

The Wrath of God GFC 10/27/19

Why did Jesus die? To save us. To save us from what?

As you're thinking about that, I want to remind you that we are in a sermon series called the **Days of Awe.**

We defined the awe as "a very strong feeling of wonder, reverence, or fear, caused by something grand or powerful."

We talked about having a reverence and holy fear of God.

Pastor Deb preached a powerful message last week on the **Fear of God. She showed us that the fear of God is not like being afraid of an abusive father.**

Rather, it is a **reverential respect and awe of a holy God that results in obedience, worship and a healthy dread of displeasing God.**

I was praying about what to preach next – and I wanted to preach on something like the awesome grace and mercy of God.

We will get to that - but I saw a quote from **R. C. Sproul that said: "We will never understand the grace and mercy of God until we understand the justice and wrath of God."**

I've preached sermons on grace and mercy many, many times.

I've talked about the wrath of God in many sermons, but I've never spent an **entire sermon on the topic of the wrath of God... until today!**

Now – let me tell you this is going to be **good!**

It's not going to be **lightweight or easy – but it will be good!**

You don't hear much about **the wrath of God these days – but if you study it out you'll find a **lot of verses** about it in the Bible.**

Many preachers **avoid subjects like this because so many people don't want to hear it.**

But I'm not here to preach what you want to hear, but what God wants to say!

I don't preach based on **popularity polls – I must preach the Word of God! And not just **part of the word** – but the whole counsel of God!**

I know many people just want to **hear about grace**, mercy and love.
And we preach grace, mercy and love.

But we must be **like Paul** who said in Acts 20:26-27

I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

And I refuse to shrink back from declaring God's word to you.

I cannot **pick and choose** what I want to believe or preach – it must be the **truth** – the whole truth – and nothing but the truth! So help me God!

Some people have a **misconception** that the God in the Old Testament is a God of wrath, but not in the New Testament.

I want to ask them if they've **ever read** the New Testament.

- I wonder if they read about the time **Jesus got angry** at the money-changers in the temple and He made a whip and drove them out!
- I wonder if they've read about the time **Ananias and Sapphira** fell over dead in church for lying to the Holy Spirit.
- And I wonder if they've ever read the **book of Revelation!**

The Bible teaches that there will be a **day of wrath** for those who refuse to **repent of sin** and place their faith in Jesus.

Romans 2:5 says:

Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed.

Some people have an issue with God's wrath because they believe that **all anger is wrong.**

But – just like Pastor Deb taught us that there is **good fear and bad fear** – there is also **good anger and bad** anger.

Not all anger is sinful!

Ephesians 4:26 says: **When angry, do not sin.**

When we think of wrath we usually think of **ungodly human anger** that is out of control, vindictive, and mean.

But God's wrath is **never out of control**, vindictive or mean.

Obviously, a holy God does **not sin** when He is angry.

God's wrath is **not an impulsive, emotional outburst** of uncontrolled fury. God does not throw **temper tantrums** or have fits of rage.

God's wrath is a justified response to **man's willful disobedience** and sin. God's wrath is **righteous indignation**, which means it's holy and it's right! God is good all the time, including when He's angry.

There are **times in life** where it is right and appropriate for us to be angry. We should be angry about **injustice, abortion, racism, child abuse** and many other evils. Those sins **anger God!**

I will also say that there are times when it is **wrong to not be angry!** **If you love someone and evil is being done to them – it is right for you to be angry about that.** **It would be wrong for you to not be angry about the evil being done.** **In fact, the person you love who is being wronged would probably not believe that you love them if you are not angry about their abuse.** **Love and righteous anger go together!** **And God's anger is always righteous, never ungodly!**

Now – back to my original question: what did Jesus die to save us from? From **hell**? Yes. From **yourself**? Yes. From **sin**? Yes. Yes, but also from **the wrath of God.** Romans 5:8-9

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Most unbelievers don't think they are at **war with God**, but they are. Colossians 1:21 says:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

In other words, when your **thinking** and your **behavior** do not line up with God's Word and God's ways – you are an **enemy of God.**

We talk about being **saved from Hell**, and that's true. But the main thing we need saving from is the **wrath of God!** And you cannot save yourself - you need a **Savior!**

Romans 5:10 says:

For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!

Even while we were enemies of God, He sent His son to be our **Savior!** Because of the **blood of Jesus**, the penalty for our sins has been paid and we are **made righteous** – right with God.

How does the blood of Christ make us right with God?

By **taking away His wrath**. By satisfying His wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 says:

For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know that many people **live in fear** of the wrath of God.

What they fail to realize is that for Christians – the wrath of God has **already been poured out**.

Jesus bore the punishment for our sins on the cross.

So, we do not have to fear the wrath of God.

In fact, we are at peace with God because the blood of Christ forgives us and **justifies us**.

In Colossians 3:5-7 Paul tells us:

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming on the disobedient. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

That's the **bad news** - the wrath of God is coming to the disobedient – the **good news** is that faith in Jesus Christ saves us **from the wrath** to come!

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 says:

You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Aren't you **glad** for that!

Aren't you glad Jesus **saved you from who you were** in the past and the **wrath to come** in the future!

Our identity is **no longer based** on who we used to be in the past.

We **used to live in ways** that deserved the wrath of God!

But when we are **born again**, we are **no longer children of wrath**, but children of God.

This makes me think of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of

God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

It is because of the blood of Jesus that we are saved and have eternal life.

God doesn't save us because we are so good or worthy – He saves us because of His mercy!

Ephesians 2:1-5 says:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.

We were dead in our sins – but because of God's mercy and grace – we've been made alive in the spirit!

We were deserving of the wrath of God – but because of God's mercy and grace – we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ!

Thank God for His grace and mercy.

James 2:13 says:

Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.

Thank God that verse doesn't stop there.

It goes on to say: Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Mercy is greater than judgment.

What exactly is mercy?

It's kind of like grace.

Grace is God's unmerited, unearned favor.

Salvation and every good thing we have is because of God's grace.

Grace is **receiving something** we don't deserve.

But mercy is **not receiving** what we do deserve.

What do we deserve?

The **wages of sin** is death and we are all sinners.

So, what we deserve is the wrath of God that causes us to **burn in hell**.

But God in His mercy **does not give** us what we deserve when we place our **faith in Jesus** and receive His forgiveness and life.

I always tell people, "Don't ask God for what you deserve. Ask for mercy."

Never confuse God's patience and mercy **with His justice**.

2 Peter 3:9 says: **The Lord is not slow in keeping His word, as He seems to some, but He is waiting in mercy for you, not desiring the destruction of any, but that all may be turned from their evil ways.**

As I said – many people think that God was mean and cruel in the Old Testament when He commanded the Children of Israel to kill their enemies in the Promised Land.

Those people have **no idea how much mercy** God showed before He gave that command!

When God made a covenant with Abraham – He told him he would be the father of many people and God gave them a Promised Land to live in.

But here's what God said right after that in Genesis 15:13-16:

Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions...

In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.

What does that mean?

Well – here's a couple of **other translations**:

The New Living Translation says:

For the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.

The Good News Translation says:

I will not drive out the Amorites until they become so wicked that they must be punished.

Are you getting this?

God did not just **arbitrarily tell** the Israelis to kill everyone.

He gave the people in the land **400 years to repent**.

400 years of mercy and patience and forbearance.

But, they did not repent.

And the wrath of God was **not poured out** on them until they have gone so far that there was **no hope** of them ever coming back!

So, cry out to **God for mercy now** because one day **there will be judgment.**

2 Peter 3:10 says:

But when the Day of God's Judgment does come, it will be unannounced, like a thief in the night.

The Bible teaches that there are **saved people and lost people.** There are people going to **heaven** and people going to **hell.** Those who are **in Christ on earth** will be **with Christ in heaven.** Those who are **not reconciled** to Christ on earth will spend **eternity apart** from Him.

That's called **Hell!**

In Matthew 25:41 Jesus said that in the **final judgment** – God will say to wicked unbelievers -

Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

That's why it's so **important to be reconciled** to God through Christ.

Reconciliation **results in peace** with God.

Without reconciliation, there will be **no peace.**

Romans 5:1

Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of **the blood** of the cross – we are reconciled **TO God** and have peace **WITH God.**

Before we were **saved** – we were **lost.**

Before we experienced **reconciliation** – we experienced **alienation.**

Before we were made **righteous** – we were **wicked.**

Before we were **friends of God** – we were **enemies** of God.

We need to get past this **modern-day nonsense** that says God loves us because **we're so loveable** or God saves us because **we're so worthy.**

Nonsense!

God loves us because **He is love.**

God saves us because **Christ is worthy.**

This is good news today!

While we were still sinners – Christ died for us!

While we were enemies of God – we were reconciled to God.

If we were saved by His death – how much more will we be saved by His resurrection power and life!

And if we were justified by His blood – we are saved from God's wrath!

This is something to rejoice about!

You don't have to fear the wrath of God!

If you are in Christ – you were in Him when He was on the cross.

That means the wrath of God has already been poured out on Christ on your behalf and God is not mad at you anymore!

You have gone from being enemies to being friends!

Please understand that God hates it when people go to Hell.

He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

The Bible teaches that Hell is a place of punishment, banishment and destruction.

That's the bad news. But here's the good news.

John 3:36 says:

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

The wrath of God will remain on you unless you believe in Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:18-19 says:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

The wrath of God was revealed from heaven:

- **When God cast Adam and Eve out of the garden because of their sin**
- **When God flooded the earth because of sin**
- **When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of sin**

But above all else:

The wrath of God was revealed on a cross on a hill in Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified because of our sins!

That cross simultaneously reveals the wrath of God toward sin and the love of God toward sinners!

When Jesus was on the cross – He was not just there for us.

He was there as us!

Galatians 2:20 says: I have been crucified with Christ...

Romans 6:5-6 says:

If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

The substitutionary atonement means Jesus died in our place and took the wrath of God that we deserved because of our sins.

We see this in Isaiah 53:4-10

Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted.

But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open his mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open his mouth...

He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the Lord makes His life a guilt offering, He will see His offspring and prolong His days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in His hand.

On the cross Jesus experienced punishment, banishment and death on our behalf.

He became sin so we could become righteous!

He was captured so that we could be set free!

He was wounded so that we could be healed!

He was betrayed so that we could be protected!

He was deserted so that we could be rescued!

He was rejected so that we could be accepted!

He was separated from His Father so that we could be one with the Father!

He experienced darkness so that we could walk in the light!

He bore the wrath of God on the cross so that we could receive grace and mercy through the cross!

And best of all - He died so that we might receive eternal life!

He came from Heaven so that we would not have to go to Hell!