

**Sermon Title: Gripped by the Wrath of God**

**Sermon Text: Romans 1:18-23**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to study, understand, and practice the wrath of God in their lives.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 4 vital aspects of God's wrath.**

**Introduction:** Any discussion or teaching of God's character that does not include His characteristic called wrath is an incomplete study. Even more important it may be an errant study of God, because one of the very real, inescapable truths about our great God is that He is a God of wrath. The Bible has more to say about God's wrath than it does about His love.

“Definition of the wrath of God: The wrath of God is His necessary, just, and righteous retribution against sin.”

God's wrath against sin arises by necessity out of His nature. Because of the justice of His law and the righteousness of His character, God must judge sin. “He takes no pleasure in punishing the unrighteous.”

*(Ezekiel 33:11 "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?')*, but He will, because He is a God of wrath.

**Psalm 18:8** Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it.

**Exodus 34:7** "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

**Deuteronomy 32:41** If I whet My glittering sword, And My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, And repay those who hate Me.

**1 Peter 1:17** And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear;

The Greek words for wrath indicate God's intense displeasure of sin and His judgment against it. God does not throw temper tantrums. He doesn't pitch fits, He doesn't lose His temper (out of control), but He has intense anger against sin. In fact, God takes torrid displeasure at sin: big sin, little sin, medium sin. He doesn't make a distinction between white and black lies, between felonies and misdemeanors. Because He is a holy, just, righteous God, all sin is repulsive to Him.

One of the great tragedies of modern Christianity, including much of evangelicalism, is the failure to preach and teach the wrath of God and the condemnation it brings upon all with unforgiven sin. The truncated, sentimental gospel that is frequently presented today falls far short of the gospel that Jesus and the apostle Paul proclaimed. – John MacArthur, Commentary on Romans 1-8, pp. 60

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

## **I. God's wrath is one of His attributes. V.18**

A. God's severity is a reflection of His wrath.

**Romans 11:22a** Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity;

(Severity is the Greek word that means “to be cut off.”)

The Puritan writer Thomas Watson said, “Is God so infinitely Holy? Then see how unlike to God sin is . . . No wonder, therefore, that God hates sin, being so unlike Him, nay, so contrary to Him; it strikes, at His Holiness.” – John MacArthur, Commentary on Romans 1-8, pp. 62

B. God's goodness is a reflection of His wrath. (**Nahum 1:2-6**)

**Romans 11:22b** but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

“God's goodness contains not only the positive things He does, but His negative reaction to evil.” God's other characteristics keep His wrath in perfect balance.

**Psalm 45:7** You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

## II. God's wrath reveals His righteousness. V.18-19

- A. God's wrath is revealed against all ungodliness of men.  
Ungodliness-(Asebia)- refers to lack of reverence for, devotion to God.
- B. God's wrath is revealed against all unrighteousness of men.
  - 1. Adam and Eve's suppressing of truth. **(Gen. 3)**
  - 2. The days of Noah-whole world suppressed the truth. **(Gen. 6)**
  - 3. The tower of Babel. **(Gen. 11)**
  - 4. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
  - 5. Pharaoh and Egypt suppressed the truth.
  - 6. Korah rebelled against Moses, suppressed the truth. **(Num.)**
  - 7. Jesus died because mankind suppressed the truth.

**Psalm 7:11** God is a just judge, And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

Unrighteousness-(akikia)- the idea of ungodliness, but focuses on result.

## III. God's wrath displays His displeasure. V.19-20

- A. God is displeased that man rejects His revelation inside man. V.19
  - B. God is displeased that man rejects His revelation outside man. V.20
    - 1. The 1<sup>st</sup> result of this rejection is futile speculators. V.21a
    - 2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> result of this rejection is darker hearts. V.21b
    - 3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> result of this rejection is foolishness. V.22
    - 4. The 4<sup>th</sup> result of this rejection is idolatry. V.23
    - 5. The 5<sup>th</sup> result of this rejection is rejection. V.24, 26, 28
- "Rather than glorifying God as the great God He is, people have elevated everything but God to His place."

### 3 Conclusions:

- 1. "To reject any attribute of God, is to reject God."
- 2. "In the righteous revelation of His wrath, He withdraws His restraint against sin and its consequence, and evil begins to spread.
- 3. God's wrath against ungodliness and unrighteousness is a part of His perfect nature and goodness.

## IV. God's wrath displays His justice in eternity. **(Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 20:10-15; Ezekiel 3:15-19)**

**Psalm 7:12** If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready.

**Romans 2:5** But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

**Matthew 3:7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

"A tombstone in an old cemetery reads this way:

Pause stranger when you pass me by  
As you are now, so once was I.  
As I am now, so you will be  
So prepare for death and follow me.

Someone came by one day and read the inscription, then picked up some chalk and wrote underneath it;

To follow you, I am not content  
Until I know which way you went."

-Our God is Awesome, Encountering the Greatness of Our God, Tony Evans, pp.245