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THE WRATH OF GOD

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For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. (Romans 1:18)

For some time I have felt led to share about the wrath of God for a very simple reason – the gospel is so diluted and grace is so abused that people are not aware of the reality of God's wrath against sin. The result is a dangerous dissipation evident in the world and in believers that neglectfully flows toward the destruction of their lives. Many of them experience various difficulties, not understanding that the source is a continuous casual attitude toward dissipation, iniquity, and unrighteousness.

1. WE ARE UNDENIABLY SAVED BY THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, YET THIS DOES NOT NULLIFY THE OTHER UNDENIABLE TRUTH THAT GOD'S WRATH EXISTS.

Shortly before his statement about God's wrath, the Apostle Paul said that the righteousness of God is manifest in the gospel from "from faith to

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faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:17b) This is an irrefutable truth. We therefore conclude that we are saved by God’s grace, and not our own good deeds; however, it is interesting to read that Paul, in Romans, quotes Habakkuk 2:4, which in its entirety reads: “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.”

Once again I would like to emphasize that we are justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but this does not diminish the following fact: if after repentance and conversion we continue to live in unrighteousness and ungodliness, grace will not always prevent consequences of wrong choices. Furthermore, I believe that a very dangerous and devilish theology has been absorbed in the church, a theology that abuses grace to a degree that people think that after conversion, regardless of how they

✦ I believe that a very dangerous and devilish theology has been absorbed in the church, a theology that abuses grace to a degree that people think that after conversion, regardless of how they live and what they have done, they will not bear any kind of consequences in this world or experience damage to their soul.

live and what they have done, they will not bear any kind of consequences in this world or experience damage to their soul. This is precisely why the Apostle Paul went on to say to the believers who had been converted, together with the pagans and Jews, that despite their faith the wrath of God will be manifest on all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man and on those who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18b)

The Greek word that Paul used for “ungodliness” (or the ungodly) is asebia. The word instructs us in regards to the neglect and violation of our duty to God, our fellow man, and our selves. For “unrighteousness” he used the Greek word adikia. This word indicates the act of something that ought not to be done, in respect to wrongdoing or evil. When we put this in the context of the entire chapter it becomes clear to us that Paul said that regardless of our confession of faith, if we willingly neglect and violate our duty before God, our fellow man, and ourselves; if we do that which we know is wrong, there will be specific consequences. One of them is the wrath of God. Speaking about pagans, Paul indicated to us a clear principle that applies to us today: “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify [Him] as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Confessing to be wise, they became fools.” (Romans 1:21-22)

I believe that there are those believers that, while they know God and experience great things with Him, somewhere in their walk with God

they became deceived and neglected their duty to God and their fellow man. They no longer give Him proper praise nor are they thankful; and therefore bring on themselves God's wrath and their spirits grow empty. They profess themselves to be wise, Paul says, but their lifestyle denies this very fact. I have asked myself how it is possible for one who is called by His name, in certain areas of their life, to behave worse than the world. I have concluded that there are those whose upbringing had too much influence, yet the greater majority has taken the gospel lightly, without the will and desire for change. These often call for grace without a will for the true change that God's grace brings.

The time has come for us to examine ourselves, stop deceiving ourselves with empty words, stop abusing God's grace and love, and begin viewing properly the picture of God and His righteousness in its entirety. When the Apostle Paul encouraged the believers in Ephesus to follow God, he did not say it was enough to believe in God, rather he warned them that there existed those who would deceive by preaching a gospel that is not based on God's righteousness and holiness.

Unfortunately, apart from the true gospel, a diluted gospel that leads people to failure is being preached. It contains elements of faith and grace but in a wrong context. We see the words of the Apostle Paul instructing the Ephesians. In addition to providing them concrete information about how to follow God, he also spoke about the consequences of a false gospel. "But fornication

and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Then he continues on saying, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them." (Ephesians 5:3-7)

Because of these empty, devilish words of those that speak lies to God's people today, the church bears serious and disastrous consequences. She has bowed the knee. Membership has become more important than conversion. When someone comes to church, in an effort to maintain them, the church will do all it can to ease the Christian life, often silently allowing injustice and ungodliness by preaching a watered-down gospel that sounds very wise and intellectual, but void of true power for change. Paul told us not to have anything to do with these, because the salvation of our souls is a very serious thing!

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2. THE WRATH OF GOD IS MANIFEST ON EARTH, AND IS BEING STORED UP FOR THE FUTURE “DAY OF WRATH”.

Pastors or even believers at times dare to speak of the judgment day, in regards to the day of wrath, but most often it is referred to as something that is coming in the future. It is rarely spoken of as something that can be manifest on the earth. The reason for this is two-fold. Some do not speak of it because they do not want to create an uncomfortable position, because they do not understand the simple principle of God’s righteousness and the proximate causes that come through His righteousness. It is interesting that we can easily understand the principles of investing and receiving, or sowing and reaping, in the business realm but when faced with God we water it down, hyper-spiritualize it, or we

★ It is interesting that we can easily understand the principles of investing and receiving, or sowing and reaping, in the business realm but when faced with God we water it down, hyper-spiritualize it, or we convince ourselves that these situations do not apply to God or that he overlooks these things in the name of love and grace.

convince ourselves that these situations do not apply to God or that he overlooks these things in the name of love and grace. All of this is true in part. It is true that after true confession and change He accepts us once again, but He does not allow room for unrighteousness and ungodliness. Many times I have heard believers justify their unrighteousness and ungodliness by saying that man is not perfect. To be sure, man is not perfect, but it is foolish to justify obvious sin and unrighteousness due to this fact; and yet continue to seek God’s blessings.

The fact is that people, despite knowledge of God, continue living in unrighteousness and ungodliness and will experience God’s anger even in their earthly life. Unfortunately, God, through the lust of their hearts, gives them over to various impurities, shameful passions, and corrupt ideas. The result can be destructive. Let us look at some of Paul’s portrayal of these people. “Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” (Romans 1:24-25)

These kind of people that say they believe, and yet live unrighteous and ungodly lives, can be given over by God to various sexual impurities. Many will bow to every creation, but place God on the back burner; meaning that all we desire to accomplish, aspire to, and yearn for, and that is placed ahead of God, is idolatry and God’s

anger will come because of it. These are slaves to sexual immorality and perversion. Therefore, it is not odd that there is so much immorality and divorce among believers. One of the many reasons is, I believe, because God does not occupy first place in their lives.

There are churches today that justify homosexuality, simply calling it a life-style; Christian counselors that counsel believers to view pornography to assist in their intimate relationships; pastors who recommend to other believers films filled with violence, witchcraft, and immorality, after which they have “home group” meetings to discuss the films as a supposed means of evangelism. Yet, we are living in the final and dangerous times and ought not to take God and His righteousness lightly, because He will pour out on us his anger and give us over to shameful lusts and uncleanness. “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.” (Romans 1:26-27)

In other words, various illnesses due to promiscuity are the just wages of God’s wrath which is manifest on the earth. There is no grace “vaccine” for these just wages, other than true conversion, repentance, and acceptance of the truth in love.

In addition to this, God may give these over to corrupt thinking to do that which is not natural. The manifestation is, according to Paul, the following: “...being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; [they are] whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.” (Romans 1:29-32)

This means, if these things are manifest among God’s people and if we approve them or conceal them in the name of love, acceptance, diversity, and grace how can we, then, say that we are

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saved and going to heaven? I believe that Satan has deceitfully crippled the church with this kind of wrong theology that says that regardless of how people live after conversion they will enter the kingdom of Heaven. Sin is no longer called sin, rather “imperfection”; standards are no longer important; iniquity, unrighteousness, and uncleanness are acceptable because of membership or giftings. The bottom line is that rather than calling this a manifestation of God’s wrath, the church justifies it or simply ignores it, leading souls to a deadly deception.

In addition to these manifestations, I believe that there exist many others about which the Apostle Paul spoke, which are, among other things, trials and tribulations. While tribulations can be, in part, our destiny as Christians, and it is normal in this world to experience rejection, pressure, and problems, I believe that some trials and tribulations come because of our disobedience to the Lord. Paul said in the second chapter of Romans, “...but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.” (Romans 2:8-9)

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The Greek word Paul used for “tribulation” is *thlipsis*, which means to be broken or seriously pressed down, and the Greek word for anguish *stenochoria*, meaning to be placed in a narrow place or to be pressed from all sides. In other words, Paul says that certain tribulations and trials are not necessarily from evil spirits, rather from God because of our aberrance to evil and evil things. Paul says that God is not partial, whether we are believers or not. Sometimes we as believers think that He is partial to us because we know Christ, which is why we have His grace and goodness that “covers sin”; and actually because of this faulty idea we sometimes continue living in sin, abusing His goodness, not knowing that we bring His wrath upon us.

3. GOD’S GRACE, GOODNESS, AND PATIENCE DO NOT COVER OUR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND INIQUITY, RATHER LEAD US TOWARD CHANGE (CONVERSION).

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4)

Therefore, despite the truth we have heard, we ought not to allow our thoughts to be focused on other people, by comparing ourselves with them; rather we must first apply these things to ourselves. The reason being that we often make the mistake of quickly judging people while at the same time fail to judge ourselves. Often this imprudence is also a fear of being discovered, and because of this we in fact judge others. This was

actually the problem among Roman Christian Jews who, because of many things, accused Christians of pagan ancestry while they refused to judge themselves at all, which was hypocrisy. This is why Paul clearly said, "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?" (Romans 2:1-3)

Let's not take on a self-righteous attitude and suppose that these things apply to others, rather we need to look at ourselves. This is what Paul wanted to emphasize, which I personally consider to be very important; we ought not to read this verse others in mind, rather with our own selves in mind. So, the question remains, what will we do about God's anger and unrighteous living? What will we do about His goodness and faithfulness? What will we do now that we are aware of what we are doing, that God's wrath is upon us? Shall we continue relying on his grace and love that "covers a multitude of sins" or decide to change? In this area we ought to break before God and be sincere because eternity and our soul are in question.

God's goodness, grace, and patience are not given to us so we can conceal ourselves in unrighteousness and iniquity, thinking that

because of salvation we are protected from any kind of influence. The Word warns us of the coming judgment, from which we cannot escape. It may seem, through human eyes, as if we have escaped some difficulties here on earth, but it is certain that no one will escape the judgment that is coming. Therefore, let us concentrate on ourselves and not on others. Let us not harden our hearts and not amass the wrath for, "in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds" (Romans 2:5b-6)

Paul implored the Romans not to be hard-hearted or stubborn (the Greek word for hard-hearted is sklerotes and means a dry, hard, corrupt heart), not to have an unrepentant heart (the Greek word for unrepentant is ametanoetos, which means to repent, to change one's way of thinking, an unrepentant heart or a heart that remains the same); to not abuse God's goodness rather receive it and cry out to Him for change. This actually activates

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His goodness, grace, and patience; which lead us back to Him, His righteousness, and His holiness; closer to Him, and not the things of this world. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel; and we should not be ashamed of it either, because it will not justify our iniquity and cover our sinful, unchanged condition. It will bring powerful change in us; we will no longer justify our sin, unrighteousness, iniquity and works of the flesh, rather we will turn from them in the power of the true gospel.

This is why Paul could say that he truly was not ashamed of the true gospel. Many today are ashamed of a false gospel because they have not experienced true freedom and forgiveness. Many continue to live in sin and iniquity, which is why they are ashamed because they have not experienced it as they should. For Paul that for those who have truly repented, the gospel is freeing and real. For him the gospel was more than just raising his hand and responding to a call for prayer – or, being accepted in church membership; rather it was “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek For in it the

righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)

I believe that when we do that we will be truly free from difficult and troublesome conditions. We will be witnesses that our lives have been transformed. If in doing good we seek glory, fame, and immortality, then we will gain eternal life, says the Apostle Paul, “...but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness-indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” (Romans 2:6-11)

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