

The Wrath of God

Romans 1:18

Let's start by revisiting our series acronym: "G.O.S.P.E.L.!"

G = Greeting	Romans 1:1-17
O = Outlaw (sin)	Romans 1:18-3:20
S = Solution (salvation)	Romans 3:21-5:21
P = Purifying (sanctification)	Romans 6:1-8:39
E = Everything (sovereignty)	Romans 9:1-11:36
L = Love [verb] (servitude)	Romans 12:1-15:13
! = Warning!	Romans 15:13-16:27

Last week we hit our first milestone... We completed the "G" (greeting) after revealing the "theme" of Romans, encapsulated in verses 16 & 17 of chapter one. Consequently, that means we are about to enter into the "O" or "Outlaw of Heaven" (a.k.a. sin) this week; where we will stay through Romans 3:20.

The subject of sin begins with the wrath of God. Let's be honest... the whole concept of a "wrathful God" goes against everything we want to find in our mental image of an all-loving God. As Andy Stanley likes to say: that truth is not "emotionally satisfying." But I'm hear to tell you... your emotional satisfaction has absolutely NOTHING to do with validating or determining TRUTH. Trust me, many people have been on the wrong "*emotionally DIS-satisfying*" end of "gravity"... and their dis-satisfaction didn't slow the affects of gravity one bit.

To that end, what are we to say about those who would recognize that God's truth is not always "emotionally satisfying" to a sinful humanity... so they "change" and subsequently "mis-represent" God's Truth?

* Forget for a minute that we are talking about God's Word... How would you react if that were someone changing YOUR words? What if you told someone you loved what they need to do to be rescued from certain torture and ultimately eternal death and damnation... and then someone else came by and told your loved ones "another way" - a way that resembled the right way, but left out key parts that would derail your loved one before they could be rescued? What if the "new" half-truth cost your loved one their life... their soul... their one opportunity to receive eternal life... thereby resulting in their eternal damnation in hell?

This is exactly what takes place every time “liberal,” “false teaching” (defined in part as sin-minimizing or sin-without-consequence theology) is shared under the phony but self-professing umbrella of Christianity. Let me be blunt... any “good news” that does not deal biblically with the “bad news” of sin, is no good news at all. And make no mistake, such warm and fuzzy versions are not some “lighter, nicer version” of the gospel... They are no gospel at all! God’s Word says that those who promote such false, mis-guiding, and hell-leading lies are to be damned (read Galatians 1:6-9).

What did you do this weekend?

What did you do with your Friday & Saturday nights??

How many of you hung out at the pharmacy???

Most of us would NEVER go to, let alone “hang out” at the pharmacy... unless we realized that we needed a specific medicine or “remedy” to heal us... So it is with sinners. Unless and until they realize they need a remedy for their sin(s), they would no more “come to Christ,” (or church) than you would go hang out at the pharmacy.

And for those who do come anyway... it’s not really for a remedy, it tends to be for some other non-essential purpose. It’s like you going to the pharmacy... but only to pick up some gum, a Coke, or some other “non-essential,” non-remedy purchase. Some come to church/Christ for the “feelings,” the “friends,” the “frivolous”... just like you swing by the pharmacy for the fast, drive-by, pick-me-ups. In such cases, you may be able to say “I was there” - but sadly, nothing of real value took place. It’s like going to the hospital... but only visiting the cafeteria. You were there... and you had a good experience... you were even “fed and nourished” in a positive way... But make no mistake, you missed the whole purpose and value of the “hospital.” You may have left with a full belly... but if the cancer remains in you, you missed your opportunity to receive the remedy... and get healed.

Some “professing” Christians would say that while the reality of sin and the need for Christ’s sacrificial, atoning death is true... it does not justify such candid, challenging, and confrontational conversations. Again, let me be blunt... the Bible is bold on sin! Jesus and His disciples were direct, unashamed, and extremely straight-forward on the reality of sin, the universal need for repentance, and the consequence of God’s wrath for all who reject Jesus as the One and Only way (read John 14:6).

Until someone has a truly, fully biblical understanding of sin, salvation, sanctification, sovereignty, & servitude... anything and everything pertaining to the relationship between “self” and THE Savior, is perceived to be something between “a waste of time” and “nice but not necessary.” Think about it... “Until you realize that you need to be forgiven, you will neither seek nor value God’s forgiveness.” - JDP

“Those who are *good enough* don’t need God.” - JDP

And sadly, we live in a self-professing, “good-enough” culture... most of whom will eventually meet with the wrath of God. For, remember what the Holman Bible Dictionary taught us last week about God’s Righteousness:

“God’s Righteousness is what He does to fulfill His promises.”

and

“Salvation & Condemnation are two sides of the coin of God’s Righteousness.”

The Psalms:

Psalm 2:12: *“Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled.”*

Psalm 78:49-51: *He unleashed against them his hot anger, his wrath, indignation and hostility— a band of destroying angels. He prepared a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death but gave them over to the plague. He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt...*

Psalm 90:7-9 (Moses speaking of God’s people)
We are consumed by Your anger and terrified by Your indignation. You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence. All our days pass away under Your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.

The Prophets:

Isaiah 9:19: *“By the fury of the Lord of hosts the land is burned up, and the people are like fuel for the fire.”*

Jeremiah 7:20: *“Thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, My anger and My wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and on beast and on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground; & it will burn & not be quenched.’”*

Ezekiel 7:19: *“...their silver and their gold (would) not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord. They cannot satisfy their appetite, nor can they fill their stomachs for their iniquity has become an occasion of stumbling.”*

*** There is perhaps no greater demonstration of my “Mr. Potato-Head God” theory... than when it comes to God and His wrath. For...

“You can no more claim to represent the God of the Bible when you proclaim a *wrath-less Lord*, than if you professed a *love-less Savior*.” - JDP

The Bible is replete with countless demonstrations of God’s Righteous Wrath...

Old Testament:

Noah & the Flood

Tower of Babel

Sodom & Gomorrah

Egypt’s plagues & army in the Red Sea

Numbers 12:1-10 = Moses’ sister Miriam cursed with leprosy...

New Testament:

**Jesus on the cross!!!
CHRIST CRUCIFIED!!!**

***Note: the same God of John 3:16 is in John 3:36...

John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

John 3:36: *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

Past/Present:

Romans 9:22: *What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?*

Future/End-Times:

1 Corinthians 16:22: *“If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed...”*

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8: *“..the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”*

Colossians 3:5-6: *“...consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience...”*

Ephesians 5:6: *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*

Quote per John MacArthur:

“God’s righteous judgment against sin is proclaimed before His gracious forgiveness of sin is offered. (Because) A person has no reason to seek salvation from sin if he does not know that he is condemned by it. He has no reason to want spiritual life unless he realizes he is spiritually dead.”

Perhaps most importantly of all... in light of our fallen, sinful nature, we must come to grips with the reality... whether we like it or not... that we are all sinners, deserving of God’s wrath. EVERY ONE of us!

Eph. 2:1-5: *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. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*

Romans 3:23: *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

Six Characteristics of God's Wrath (v.18)

1. Its Righteous Reality (v.18a = "The wrath")

God's Word speaks of it... therefore it is REAL

God's Word defines it... therefore it is REAL

God's Word demonstrates it... therefore it is REAL

God's Word attributes it to God... therefore it is RIGHTEOUS

2. Its Quality (v.18b = "of God")

It is "DIVINE" in "QUALITY"... as it is "OF GOD"

Divine wrath is nothing like man's sin-stained wrath...

"God's wrath... is His righteous-response... to man's rejection... of God's righteous-ness." - JDP

Sin-filled human wrath is not allowed biblically...

Psalm 37:8: *Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.*

Ephesians 4:26: *"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,*

James 1:19-20: *Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.*

"Human wrath" = *burst* (emotional, momentary, uncontrolled anger)

“God’s wrath” = *cursed* (“righteous, measured, determined indignation”)

God’s anger is the only righteous response to evil...

“God could not be holy and not be angry with evil. Holiness cannot tolerate unholiness.” - John MacArthur

Habakkuk 1:13: *Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they?*

Two times Jesus demonstrated His righteous anger as He cleared out the temple court....

Read: John 2:14-16 & Matthew 21:12-13

John 2:14-16: *“In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!”*

Matthew 21:12-13: *“Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer,’but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.”*

“There can be no surer or sadder token of an utterly fallen moral condition... than not being able to be angry with sin & sinners.”

- Richard Trench

3. Its Timing

(v.18c = "is revealed")

The timing of God's wrath is tied to the fact that God intentionally reveals it

When you realize that nothing happens "by chance" with God... then one realizes that whatever is "revealed" is done so on purpose... which also means that the timing of God's wrath is 100% under God's control.

NOTHING is EVER out of God's control, purpose, or timing.

God's wrath was first revealed in the Garden of Eden... when after Adam & Eve trusted the serpent's lie over God's promise... He IMMEDIATELY pronounced the sentence of death upon them and ALL of their descendants (that includes us).

"God is no idle spectator of world events; He is dynamically active in human affairs. The conviction of sin is constantly punctuated by Divine judgment." - Geoffrey Wilson

Ahhhh.... some say,

"but what about the times when God seems to hold back His wrath from those who more than deserve it?"

Answer: First... that is called mercy...

Second... NO ONE is getting over on God!

Read **Romans 2:5**... Sin stores up wrath the same way a Tsunami stores up water...

It may go unnoticed while it is moving toward the shore... but don't let its seemingly invisible force throw you...

As we have all seen... when it hits and unloads its force, what was only seconds earlier, invisible to the naked eye, can unleash an indescribable, unforgettable force of wrath & wreckage.

Donald Barnhouse preaching illustration:

A mid-western farmer plowed his fields right next to a small country church predominately filled with local, Christian farmers. He later admitted to intentionally disrupting their services with his productivity. This came out through his "letter to the editor" of their little community news paper. In his letter the man wrote: "although I don't respect the Lord or His designated day, I have the highest per acre yield of any farm in the county." He went on to publicly ask the Editor: "How do the Christians explain that?"

The Editor responded with tremendous restraint, insight, and wisdom...

"God doesn't settle all of His accounts in October."

4. Its Source

(v.18d "from heaven")

"Heaven reveals God's wrath in two ways. First, through His moral order, and second, through His personal intervention. When God made the world He built in certain moral as well as physical laws that have since governed its operation. Just as a person falls to the ground when he jumps from a high building, so does he fall into God's judgment when he deviate from God's moral law. That is built-in wrath. When a person sins, there is a built-in consequence that inexorably works. In this case, God is not personally intervening, but is letting the law of moral cause and effect work."

- John MacArthur

Make no mistake... whether God's wrath is demonstrated through His "design" or His "discipline," its architecture, actions, & affects are ALL ordered & ordained by God in heaven. - JDP

God's wrath & God's will cannot be divided. - JDP

Read the book/account of Job.

Read chapter 16 of the book of Numbers

Read Ananias & Sapphira's account in Acts 5:1-11

5. **Its Extent** (v.18e “against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men”)

“Ungodliness = anti-God in action” - JDP

God's wrath is for the wretched...

...and you & I (as well as the rest of humanity)... are the wretched.

Romans 3:23 = *“For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

“Ungodliness = anti-God in action” - JDP

Don't confuse “goodness” & “godliness.” - JDP

“Good deeds” do not guarantee God seeds.” - JDP

Moreover, no amount of religious activity or knowledge can take the place of grace & godliness.

Before you write that statement off as “churchy-common-sense,” ask yourself this question:

“Do I see myself as more deserving of God's grace, or more worthy (now that I've cleaned up my act), than ANYONE else on the planet?”

If so, be advised... that's ungodly, self-elevating behavior.

“Ungodliness refers to a lack of reverence for, devotion to, and worship of the One true God... which eventually leads to some form of false worship.” - John MacArthur

Listen to God's perspective on the relationship between ungodliness and His wrath:

Jude 14-15: *It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*

Ungodly rationalizations always give rise to unrighteousness...

Ungodliness leads to unrighteousness!

Unrighteousness = anti-right actions toward God, His standards, & the promises (if any) made to Him.

Unrighteousness is revealed in one's relationships as a result of ungodliness.

When you are not right with God, you are not right with any one or any thing - period!

See the relationship... Anti-God (ungodliness), results in Anti-Right (unrighteousness), living.

“Your heart relationship to humanity will be directly parallel to your heart relationship with God.” - JDP

Ephesians 2:3: *“Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature **children of wrath...**”*

6. **Its Cause** (v.18f = “who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,”)

*** We will pick up and unpack the “cause & reason” for God’s wrath next week...

*** But for now... Hear God’s Word:

God doesn’t sweep ANYTHING under the rug... and you’ll NEVER get ANYTHING over on Him!

God’s wrath comes because His Truth is being (and has been) suppressed in the midst of unrighteousness.

“When lies meet the Truth... they’re always in trouble!” – JDP

“Unrighteousness always has a righteous price to pay!” – JDP

CLOSING:

Today... We learned that THE WRATH OF GOD IS RIGHTEOUS & REAL...

Now... with ALL THE LOVE IN MY HEART...

HEAR THE HEART OF THE LORD...

**“Grace, Mercy, & Wrath are the Righteous coins of Christ’s
‘currency’ and EVERYONE will have to settle their sin debt with Him
One-Way... or the other.” - JDP**

Another reason God’s wrath is righteous...
it always follows...
the rejection of repentance & redemption...

Just because the wrath of God is real... It doesn’t have to be your eternal reality!

While Wrath *is* for Wretches... but... Praise God...

so is His AMAZING GRACE!

Let’s sing from the heart... **Amazing Grace...**
(House of the Rising Son)