

The Wrath of God

by Charles Leiter

The sermon explores the importance of understanding God's wrath, its incomprehensibility, and its manifestations in the world, highlighting its relationship to God's justice and holiness.

Duration: 52:08

Scripture: Exodus 32:10, Numbers 25:4, Nahum 1:2-8, Romans 4:15

Topics: "Gods Judgment", "Divine Wrath"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the present course of the world as a downward spiral towards hell. He emphasizes that people become increasingly blind and deceived as they continue on this path. The preacher explains that God actively gives people over to their sinful desires, leading them further into darkness and depravity. The sermon also highlights the wrath of God, which is manifested by God giving people over to deeper and deeper sin as a form of judgment.

Transcript

Tonight, we are going to have what in contemporary Christianity would seem a quite unusual theme, but a most certain theme and a very important one. And it is on the wrath of God, the wrath of God. It is a very, very important, indispensable aspect to the knowledge of God, and that is to understand his wrath.

For as his righteousness and his holiness, it is a true work. It is a true attribute. It is something that we ought to behold.

It is something for which we ought to adore him and fear him. I'm going to ask Brother Charles Leiter, he is going to come now and and teach. He is a pastor of a church in Kirksville, Missouri, and be praying for him in this splendid and awful and difficult task.

I was talking to one of the sisters about the whole subject of the wrath of God and the hate of God and the love of God and those things. And it really is not a cop out to say that things are incomprehensible to us. It's one thing if our theology is irrational, if you try to say God is ultimately sovereign in salvation and man is ultimately sovereign in salvation, that's irrational.

But if you say God is ultimately sovereign in salvation, but somehow man still real and responsible, that's a mystery, that's something incomprehensible. We don't know how to fit it together, but we know absolutely unshakably that both of them are true. And we're dealing with some incomprehensibles in God.

Brother Paul has mercifully kept from assigning topics like omniscience and eternity and things like that. But beloved, we have the idea that we can draw a circle around God. That's not possible.

Whenever we talk about God's eternity, you say, well, He's existed from eternity past and He exists into eternity future. And in your mind, you put a rope all the way around that. And the fact is, is that it keeps going past the other side of that rope forever and ever and ever and ever.

Think about this. Why did God wait forever before He created the world? And if He waited forever, then He never created it. You see, it does not mean that God is irrational and it does not mean that He's unknowable, but it does mean that He's incomprehensible.

We cannot understand the relationship between time and eternity. The way we define something is by speaking in terms of higher categories. So if we want to talk about Stark's Delicious and Jonathan and all these things, we put them all.

We don't go through the whole list every time. We say those are apples. And then we don't go through the whole list and say, you know, apples and oranges and that and that and that.

You don't go through all that. You say that's fruit. And we keep going up to a bigger category.

You see where we're going. You get to a point where there's one that you cannot define because there's nothing any bigger that you can speak of Him in terms of. And so God, as such, is beyond us, and yet He's the foundation, as we just heard a while ago.

He's the foundation of all knowing. He's the foundation of all truth. And we know Him inescapably because He's made Himself known to us.

Let's pray. We're going to be looking at Nahum, chapter one, verses one to eight. Maybe you could find that first and then we'll pray.

A little book after Micah, before Habakkuk. Let's pray. Our Father, we have seen in these brief messages enough to see that we're nothing and you're everything.

And we ask you, Lord, that after this time, not a one of us would ever again be ashamed of the wrath of God. We pray that you'd show us something of the splendor and the glory of your wrath. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Nahum, chapter one and verse one, the oracle of Nineveh, the book of the vision of Nahum, the Elishite. A jealous and avenging God is the Lord.

The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries and he reserves wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power.

And the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. And whirlwind and storm is His way and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry.

He dries up all the rivers, Bashan and Carmel wither, the blossoms of Lebanon wither. Mountains quake because of Him and the hills dissolve. Indeed, the earth is upheaved by His presence, the world and all the inhabitants in it.

Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken up by Him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him. See how these things go right together? But, verse 8, with an overflowing flood, He will make a complete end of its sight, speaking of Nineveh here, and will pursue His enemies into darkness.

Our final session here for today is the subject of the wrath of God. And we see how clearly this is taught in the Scriptures. Verse 2, a jealous and a binging God is the Lord.

The Lord is wrathful. He is avenging and wrathful. He takes vengeance on His adversaries.

He reserves wrath for His enemies. In verse 6, who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire. You see so clearly here.

It would be a great understatement to say that the Bible has a lot to say about the wrath of God. When I was preparing for this time, I printed out just the verses that specifically mention the wrath or anger of God. Specifically.

And I printed them out, single-spaced, ten-point font, not a real big font, 15 pages, single-spaced, ten-point font. We were going on a trip and I had my wife read two or three or four pages at a time. And finally, I'd say, let's just stop.

I can't take, I mean, there's too much. Let me just give you a few of these. Now, you've got to listen to the words too.

Everything about this. I mean, for years, I've been a Christian. I've spoken on the wrath of God, but I've never given it real clear, detailed study.

You've got to think about it. When He says things like this, Thou dost send forth thy burning anger. God sends it forth sometimes.

And it consumes them as chaff. Let me alone, that my anger may burn against them, and that I may destroy them. When the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled.

That word comes up a lot. And the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. Here's Moses speaking.

I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the Lord was wrathful against you in order to destroy you. Consume, destroy, consume, destroy. Listen to this.

It's unbelievable. The Lord shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the Lord and His jealousy will burn against that man. And every curse which is written in the book will rest on him.

And the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. For a fire is kindled in my anger and burns to the lowest part of Sheol and consumes the earth with its yield and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains. However, the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.

Behold, the name of the Lord comes from a remote place, burning as His anger and dense as His smoke. His lips are filled with indignation and His tongue is like a consuming fire. And that goes all the way

through the book of Revelation, where you have this wrath of God mixed full strength in the cup of His anger and this great wine press of the wrath of God.

Right all the way through the whole Bible. Now, isn't this amazing? I mean, the Bible teaches that the God who is, is a God who is angry. That's what the Bible says.

And not only is He angry, but He's angry, literally, all the time. That's what the Bible says. Psalm 7, verse 11, God is a righteous judge and a God who has indignation every day, every day.

Now, how are we to understand this? What does it mean that God is angry? What is God's wrath? And the first thing I want to say is this, God's wrath is not like the majority of all the anger that you have experienced in your whole lifetime. It's not like that, because the vast majority of what you have experienced of anger is a sinful kind of anger. Almost all of it is sinful.

So when we say, what is the wrath of God? It's not a temporary loss of self-control. It's not a childish tantrum. It's not a selfish fit of emotion.

It's not the result of any kind of frustration or exasperation. Think of how much human anger this rules out when you start thinking about the wrath of God. It's not a display of peevishness.

That's not what the wrath of God is. The wrath of God is something holy and good. It is terrifying, but it is lovely.

It really is, because God is altogether lovely. And His wrath is glorious and wonderful. What is God's wrath? God's wrath is His holy, white-hot hatred of all that's evil and all that's ugly and all that's bad.

It's the reaction, the revulsion of His holy nature against sin. You try to bring God and sin together, you get a repulsion and a reaction and a hatred. People say, I don't believe in a God of hate.

Brother Paul pointed out that, you know, they say, I believe in a God of love. Well, if He loves, He has to hate. He has to.

If you love little children, you are going to hate child abuse. And the worse the abuse, the greater your outrage and the greater your hatred. That's what Brother Paul was talking about this morning in terms of the absolute purity, you see, of God.

What kind of person could watch the details of some kind of terrible atrocity taking place and just yawn and say, ho-hum, I wonder what we're going to have for dinner tonight. That's what you're asking for if you ask for a God without wrath. I stood a couple times there in Germany at Dachau in front of those furnaces where tens of thousands of people were burned up there.

And I can't tell you the things that were done. But I know this, there were thousands of pounds. I know at Auschwitz there were something like 14 or 16 thousand pounds of women's hair that was cut off of them so they could use it to make gunny sacks out of.

And those people went home at night and listened to classical music. That's what you're asking for if you ask for a God without wrath. You're asking for someone who can tolerate wickedness and not burn with hatred of it.

And I say a God like that is not a God that would be worth having or worshipping. And every one of us knows it. The problem in our day, when you start talking about the wrath of God, there is no outrage against sin in our day.

Beloved, we are so soft on sin. We live in a day when a man can murder his wife and they'll work it out some way so that the wife looks like the cause of it and the guy that murdered her looks like a victim. And everything that he's done is excused in some way or another.

And we have partaken of a lot more of that than we realize. Some of you know a brother from Canada there who's gone to be with the Lord, Keith McLeod. I was with him one time.

And we were talking about the things of God and he said, I hate sin. And he said it in such a way that there was such a holiness and such an outrage that the chills went down my back. I felt like I was in the presence of God in some measure.

And I was because the Spirit of God is what created that. God hates sin. There's a purity and a holy anger.

Beloved, it is a great glory to hate sin. It's a great glory. There's some men here, whenever I'm around them, I feel like they hate sin more than I do.

And it fills me with a sense of the glory of God to be around such men. What is it? It's wickedness not to hate sin. And God hates sin absolutely.

With a fiery, burning, hot hatred, He hates it. An absolute, perfect hatred. He hates it.

He's outraged by it. Remember the Lord Jesus Christ? Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. There it is.

If you love righteousness, you'll hate iniquity. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore, God, even thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

That's why there's joy missing a lot of times. Because there's not sufficient hatred of evil. And you hate evil bad enough, and you love righteousness good enough, you'll be filled with the oil of gladness.

God hates sin with a fiery, burning, consuming hatred. You remember what the Bible says? Our God is a consuming... You remember how many times that word came up in what I read? He is a consuming fire. Isaiah 33, 14.

Sinners in Zion are terrified. Trembling to seize the godless. What are they asking? Who among us can live with a consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning? Not talking about hell, it's talking about God.

It's not talking about hell, it's talking about heaven. Who among us can live with continual burning? That's what God is. He is absolutely holy.

And His wrath is directed against all that is evil. But there's more than that. God's wrath is tied in directly with His justice.

I read you that passage in Psalm 711. Where it says that God is a righteous judge. He's a God whose anger has indignation every day.

His wrath is tied in, you see, with His justice. And that's what Brother Michael talked about last night. The justice and righteousness of God.

One of the most important verses in the Bible about wrath. Romans 4, 15. The law worketh wrath.

But where no law is, neither is there violation, transgression. The law worketh wrath. In other words, the wrath of God has to do with broken law.

And it has to do with God's righteous determination to punish every sin. And to make every wrong right and to balance the scales of justice. His wrath is tied in with His justice.

When sin is punished and justice is satisfied, wrath subsides. Now let me just give you one example. Numbers 25.

This case of Baal Peor. The people went out and intermarried. Verse 4 says, The Lord said to Moses, now listen to this, Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the Lord, so that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.

See that? Wrath turns away when justice is satisfied. Verse 11 and 13. God says concerning Phinehas, He has turned away my wrath from the sons of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them.

He was jealous for his God and made atonement for the sons of Israel. Now question, how did Phinehas turn away the wrath of God? How did he make atonement for the sons of Israel? He came in there and took a spear and rammed it through that Israelite man and Midianite woman who were high-handed enough to go into that tent in front of everybody while they're weeping before the Lord. You see, justice has to be satisfied.

Wrath is tied in with unsatisfied justice. Well, we've seen something of the fact of God's wrath and we've seen a little bit of the meaning of God's wrath. Now I want to talk to you about the manifestations of God's wrath.

According to the Bible, God's wrath is presently manifested and it will be one day manifested. So first of all, the present manifestation of God's wrath. Romans 1.18 is the verse.

He says, The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. I think the NIV says, is being revealed. Paul says that right now the wrath of God is revealed from heaven.

And it's revealed, say it this way, the present course of this world and the present condition of this world will right now manifest the wrath of God. Right now. Beloved, we live in an abnormal world.

And oh, how important it is to get a hold of this. The world is full of sin and God has drawn back in wrath. And the world that we live in right now is not a normal world.

We live in an abnormal situation. And it ought to affect all of our thinking. Something has gone wrong.

It's not the way it started out. Something's happened. Death and disease and war and suffering and famine and pain and perversity are not normal.

Sin has come in and God in wrath has withdrawn and all these things have come upon us. Now can you imagine what it would be like if you're not a Christian? You start out looking at the world and trying to make sense out of this mess because you've got to start with it as being normal. It is absolutely... Could you imagine if this was normal? The despair that you'd be in? The Bible answer is a hard answer, but it's the only answer that there is.

This world is abnormal. It's under wrath. Just consider one of these abnormalities.

Death. The Bible teaches that death in the human race is a result of the wrath of God. It's a great abnormality.

The Bible... I'm sorry. The story goes that when Buddha was a young man, when he was a boy growing up, his rich father tried to shelter him from all suffering. But eventually something went wrong and he came in contact not well with several things, but ultimately came in contact with a corpse.

And this is what he said. He says, Is this the only dead man or does the world contain other instances? And that was a shocker that sent him on his quest. He renounced his riches and tried to seek for enlightenment.

Does the world contain other instances? It's full of other instances. There's piles of them and mountains of other instances. Vast all around us.

Death. And the question is, what is the explanation for this? Well, Buddha tried to seek enlightenment and the problem is that his so-called enlightenment was total darkness because it had nothing in it whatsoever about God or about sin. You know that most of the major world religions are atheistic.

When you ask Buddha about God, he said roaring silence. He didn't believe in God. And he had no answer whatsoever for what we face.

The Bible says the answer, the reason. Beloved, again, we're used to it. Like Paul said about the fish in the water.

We're used to people dying. Again, there are mountains and mountains and mountains of dead bodies in this world. There are people rotting in the ground all around us.

They started to widen the road a little bit there in England by Bun Hill Fields, which is the cemetery where some of these famous Christians are buried. Bone Hill. Bone Hill Fields.

They started to widen the road. They dug up so many bodies of Quakers and different people in there. Mountains of them underneath that road.

I mean, we're used to death. Let's just look at one passage before we go on. Psalm 90.

This is the Bible explanation. Verse 1, And Lord, Thou hast meant our dwelling place in all generations before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God. Thou dost turn man back into dust, and dost say, Return, O children of men, for a thousand years in Thy sight, or like yesterday when it passes by, or as I watch in the night, Thou hast swept them away like a flood.

They fall asleep in the morning. They're like grass which sprouts anew. In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew.

Towards evening it fades and withers away. Four. You've got to keep going.

For we have been consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath we have been dismayed. Thou hast placed our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy presence. We have finished our years like a sock.

I'm sorry. Verse 9, For all our days have declined in Thy fury. We have finished our years like a sigh.

As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years or, due to strength, eighty years. Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow, for soon it is gone and we fly away. Verse 11, Who understands the power of Thine anger and Thy fury according to the fear that is due Thee? So teach us to number our days that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom.

Notice what he says here. These generations and generations of people that are dying. It's a result of God's wrath.

And he asks a question in verse 11. Who understands the power of Thine anger and Thy fury according to the fear that is due Thee? In other words, just how great is the wrath of God? And the fact is, it's as great as God is. The wrath of God is infinite.

And if we want to get a little feel for the wrath of God, all we have to do is go out and look at all the cemeteries in all the world, and that will give you just a little feel for how much God hates sin. Well, the present condition of the world speaks of the present manifestation of God's wrath. But not only the condition of the world, the present course of the world manifests the wrath of God.

Again, this is very important. And Paul teaches this in Romans 1. I think I'm going to need some water. I'm having a hard time here.

Thank you. Romans chapter 1, verse 24, 26, and 28. And this is very important.

Not only the present condition of the world, but the present course of the world. Paul teaches in Romans chapter 1 that the wrath of God is presently manifested by the fact that He gives men over to deeper and deeper sin. Romans chapter 1, verse 24, it says, Therefore God gave them over in the lust of their hearts to impurity.

And verse 26, For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions. And verse 28, Just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind. Part of God's judgment against sin is that He gives men over, as Brother Mack was talking about with Pharaoh, He gives men over to more and more sin.

Thank you, Brother, I'm sorry. Part of God's judgment against sin is that He gives men over to more and more sin. Three times here it says, God gave them over.

You start out in idolatry, you start out in rebellion against God. In a little while, He gives you over to what? Sexual impurity. That's the first step of the way.

And then the next thing He does is gives you over to perversity. All kinds of sexual perversity. And the next thing He does is give you over to a totally depraved mind.

Paul says, This is a present manifestation of the wrath of God. Now you say, Is that a passive thing or an active thing? Well, it's both. God actively gives you over, lets you go.

Lets you go the way that you want to go. God leaves men alone and lets them go their own way. And gives them over to more and more blindness.

Brother Michael Durham had an illustration on this that I heard last year that I think is a wonderful illustration of what happens in this. Here's four or five men out golfing. And they're laughing and joking, talking about religion.

And they say, Ah, there is no God. And one of the guys steps over, he's going to show off a little bit, he steps over with his golf club. And he raises it up to the heavens and he says, God, if you're there, strike me dead.

What happens? Well, the sky is still blue, the birds are singing. You say, What mercy of God that He didn't strike him down. Well, that's the wrath of God.

If a bolt of lightning had come down and killed him right there, at least those men around him would have feared, and they might have been saved from hell. And the whole community might have found out about it. But as it is, they walked on their way laughing.

See, there isn't any God. It's the wrath of God when He leaves you alone. The course, not just, now look, the condition of the world shows presently, right now, the wrath of God is all around us.

But the course of the world shows the wrath of God too. Downhill, letting you go, giving you over to sin. It's a fearful thing.

You know, with Ananias and Sapphira there in the early church, they told those lies. God killed them. That is such mercy.

We're not experiencing anything like that nowadays. When God draws near in a church, I mean, He says that in Malachi. He says, I'm going to draw near to you.

And I'll be a swift witness against those adulterers. And those people that bear false witness. That's a great blessing.

Nowadays, there's all kinds of stuff like that and nothing. That's not mercy. That's judgment.

But it's a fearful thing when God just leaves you alone. If you're not a Christian here tonight, you say, well, I don't believe there's even any such thing as the wrath of God. Well, let me ask you a question.

Does it bother you that you're not a Christian? No, it doesn't bother me. First sign of the wrath of God on you. Do your sins bother you? No, they don't bother you.

Did they used to bother you? Yeah, back when I believed all that stuff about hell and all that. That's another sign of the wrath of God. Now listen to this one.

Are you doing things now that you used to say were wrong? And if you're honest, you'll have to say yes. That's another sign of the wrath of God. He's letting you go deeper.

Those people in Romans 1 didn't start out at the bottom. They were given over and given over under the wrath of God. That's how it happens.

The last half of Romans 1 describes the present course of this world as a terrible downward spiral. Men keep getting blinder and blinder and harder and harder on the road toward hell. More and more deceived.

You think you're free when you start out on the path of sin. You know, I could stop any time. And I'll do this, but I would never do that.

And in a little while, you're doing that and justifying it to other people that question you about it. And beloved, the terrifying thing about it is this is not in your power. It's God gives you over.

And when He gives you over, you're given over. It's not something that you're going to control. You know, it's quite a thought, isn't it? Adolf Hitler was once a little boy playing with toys.

Just as nice as any of the little boys in here. Isn't that amazing? I started college with a blond-haired kid that was one of the most innocent type college kids that I ever met. He said, here's a picture of my sister.

Isn't she pretty? Well, she was a homeless girl you'd want to see. He was just a naive, nice, innocent kid, relatively speaking. By the time he got out of college, he was robbing hard liquor stores.

That's amazing, isn't it, how fast? He wouldn't have recognized himself. If I had told him that day I met him what he was going to be doing, he would not have believed it. That's the wrath of God whenever He gives you over and gives you over.

What he did to Pharaoh, hardening Pharaoh. What was it? It's justice. He was giving him over to what sin deserves by hardening him.

Moses, he didn't give over to what he deserved. Old B.B. Caldwell used to have a sermon on Romans 1 entitled, The Light's Going Out on the Road to Hell. And it's quite a picture.

You know, as you're going down the road to hell, the lights start failing on your car. That's really what happens. And by the time you get to the bridge outside, the lights are completely out.

And you go right off the edge. Present manifestations of the wrath of God, according to the Bible. And you see, you don't have to say, it's really, I have to take it by faith that there's such a thing as the wrath of God.

You see the wrath of God all around you. Constantly. But finally here, the future manifestation of God's wrath.

We need to say a little bit about that. Because it's big. Romans 2, 5, Because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you're storing up for yourself, right? While God's wrath is being manifested now, it's also being stored up.

You're storing up for yourself wrath. Against the day of wrath. In revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

The Bible teaches that there is a future day of wrath coming, in which sin will be fully punished, and the scales of justice will be finally balanced out. For those that are wicked, they'll be balanced out. Let me just give you a few verses.

First of all, from the Old Testament, there are many passages foreshadowing this day of wrath. First of all, this. A day, and listen to these.

I'm not going to give you the references, just let them soak in a little. A day of wrath is that day. A day of trouble and distress.

A day of destruction and desolation. A day of darkness and gloom. A day of clouds and thick darkness.

Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord's wrath. All the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy. For He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Indeed, God speaking here, my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them my indignation, all my burning anger, for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of my zeal. Isn't that amazing? From the New Testament, when He saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, He said to them, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? You see, there's that wrath stored up that's coming. And they said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

For the great day of their wrath has come. And who will be able to stand? If anyone worships the beast in his image and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of his anger. And he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night, those who worship the beast in his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. And from his mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it he may smite the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron. And he treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty.

Beloved, how great is the wrath of God? It's as great as God is. It's infinite. In other words, it's incomprehensible how great it is.

That's what we try to read there in Psalm 90. Who understands this power of this wrath according to what it deserves to be understood? Nobody does. Nobody understands it.

Nobody's ever rightly comprehended how great the wrath of God is. That's the wrath, what we've been reading about here, where he says the whole earth is going to be consumed. That's the wrath that men think they're going to bear up under.

I mean, I think a lot of sinners have the idea, they think, I'm going to just grit my teeth and go in there, you know, do the best I can to stand up against it. Then Jonathan Edwards says it's like a spider bracing himself for a blast furnace. Just like that, we will yield.

I mean, the most hardened sinners are going to yield instantly in the flames of God's wrath. Because it's the fierce wrath of the Almighty. The fierce wrath of the Almighty.

Just a little bit of application here to our daily lives. What is the application for the Christian? Well, Brother Paul mentioned it this morning. It ought to lead us to worship God.

We ought to worship God, that He is such a hater of sin. It is wonderful that God has such absolute and perfect hatred of sin. That alone should be cause of endless worship.

But to think that the God of infinite wrath so loved the objects of His wrath, that He Himself came in the person of His Son and bore His own wrath so that He could make a way for us to be received. You see, this whole thing, when we talk about the cross, Brother Michael talked about righteousness, Paul talked about absolute moral purity. All of that.

You can also talk about the same thing, the whole thing in terms of wrath. Because what was happening there when the Lord was in the garden? Father, I mean, sweating, drops of blood. What was happening? Father, if it be possible, let this cup.

What cup? That cup of the fierce wrath of Almighty God. And He drank that cup to the very bottom for His people. Much more than, having now been justified by His blood, we'll be saved from the wrath through Him.

Beloved, there is no condemnation and no wrath left because He drank it to the bottom of the cup. There's no wrath left for His people. The wrath is gone.

And now, surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. How could you say anything any better than that? The doctrine of God's wrath ought to move us to warn others. Paul says, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

If we love men, we must speak to them about wrath. In short, we must be negative. And nobody nowadays wants to be negative.

What would you think? Here's a person dying of cancer. And they go to the doctor. And the doctor looks him over and says, There's nothing really wrong with you.

Not that bad, anyway. Nothing serious. Take a couple of aspirin.

You know, my dad had cancer. He went to the doctor. The doctor said, These headaches, I mean, and they didn't know what it was, of course.

He said, These headaches you're having, you've got psychological problems. It's because, you know, it's in your head, in the sense of psychological. Well, my dad never had a psychological problem in his life, except for the fact that he got mad when the doctor told him that.

And he didn't go back until it was too far gone. There wasn't any hope whatsoever. That doctor was a false prophet to him.

And that's what every false prophet is doing in the spiritual realm. A guy comes in with this festering sore, and instead of being honest enough, or maybe he's so blind he doesn't even know it, instead of saying, Look, buddy, maybe we can save your life if we cut your arm off. Instead of that, he says, Look, let's put a band-aid over it.

It's not that big. It'll only take five minutes, and your friends will wait. Try to minimize the thing.

Make it just easy, does it? No, it may cost you everything. But there might be a hope that you won't go to hell. You know, the spiritual equivalent of a band-aid, that smiley face, Smile, God loves you.

I'm really thankful we don't see those around so much anymore. That's an outrage. Can you imagine Jonah's walking down the streets of Nineveh? Smile, Nineveh, God loves you.

Smile, Nineveh, God loves you. He's a false prophet. God is getting ready to destroy them and wipe them off the face of the earth.

It's not the time to say, Smile, God loves you. A pastor friend of mine that's meant a lot in my life has a tract entitled, What's Wrong With This Picture? It's got a picture of Noah's ark, and the flood's rising there, and people are crying, and they're out in the water drowning. And on the side of the ark are these smiley faces.

Smile, God loves you. What's wrong with this picture? There's something wrong with that picture. If we believe that God is a holy God and men are going to hell, we've got to be honest with them.

Finally, for the non-Christian, if you're not a Christian here tonight, the application is really easy. Flee from the wrath to come. That's what John the Baptist was saying.

And, you know, he thought in those terms when those people came to him. He wasn't thinking in terms of, you know, getting a better life. Aren't you tired of being an alcoholic? Don't you want to have a better life? You could have a happy marriage.

He's thinking in terms of flames there on the horizon. Flee from the wrath that's coming. Every illustration is imperfect, but there's some things I like about this comparison of the wrath of God to a prairie fire.

Some of you may have heard this. Out on the open prairie when it's really dry, a strike of lightning or a neglected campfire or anything can start a raging prairie fire. And they say a horse can't even outrun it.

I've never seen that. I've never experienced that. But the only way to escape that fire, I've been told, is to start another fire there where you are.

And as it burns outward, you hope it gets big enough, that there's a big enough burnt out area that when the real thing gets there, I mean the fullness of it when it arrives, that you'll be in the burnt out area. Well, beloved, that's what God has done, only He's done it for real in the Lord Jesus Christ. He's burnt out.

The fire of God has already fallen. And it fell and it burnt itself out absolutely. And the place that it burnt out is infinitely big if you'll just get there.

You get to Christ where that fire has fallen and you'll be safe. The wrath of God has fallen on Him. And He has paid for the sins of everyone who will put their trust in Him.

Flee to Christ and you'll be safe when the day of fire arrives. Put your trust completely in Him as your sin bearer. You know, it is not a tragedy when God puts people in hell.

That's not a tragedy. It is a tragedy that a man goes to hell when he doesn't have to. That's a tragedy.

But the fact that God puts men in hell, if He didn't, He wouldn't be God. He wouldn't be worthy. He wouldn't be anything.

And how we should thank God for His holy, perfect, complete, 100% hatred. Like a consuming burning fire of all that is evil. And nothing of that sort can ever exist in His presence, not even a little bit.

How thankful we should be for the wrath of God. Amen.

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