

The Terror of the Lord

by Samuel Logan Brengle

The terror of the Lord is a solemn and certain fact that should be preached continually and everywhere, and it is a fact that God's law cannot be broken with impunity and that judgment follows wrong-doing as night follows day.

Scripture: Genesis 3:4, Psalm 9:16, Proverbs 14:9, Ezekiel 18:4, John 1:29, Romans 6:23, 2 Corinthians 5:11, Hebrews 10:31, 1 John 4:18, Revelation 20:11-15

Topics: "Judgment and Mercy", "The Fear of the Lord"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the duality of God's nature, highlighting that while He is rich in mercy, He is equally terrible in wrath. The sermon underscores the importance of recognizing the terror of the Lord as a motivator for repentance and a call to holiness, warning that judgment follows wrongdoing just as night follows day. Brengle urges that this truth should be preached earnestly and with reverence, as it reflects the unchangeable holiness of God's character. He contrasts the mockery of sin with the reverential fear that leads believers to seek refuge in God's love and mercy. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a balance of holy fear and love, urging listeners to make their calling sure and endure to the end.

Transcript

Knowing.... the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (2 Corinthians v. 11.)

'The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth,' (Psalm ix. 16.)

The majesty of God's law can be measured only by the terrors of His judgments. God is rich in mercy, but He is equally terrible in wrath. So high as is His mercy, so deep is His wrath. Mercy and wrath are set over against each other as are the high mountains and the deep seas. They match each other as do day and night, as do winter and summer, or right and left, or top and bottom. If we do not accept mercy, we shall surely be overtaken by wrath.

God's law cannot be broken with impunity. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' We can no more avoid the judgment of God's violated law than we can avoid casting a shadow when we stand in the light of the sun, or than we can avoid being burned if we thrust our hand in the fire. Judgment follows wrong-doing as night follows day.

This truth should be preached and declared continually and everywhere. It should not be preached harshly, as though we were glad of it; nor thoughtlessly, as though we had learned it as a parrot might

learn it; nor lightly, as though it were really of no importance; but it should be preached soberly, earnestly, tearfully, intelligently, as a solemn, certain, awful fact to be reckoned with in everything we think and say and do.

The terrible judgments of God against the Canaanites were but flashes of His wrath against their terrible sins. People with superfine sensibilities mock at what they consider the barbarous ferocity of God's commands against the inhabitants of Canaan, but let such people read the catalogue of the Canaanites' sins as recorded in the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus (verses 6-25), and they will then understand why God's anger waxed so hot. The Canaanites practiced the most shameless and inconceivable wickedness, until, as God says, 'the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.'

'Fools make a mock of sin ' wrote Solomon (Proverbs xiv. 9), and professedly wise men still lead simple souls astray as the serpent beguiled Eve, saying, 'Ye shall not surely die.' (Genesis iii. 4.)

But men who understand the unchangeable holiness of God's character and law tremble and fear before Him at the thought of sin. They know that He is to be feared; 'the terror of the Lord' is before them. And this is not inconsistent with the perfect love that casteth out fear. Rather it is inseparably joined with that love, and the man who is most fully possessed of that love is the one who fears most -- with that reverential fear that leads him to depart from sin. For he who is exalted to the greatest heights of divine love and fellowship in Jesus Christ sees most plainly the awful depths of the divine wrath against sin and the bottomless pit to which sinners out of Christ are hastening.

This vision and sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of God's wrath against wickedness begets not a panicky, slavish fear that makes a man hide from God, as Adam and Eve hid among the trees of Eden, but a holy, filial fear that leads the soul to come out into the open and run to God to seek shelter in His arms, and to be washed in the Blood of 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'

Lo! on a narrow neck of land, 'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand, Yet how insensible! A point of time, a moment's space, Removes me to that heavenly place, Or shuts me up in Hell!

Before me place in dread array The scenes of that tremendous day, When Thou with clouds shalt come To judge the people at Thy bar; And tell me, Lord, shall I be there To hear Thee say, 'Well done!

Be this my one great business here, With holy joy and holy fear, To make my calling sure; Thine utmost counsel to fulfill, To suffer all Thy righteous will, And to the end endure.

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