

“The Wrath of God”
Romans 1:18
(Preached at Trinity, March 11, 2007)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We’ve spent the last several weeks looking at **Verses 16-17**. They are wonderful verses. As I’ve stated, they are the most important verses in the entire letter. They provide the theme – How a man or woman might be made right before God.
2. Paul is describing the Gospel of Christ – the power of God unto salvation.
 - A. Salvation is granted “**To every one that believeth**”
Salvation is open to all men, every race, every language, and every cultural background – no matter how educated, no matter how wealthy, no matter how morally bankrupt – Only one thing will rule you out: Unbelief. Salvation is limited to only those who believe.
 - B. Then Paul makes a statement that is the foundation of all Christianity. All of Christianity rests upon it. It is so important that Paul uses the next eight chapters speaking about it.
Romans 1:17 – “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
Paul is speaking about the glorious doctrine of **Justification by Faith Alone**.
3. This verse answer the question of how a man might be saved. It speaks of the righteousness of God revealed, a righteousness from God which comes to us by faith.. These alone shall live.
4. From this point in his letter Paul focuses more particularly with the issue of sin. He is going to hold it before us. He wants us to examine it very closely, to look at it from every angle.
In **Verse 18** we find the ultimate problem of sin.
 - A. Sin is not just an ethical problem. It is an offense against God. Sinners are those who have offended God.
 - B. God’s anger is not just kindled against sin. His fiery anger is kindled against sinners, against every human being.
 - C. This is why only the just shall live. Because God’s wrath is kindled against all sinners. All men are under God’s just condemnation.
5. Before we can understand the subject of sin we have to understand the wrath of God. Paul ties the understanding of sin with an understanding of the wrath of God. In the Book of Romans he will use this word over and over.
About 1/3 of the N.T. uses of the word **ὀργή** (wrath) are found in the Book of Romans.
6. Paul wants us to be clear. Before a man will resort to God’s grace he must be brought to a dread of God’s wrath – he must have a sense of danger.
7. This morning I want to begin looking at this subject – the wrath of God. You cannot understand the Gospel without understanding the wrath of God. You will not understand the wonder of the cross without this. This is why the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those that believe not. They don’t understand the wrath of God.

8. This morning I want to examine this doctrine under several headings. I've chosen an alliterative course – all begin with the letter “D”
- I. First, it is a Doctrine Defined
- A. The wrath of God is one of God's divine attributes
1. The wrath of God is His fiery anger against sin. God's wrath is His holy hatred and indignation towards sin.
 2. God not only hates sin – His anger burns against the sinner
 3. God's holy character does not allow indifference towards sin
 - a. If God is pleased over all things holy then He must be displeased over all things defiled.
 - b. If God is infinitely holy then His displeasure over sin must also be an infinite displeasure.
 4. The Bible describes this displeasure as a holy hatred
Psalm 5:5-6 – “The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. ⁶ Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.”
- B. God's holy hatred of sin has kindled His righteous anger
1. God's anger is an infinite fury, a terrible rage – yet it is not like the anger of men.
 - a. Human beings usually sin in anger because our anger flows forth from our sinful pride
 - b. God's anger isn't reactionary. Rather it is the expression of His holy character towards that which is not holy. This is why Isaiah was so affected at the vision of God in all His holiness.
Isaiah 6:5 – “Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”
 2. God's holy wrath is His curse upon the sinner
 - a. It is fearful to consider
Hebrews 10:31 – “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*”
 - b. To be cursed of God is to fall under His condemnation. It means God is against the sinner and ultimately will consign him to an everlasting torment.
- II. Second, the wrath of God is a Doctrine Denied
- A. The love of God for many has become His only attribute
1. God is seen as this benevolent being who exists to fulfill our needs, desires, and expectations.
 2. He wants us to be happy, wealthy, and have our fantasies fulfilled
 3. Most believe that God loves all men equally and has planned wonderful things for all men – sin is not even a consideration.
- B. It is unpopular to speak of sin and condemnation
1. Some see the wrath of God as an outdated relic that should be rejected by modern man.

2. Many believe that as human beings we have evolved to our present state of excellence and we are growing better and better. We make mistakes but are basically good people.
3. Sin is not in our vocabulary.
Homosexuality is an alternative lifestyle
Abortion is a choice
A rebellious teenager is simply striving for independence
Fornication is sexual freedom
Alcoholism is a disease
- C. Today most deny the concept of sin and any idea of consequence for sin
Few today tremble at the thought of God being angry with them
 1. Few believe that the most powerful being in the universe is angry and poised to crush them
 2. Most believe that hell is simply inconsistent with the character of a God who is only capable of love. Hell would be much too cruel and violent.
 3. The mantra shouted today is, “Thou shalt not judge” and they actually believe that God will not judge them.
- D. Notice Paul starts with the wrath of God
 1. He doesn’t tell them that God will meet their felt needs
 2. He doesn’t tell them that coming to Christ will result in a wonderful life
 3. Paul says, “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men”
 4. It seems the church has ceased warning people of the wrath of God. We want them to feel comfortable with non- threatening preaching.
 5. This is one of the things that drove Paul to preach
2 Corinthians 5:11 – “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”

III. Third, the Wrath of God is a Doctrine Deserved

- A. God's wrath is always judicial
 1. Everyone receiving God's wrath will get exactly what he deserves.
Each of us will receive what justice requires
Psalms 5:4-6 – “For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. ⁵ The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. ⁶ Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.”
 2. All of us have sinned so all of us deserve hell
 - a. Sin is rebellion against the authority of God – it is the denial of God’s right to rule. This is the essence of evil, of wickedness
 - b. God will not allow challenges to His sovereign dominion
 - c. His wrath is His righteous response to wickedness. If you are lost in your sin God sees you as evil, as wicked, as abominable
 3. This is why election is a wonderful act of God’s grace
 - a. None of us deserve it – we are all guilty
 - b. This should silence all who would dare utter the word, “Unfair.”
Romans 9:21 – “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”

- B. The tragedy is God has offered His mercy to all but most will not have it
1. The unbeliever has chosen to be without God
 2. By their continued rebellion against God's mercy they are heaping unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath.
Romans 2:5 – “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;”
- C. God's justice is always perfect - Divine retribution
1. God always does what is good and right
 2. None will face His wrath by accident
- IV. Fourth, the Wrath of God is a Doctrine Displayed
- A. God's wrath has been displayed in the Past
1. The Fall - all of creation was cursed - It abides today
All of the suffering in the world today is a testimony to God's condemnation of sin – all disease, all death, all sorrow and tears
 2. The Flood
 3. Sodom & Gomorrah
 4. The Egyptian plagues and overthrow of Egyptian army
 5. The judgment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram - the earth swallowed
Numbers 26:10 – “And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.”
 6. Ananias and Sapphira
 7. Those that come to the Lord's table unworthily
- B. God's wrath is also Displayed in the present
1. God often brings swift judgment upon individuals in this life
There is testimony after testimony of the sad consequences of sin
Broken homes, broken lives.
 2. God will not be mocked – even when it seems that all is well God's sword of justice must be seen.
- V. Fifth, the Wrath of God is a Doctrine Delayed
- A. The NT word for wrath is **ὀργή** which describes something that builds up over a period of time
1. This is a perfect illustration of God's righteous anger upon the earth
It is building up. This is why Paul describes God's wrath upon sinners as something being stockpiled
Romans 2:5 – “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;”
 2. We are living in a great age of mercy
 3. God is delaying His ultimate wrath upon sin
 4. He is calling men to flee from this wrath – to flee to Christ

- B. Many give great focus upon the Second Coming of Christ
 - 1. It will be a glorious time – but many do not understand what this will entail
 - 2. The Lord of lords and King of kings shall crush all His enemies
2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 – “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, ⁸ In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹ Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”
 - 3. Every sin will be exposed, every thought revealed, every motive examined
- C. And then comes the judgment
 - 1. Many will hear the dreadful words:
Matthew 25:41 – “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”
 - 2. At the judgment all of the wrath God has been reserving for sinners will be unleashed.

Conclusion:

- 1. What must be our response to the wrath of God.
 - A. First, it must be preached – even if it’s unpopular. Most preaching today focuses more on “felt needs” – problems with relationships, problems with fears, problems with feelings of inadequacy. This is not the Gospel!!!
 - B. The Gospel is not telling people our feelings about our relationship with Jesus. It is telling sinners of their need of a Savior. We must warn sinners of the consequence of sin – that God’s wrath is kindled against them.
 - C. This was preached in the past and must be preached today.
 Jonathan Edwards: “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” preached at Enfield Massachusetts during the Great Awakening.
 People were convicted of their sin. They began sobbing and weeping. Some moaned loudly. Others clutched their chests and fell to the floor. At least once, Edwards stopped reading and looked up rather disgusted that people were making so much noise during his sermon. People began to call out “What must I do to be saved?” They reached for building columns and chair rails, something solid to hold onto, because they were sure that the floor of the church would suddenly open up and swallow them into the fires of hell under their feet.
- 2. If you have not turned from your sin and trusted Christ today must be the day. It is the only day you have. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.