is under the wrath of God. Mankind is represented by Adam. We are in Adam.

We are in trouble. We are in serious trouble as a race. This shocks people.

People don't like this. People don't like this concept that we need to be saved from God. Listen, let me tell you something.

Our greatest need is not to be saved from sin. It is not to be saved from death. It is not to be saved from hell or the flesh or the world or the devil.

That hiding place you need is a shelter from God Himself. The holy, holy, holy God is an absolute terror to those with no hiding place. Man needs to be saved from God.

In Romans 5.9, we get that reality that we need to be saved by Christ from the wrath of God. 1 Thessalonians 1.10, same truth. Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come.

This is the culmination of man's deadness. Man by his very nature provokes God. Man offends God.

Man infuriates God. That's what we find all over Scripture. Man is a transgressor against God.

Man is evil in the face of a holy God. The natural man is a malefactor. He's dead in his sin.

He's dead concerning the law. He is a criminal. He is a condemned criminal.

He is defiant. And God is angry. That's what you get when you take a holy God and you set Him face to face with a man who's of a fallen race, falls short of the glory of God.

God is angry. Man is constantly in a state of wrath. A condemned criminal.

That's all man is. A condemned criminal waiting the day of execution. Don't you recognize? Our race is born on death row.

Make no mistake about it. God means to do man harm for what man has done. Make no mistake about that.

All men are by nature children of wrath. What a statement! All men. All men are children of wrath.

This has to do with how we relate to God. This has to do with how God sees us. This is almost incomprehensible to man.

Here's the problem. Natural man, he imagines himself good, or relatively so, and he imagines a God who smiles upon him. And you know what? Because he imagines himself good and he imagines God smiling on him, he really believes that's the way things are.

But that is not the way things are. That's the way man imagines things are, but that's not the way things are. And you know what? Scripture says we love to believe a lie.

So we live our lives loving to believe exactly that. It's going to turn out okay. Do you recognize that every half second or so that somebody dies in this world, the vast majority of them are coming face to face with such terrors? Everything they feared suddenly breaks forth upon them.

Hell is real. The wrath of God is real. And if you want to sum up all mankind, no matter the skin color, no matter the country they come from, it is this.

They can come from Hindu countries. They can come from America. They can come from South America.

They can come from Russia. They can come from Asia. They can come from Australia.

They can come from wherever. But one thing's for certain, we're all descendants of Adam. And by nature, we're in trouble.

By nature, we are fodder for the fire. Every half second, somebody perishes. Somebody dies.

And if Scripture be true, only a remnant are truly Christians. Do you recognize the horror that's taking place right at this moment? Because from the time I started this sermon until right now, there are souls who have perished and they have come face-to-face with the reality of an angry God who can stand, who can abide the consuming fire. Nobody can.

It's like you take a bug and you throw it in the fire. Edwards liked to use that picture. It just yields before the fire.

What can you do? You die and there you are in the presence of a holy God in everything. His whole being is bent on your destruction. And you have no hiding place.

That was us, Christian. That's how you were. And if you're lost, that's how you are.

And that's how the vast majority of the world around us is. And it's terrifying. Man is the way God sees him.

Man is not the way he imagines himself to be. Man thinks so highly of himself. And God says the whole lot of you are born to wrath.

Not born to be wild. Not born to be free. You are born to wrath.

Your life may be shorter. Your life may be longer. Born to wrath.

Children of wrath. Objects of wrath. You had that truth there in John 3.36. Whoever does not obey the Son, Scripture says the wrath of God abides on him.

You have a world out here. They're not submitting to Christ. The wrath of God presently abides on them.

The wrath of God is presently revealed from heaven against all this ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. That is the truth of Scripture. It may not break forth upon our heads immediately.

We may be storing up wrath for the day of wrath. Make no mistake about it. Though you may have woken up to the sun shining out here, if you don't have a hiding place, God is angry.

You are in death row and the day of your execution is coming quickly. Quickly. And it's forever.

You get sick today. You get really sick. There's a hope.

I'm going to get well. You break your arm. There's a hope.

It's going to heal. You come face to face with an angry God without a hiding place. There's no healing that.

You just melt before it. Forever. Forever.

Forever. I can remember as a young Christian, I played a John MacArthur sermon for someone in my family hoping that God might save her through it. When it was done, or I turned it off, she responded somewhat approvingly by saying, oh, well, I'm glad that he isn't the kind of preacher that preaches all about hellfire and brimstone.

And I said, oh, wait a second. He didn't happen to in that clip I played for you. But he most certainly preaches about hell.

Why are people happy to not hear about hellfire and brimstone? Why? Listen to me. If the doctrine of the wrath of God is true and hellfire and brimstone is true, is that a truth that we should be hiding? Should we be glad? Oh, we're glad! There was a sermon and we didn't have to hear about hellfire and brimstone. Listen, this pertains to every one of us.

We can't escape it. Is there anything that's more applicable to the human race than if all mankind are children of wrath and we at breakneck speed are headed towards eternity? Listen, we sing a song called The Sands of Time Are Sinking and we are in that hourglass and we are going down with the sands and you can't stop it. And if you don't have a hiding place, those sands are drawing you ever onward, ever forward.

You can't stop. You can't just opt out. You can't say, well, you know, I didn't pick it to be like this, so I'm out of this.

I want no part of this. You don't get to make that call. And if you don't have a hiding place, I'll tell you what's waiting in those sands down there.

It is the wrath of God. It is eternity. Is there anything that matters to anyone like this? I mean, you think of all the things that matter.

This matters. If there's anything we should not be silent to this world about, it is this. We are in such a state of lust and devilishness and worldliness and sin that God sees us as only fit to be cast into the fire.

Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? That's what Isaiah said. Who among us can dwell with the everlasting burnings? So is that it? We should be happy when we hear preaching that leaves this out? Is that it? God, help us when this teaching's left out. For it is only here that in the greatest possible way, we come to recognize our absolute, desperate, need of the power of God and the need of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The thing is, the wrath of God is not even taken seriously. When's the last time you saw that on the billboard or in the headlines? On Drudge Report or wherever you might look for news? When do you hear about the wrath of God? And yet, you know what's interesting? People are perishing in this world. Thousands and thousands and thousands every single day.

And they are perishing. And they are coming face-to-face with the wrath of God. And man wants to be oblivious to it.

We just want to ignore it. But men don't know the wrath of God. And because they don't, they don't realize how desperately... You see, the thing about it is to know about the wrath of God is to see your sins for what they are.

We don't know about the wrath of God as a race. And so, we don't really recognize the weight of our sin. That's the issue.

And because we don't recognize that, we don't realize how desperately we need Jesus Christ. And because we don't know how desperately we need Him, He's relatively insignificant to us. And since He's so relatively insignificant, I reckon most of mankind just remains lost.

And dead in their sin. Oh, we desperately need a hiding place. Desperately.

Notice the text. Verse 3, the end. By nature, children of wrath, just as the others, or even as the rest, the ESV says, like the rest of mankind.

That's certainly exactly what is implied. Wrath. There's no hidden meaning in the word.

It means extreme or fierce anger. We're talking about the burning. God's wrath is said repeatedly in Scripture to burn.

To burn. It's like a fire. It's the burning, intense upsurge of God's nature in reaction against someone who does insult to His glory.

We're talking about the indignation of God. Wrath is the divine reaction against evil whereby God judges and He punishes. God punishes sin.

Even things you think are little white lies. Not that big a deal. God punishes every single insult to His glory.

You may consider them small. He doesn't consider His glory a small thing. He punishes every single sin.

This is what we're talking about. Wrath is both the anger that God feels now, the present reality, and then oftentimes wrath is viewed as the future when it's actually poured out upon the sinner. Scripture speaks about you if you're lost.

You're storing up wrath now for a day of wrath. God is angry with the wicked every day, but Scripture also talks about the wrath to come. The wrath now is what He feels towards sinners now.

Even though He may not be punishing them yet, the punishment poured out on them in the future is also viewed as wrath. Now let's be clear. We often see people, perhaps you've seen, you can imagine in your mind, somebody who's just full of rage.

A person full of rage. And that rage just breaks forth in uncontrolled fashion. That word uncontrolled is not one that you ever want to attribute to the Lord.

God's wrath is never out of control. That doesn't mean God's wrath isn't violent. It is.

God's wrath is never inconsistent with justice. But that doesn't mean it's not severe. It is.

But we must never think of some uncontrolled manifestation of fury. Some guy so angry, he's just trembling with rage, and he just bursts out uncontrolled. Can't hold it back.

Lost self-control. God does not have passionate outbursts like that. Let me tell you, His wrath is measured.

His wrath is consistent with righteousness. His wrath is perfect. God's emotions are perfectly held in check.

They're under control. They're never silently an irrational or sinful outburst. Don't ever imagine that about God.

It is a righteous, measured response to sin. And because we're all sinners, when I say it's according to justice but severe, we just don't get it. We don't get how bad sin is.

And so when we see how God reacts to it, it seems severe to us as though, wait, that's too much. That's too much. God never gives too much.

The only reason it seems too much to us, I mean, seriously? Seriously? You're going to throw somebody into the lake of fire forever? Doesn't that seem excessive? We don't get the depth of the crime. The wrath of God. The wrath of God helps us recognize how bad sin is.

And it's good. Because you know what? If you start recognizing, wow, I'm that bad. Maybe your eyes start looking around now for a hiding place.

If I'm that bad, I need Christ that much. Vengeance. Vengeance belongs to the Lord.

Here's a question for you. Are Christians children of wrath? It's not a trick question. No.

The text says you Ephesian Christians and all Christians were. You notice that, right? The tense of the verb. You were.

It's past tense. You're not any longer. So let me ask you this.

Does God change? God says, I the Lord do not change. Therefore, you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. That's Malachi 3.6. I would answer the question this way.

Yes and no. Maybe that makes somebody a little bit uncomfortable because you're used to thinking that one of the attributes of God is that He's immutable. God doesn't change.

God is unchanging. But here's what I want you to see. Back in chapter 1, before the foundation of the world, God chooses.

We sing about it. A chosen race. God chooses a people.

In love, He predestined them for adoption. But let me ask you something. Were they children of wrath like the rest of mankind when they were dead in their trespasses? Yes.

And that's what the text says. You were. But they're not anymore.

Did God change? Well, see, God's disposition towards them did change. But God isn't a changing God. In other words, God always responds to moral evil the same way with wrath.

But God always responds to moral good the same way. God responds to repentance the same way. Is it true that somebody can be an object of God's wrath today and not tomorrow? Yes, that's what this is teaching.

Clearly, this is teaching that. Brethren, God doesn't change in this sense that if He comes face-to-face with you and you have not a hiding place, He will respond the same every single time. And if He comes face-to-face to you and your sins have been laid on Christ, He will respond the same to you every time.

God reacts to the way man reacts to Him. And God reacts the same every time. What we don't want to think is that God is simply stoic.

We don't want to think of Him unchanging in the sense that God is somehow a stone. Somehow God is unfeeling. Somehow He is static.

No, we have a God who perfectly overflows with the right response to everything. So it should cause us to fear to raise a fist against Him because He will respond against that fist the same every single time. But if we come to Him seeking His help, surrender to Him, He will respond the same to us every time.

Did He change? Well, certainly, His character doesn't change, but His disposition towards you as an individual will change. You can be a child of wrath and then not. But there's only one hiding place.

Only one. Let me just tell you something about wrath as it's found in Scripture. Though God's wrath is no exhibition of uncontrolled rage, it's very controlled, very measured.

Indignation. According to justice, I can tell you this, it may not be uncontrolled outburst. It may be very measured.

It may be according to righteousness. But God's wrath is portrayed in Scripture in an utterly terrifying fashion. If you actually listen to what Scripture says, all mankind should hear this and fear greatly.

Listen. Don't turn to these. Just listen.

Psalms 21:8-9 Your hand will find out all your enemies. See, here's the thing. All mankind by nature, children of wrath.

You've done such things as deserve punishment. What you have to recognize is this, it's so easy to read Scripture and read about enemies. Oh, that's somebody else.

That's all mankind. All mankind by nature is an enemy to God. All mankind by nature is said to be alienated from God.

All mankind by nature is an enemy. That enmity with God does not keep God's law. Indeed, He cannot.

The enemy here is not somebody else. It's you. It's me.

Enemy. Your hand will find out all your enemies. Your right hand will find out those who hate you.

You see, again, man just doesn't think that. He doesn't think he hates God. But he hates the true God.

Not the God he's invented. But he hates the true God. Listen to this.

We have to come face to face with this. We have family members who have died and we know they weren't Christians. I was there when my stepdad died.

You try to imagine, what is he facing right now? You will make them as a blazing oven. A blazing oven. The Lord will swallow them up in His wrath and fire will consume them.

This is not imaginary. Somebody might say, well, I think that's an analogy. Well, as Piper said, what's worse? The analogy or the reality behind the analogy? You want to somehow make this into an analogy because you're trying to make it into fiction.

You don't want to go there. Because even if it's not true fire like the fire that we would find in one of our ovens, why do you think God is using that kind of picture? Brethren, being burned is something we recoil from. Every one of us probably has sat in front of an oven or in front of a bonfire, a campfire, and you imagine being thrown in there.

This is the imagery God uses. This is how bad our sin is. It's a lake of fire.

We heard about it in the first hour. A lake of fire. It's going to consume them.

Jeremiah 23:19 Wrath. He talks about it bursting upon the head of the wicked. Bursting.

2 Chronicles 29:8 The wrath of the Lord. It makes them an object of horror. Here's the thing, God's wrath makes people into something.

Into what? An object of horror. Brethren, this isn't a scary movie on TV that the movie's going to get over with and then you walk away and you kind of shake it off. This isn't a nightmare that you wake up from.

God makes unrepentant sinners into a horror. An object of horror. Isaiah 30.30 And the Lord will cause the descending blow of His arm.

Here you have the wrath of God. Like God's arm coming down, it says, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, a cloudburst, storm, hailstones. Isaiah 13.9 Behold, the day of the Lord comes.

Cruel. Every translation says that. Cruel.

With wrath and fierce anger. God Himself describes that day as a cruel day. And it says to destroy its sinners from it.

You know what I want you to recognize? God's wrath is against people. And it's always against people who have sinned against Him. Always.

Psalms 50.22 Mark this then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart and there be none to deliver. Listen to this. Ezekiel 22.20 As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace to blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in My anger and in My wrath, and I will put you in and melt you.

This is God's language. God intends us to look at this. This is the God we have to do with.

Listen, this all the more brings into stark, blazing reality what was done there on the cross. Look, the next verse, but God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us. You see, brethren, Paul recognizes for us to even begin to recognize what mercy and love are all about, you've got to put it against this backdrop of wrath.

Because then it wakes us up to, wow, what have you done? Lord, what did you endure on that cross? Stricken, smitten, afflicted of God. His soul, Psalm 22 says, if we would have gone further in that psalm as we sang it, His soul was poured out like water. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? You see, this, listen, God's love did this.

You have to recognize the Father is not simply placated by the Son because He's in a rage. It was the love of the Father Himself that provided the Son, that sent the Son into the world. You see, God is confronted.

But God! But God! It's Him! He did it! His wrath is upon us. He's confronted by His own wrath. But God responded.

God responded. We're children of wrath. His wrath! Not just ambiguous wrath.

His wrath! It's He that is angry with us. And His love finds a way. The power of His love overcomes the power of His anger.

That's the picture. God says in Nahum 1-2, the Lord is a jealous and avenging God. You see, this idea of jealousy is attached to wrath.

What's He jealous of? He's jealous for His glory. And when we disobey Him, we spit in His face. And there is repayment.

Oh, how often His wrath is described this way. Deuteronomy 7-10 God repays to their face those who hate Him by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates Him.

He will repay Him to His face and make no mistake about it. You cannot say, I don't hate Him, and then run out and disobey Him. If you disobey Him, you hate Him.

Why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say? Don't be deceived. Don't be hearers of the Word only deceiving your own selves. You see, this is what God does to us when He saves us.

He causes us to keep the righteous requirement of His law. He says He's going to write the law on our hearts. And He's going to cause us to walk in it.

This is God's regeneration. Don't deceive yourselves. If you're living a life of disobedience to the Lord, you hate Him and you are an enemy of His, and He will repay you to your face.

You cannot make this go away. None of us can make judgment day go away. It's coming.

There's only one place of safety. Don't run to Sinai. That mountain is no hiding place.

There's only one hiding place. There's only one. Every disobedience.

Micah 5.15 In anger and wrath, I will execute vengeance on the nations who did not obey. Our love. Jesus said it.

If you love Me, keep My commandments. You can't separate the two. All the things to do.

Bring all your disobedience to Him. Lay it out there. Confess your sins.

Lord, I am a sinner and I've disobeyed You and I've hated You. I've been Your enemy. There's no question about it.

Lord, I've lived for Myself. I've been self-serving. Lay it out there.

Because He has provided a hiding place. He will save you to the uttermost. He will deliver you from His wrath.

He will cast those sins behind His back into the depths of the sea. He'll blot them out. Every disobedience.

Isaiah 26.21 For behold, the Lord is about to come out from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth. Not just for any reason. Not indiscriminately.

It's just for their iniquity. He's about to come out of His place. You know what this is a picture of? He's over there in His place not punishing us yet.

Here's what happens. We sin. Hey, nothing happened.

Something did happen. We just didn't see it. You were filling up the measure of your wrath.

God became more angry with you than He was before. His wrath against you is more intense than it was before, but you don't feel it. Hey, nothing happened.

I'm going to go eat. Enjoy the sunshine. I lay my head down to rest tonight.

Nothing happened. Don't deceive yourselves. Scripture says He's coming out of His place.

He's coming. If you don't have a hiding place, and in that day, they're crying for the rocks to be merciful to them and cover them from the wrath of the Lamb because they want to get away. And I'll tell you, in that day, it'll be a reality.

You can brush it off today. Oh, it's not true. I believe in evolution.

Oh, God isn't like that. God is a God of love. God is a God of mercy.

Yes, Paul is all but set to tell us about His mercy and His love. I agree. But if you think God's love and God's mercy somehow causes God to just push sin under the rug, you have missed it.

We are children of wrath. We are children of wrath headed to a day of wrath when God comes out of His place. And when He comes out of His place, He's coming and He will repay you face to face.

Every single time you violated His holy law, every time you spit in His face, He will punish you. Your sins will be punished and they will either be punished in the person of Jesus Christ or they will be punished upon you. It will burst forth upon your head.

If you do not have Christ as a hiding place, you are in serious trouble because I cannot guarantee that you will live one hour longer. God may take you out at any time. The fullness of the sins of the Amorites, there was a day when it was not full, but it became full.

And when it became full, God sent His people into the land and they killed everybody. Man, woman, and child. And if you think, oh, children are a little innocent, they are by nature children of wrath.

And when His wrath once burst forth in the days of Noah, all but eight souls, and the days of Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah went under the flames, one man, two daughters are spared. Listen, God has given us glimpses. This ought to take nobody by surprise.

Man thinks he is something. Let me tell you, he is. He's an object of wrath and God's coming for us.

God's coming. He's going to come out of His place. For those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

And by the way, that's the first text I quoted here from the New Testament. Don't dare try to persuade yourself that somehow God was one way in the Old Testament and He's changed. What we find is this, put to death therefore, the sister letter to Ephesians, the Colossian letter, put to death therefore what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these things, the wrath of God is coming. God is going to come out of His place. Can I tell you something? The name Christian is not a hiding place.

The four walls of this church are not a hiding place. There's no title you can wear. You can call yourself a child of God.

You can call yourself a Christian. You can call yourself redeemed. You can call yourself by any name.

Call yourself alive like the folks at Sardis did. You can have a name that you're alive, but it's not a hiding place. There's only one hiding place.

It's Christ. You've got to have Christ. The One who went up on that cross and the sun went out.

There in the darkness, this wrath we're talking about, it burst upon His head. He was there in my place that I might not bear it anymore. That I might be a recipient of mercy and love.

Men imagine they can endure this. I've talked to people. Well, when I stand before God, I'm going to tell Him who can stand, Nahum says, who can stand before His indignation, who can endure the heat of His anger.

His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken into pieces by Him. Revelation 6 The kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful and everyone, everyone, all the sons of disobedience, slave, free, they hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come.

Who can stand? I think it's time for us to reckon with the true Christ. He's not a perpetual baby in a manger. He's not a perpetual dead figure on a crucifix on the wall.

He is very much alive. A Lamb. We characterize a Lamb as not fierce, soft, approachable.

That's how God sets Him forth now. He's approachable. Do you ever read there Luke 15? The tax collectors and the sinners, they came to Him.

Oh, right now, He is approachable. Come unto Me. Without price.

No money? Come buy and eat. Come. Thirsty? Whosoever will? Burdened and heavy laden? Come.

Come. What a fool you are to play with your soul and not come. You wake up in hell and you wake up face to face with the wrath of God and you recognize there was a Savior offered to you and you turned your back on Him.

What a fool. What a fool. What is it to be a child of wrath? Simply to be born into this world a man or a woman.

That's it. It's a condemned race. We are a cursed race.

Lay it down. What is it to be a child of wrath? It's to be a person who can step out and enjoy the spring sun, the spring breeze, go home and enjoy a meal, and yet turn all these blessings of God into aggravated misery. The kindness of God.

The happiness that God gives us. Fortune, fame, kindness. You know what Scripture said? It's meant to lead us to repentance.

But the Apostle turns right around and says, but because of your hard and impenitent heart, you're storing up wrath. Wrath! Wrath! Why? You take His blessings. You take His kindnesses.

And you're just hard towards Him. I will not bow to Him. I will take His food and I will take His rest.

And I will take His Son and I will take the health He's given me. But I will harden my heart. I will disobey and I will do what I want to do.

And you are storing up wrath. And you are aggravating your misery. That's what Scripture says.

That's what it is to be a child of wrath. And you cannot hide behind the name of Christian because if you're not a true one, it will find you out. He will find you out.

He will come for you. He will come out of His place and He will strip away the false titles. You were hiding there.

And you knew it. You were living a life, coming among the church, but all the time disobedient, all the time self-serving, and the wrath of God will come for you. And who can abide that? What will you say? Because when He comes on that day, He will say, depart from you workers of lawlessness.

You played the part, but your life gave you away. You were known by the fruit all the time. It gave away you didn't have a hiding place.

No hiding place. No hiding place. If death seizes you, even before it does, your deathbed, if you have not a hiding place, it will be a place of terrors.

And who's to say the moment you step off into eternity, none of us have been there and come back. Christ was there. And the sun went dark.

He didn't come back and tell us we're shrouded. He became sin for us. If such things happened there, God wouldn't even have the sun to shine upon it.

Why must the Son of God, why must God forsake God? How can it even be? I don't know. I don't know. Oh, folks, why must Christ die? We're saved by the shed blood.

We sang about it. The blood. What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing. But why? Why? Why? Why did it take blood? Why did it take the cross? The wrath of God explains it all. Explains it.

What profit, brethren, is there in an abundance of wealth? You live your life gathering together all this stuff. When that trumpet of eternal judgment blows, what then if you don't have the blood to cover your sins? What then if the cross does not speak on your behalf? Don't play games. What will a man give in exchange for his soul? In that day, in that time, in that moment, you will give everything and it will be too late.

You cry for mercy, then it's too late. You cry even for the rocks to have mercy and fall upon you, but it's too late. This is what God's power and His love was confronted with.

His honor that He's so jealous for has been dishonored by you and by me. And it is such a heinous crime. His glory is so great that damnation is mandatory.

It's a must. What we come to hear is, but God, but God, but God had an answer for it. And it's Him.

Because there we were. We were going along. I was following the course of this world.

Following the Prince of the Power of the Air. And I was just going along. And I would have gone right over the edge if He hadn't said, You're mine.

And grabbed me out. What has He done? What has He done that He has saved anybody? This is it. This is how He overcomes our trespasses.

Mightily overcomes our deadness. Makes us alive together with Christ. Brethren, what shall we say to these things? Praise the Lord He provided a hiding place.

There is a hiding place. We sing a song by McShane. He talks about seeing the damned.

What are we going to say? There's my high school buddies. I did exactly the same thing they did. There's the guys in college I partied with, went to spring break with.

Lord, I remember that night I was with those guys. I was the worst of all of them. The filth that came out of my mouth, the things I did.

Lord, how can it be I'm here? They're there. How can it be? They're in flames. I was worse than some of those guys.

Why am I here? Why were my eyes opened to see my need of a hiding place? Lord, why me? Because of the mercy, because of my great love with which I loved You. And we will all fall on our faces. Thank You.

Thank You, Lord. My brethren, you're dismissed.

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