

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Richard Cimino
Sunday Morning
March 1, 2009

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Rescued From Wrath

We are going to spend one more Sunday looking at the last words of Chapter 1 - words that are extra wonderful for a Communion Sunday

REMEMBER:

Paul ends each chapter with a reference to the return of Jesus.

1 Thes. 1:9-10

9...how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

CHRISTIANITY has in large part come to be viewed, both from without and within, as a subculture, a collection of men and women with similar moral values; and a general belief in God and Jesus

And Paul does remind these men and women that they are indeed a collection of men and women, the ecclesia. But he wants them to know that there is nothing VAGUE or UNCLEAR as to the GREAT and GLORIOUS NATURE of their assembling together.*

1 Thessalonians 1:10

10and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

They were a collection of men and women who had been RESCUED! Think of the men and women in a lifeboat when the Titanic sunk.

They were not merely a collection of men and women with similar values. They were together in that boat because they had been RESCUED from a horrible death on a sinking boat in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic. JESUS had RESCUED this collection of men and women from wrath! Now, as an assembly of believers, they were waiting for Jesus who had rescued them!

KEY INSIGHT:

The emphasis of the word delivered is upon the seriousness of the situation from which they were delivered.

The scriptures are clear about God's wrath:



- the PURPOSE of it
- the ETERNITY of it
- the FINALITY of it

I pray that the Holy Spirit will:

- Enable us to understand the GREATNESS of that wrath.
- Stir our hearts and awaken our hearts to the fact that a Christian is someone who has been RESCUED -- DELIVERED FROM from His WRATH!
- Enable us to understand the GREATNESS of our DELIVERANCE
- Above all help us to understand the GREATNESS of our DELIVERER!

I. The PURPOSE and NATURE of God's Wrath

Romans 1:18

18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 12:19

19Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

VERY IMPORTANT OBSERVATION:

Paul is telling us that this thing called wrath is connected with God's response to something that deserves vengeance. And then tells us that God has said - "I will repay."

CRUCIAL POINT:

God's wrath is a repayment to man for something man has done.

From this verse alone, we can define the wrath of God as, God's settled anger toward sin, expressed in the repayment of suitable vengeance on the guilty sinner.

SO there we have What it IS (God's settled anger toward sin) and what it DOES (the repayment of suitable vengeance on the guilty sinner).

It is interesting to hear how many people, church-goers included, that are very uncomfortable with the thought of God ever being angry.

First of all -- because the only anger they are familiar with is an unholy anger coming from fallen, sinful, unholy humans.

But we must note that they commit the common and tragic error of interpreting the Bible and building a theology out of human wisdom and emotion.

DID YOU KNOW THAT the words wrath and anger (orge and thumos) are used over a hundred times in the Bible side by side?

Psalm 6:1

10 Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.

Psalm 90:7

7 We are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed.

Hosea 13:11

11 I gave you a king in my anger, and I took him away in my wrath.

Romans 2:8

8 For those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury [anger].

QUOTE: A.T. Robertson -

"God's anger (thumos) is his vehement fury or boiling rage. His wrath (orge) is his settled indignation or his settled anger."

In other words, in God's anger the emphasis falls on the emotional, boiling intensity of it. And in God's wrath the emphasis falls on the controlled, settled, considered direction and focus of its application. But we dare not draw a hard line between them. God's anger is never out of the control of his wisdom and righteousness, and his wrath is never cool or indifferent, but is always a wisely directed fury. The wrath of God is never less than a perfect judicial decree, but is always more than a perfect judicial decree because it is always full of right and fitting fury.

II. The ETERNITY and FINALITY of God's wrath

In Daniel 12:2 God promises that the day is coming when:

2 many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Jesus spoke of the eternity of God's wrath in numerous ways:

Mark 9:43-48

43 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than

with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 48 where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Some manuscripts add verses 44 and 46 (which are identical with verse 48)

TWICE Jesus refers to the fires of hell as “unquenchable” they will never go out. THIS IS HUGE - God incarnate is speaking in terms that are unmistakably clear In fact they are terrible in their clarity. He says - IF you go there - there will be no relief for ever and ever.

On another occasion:

Mark 3:29

29Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.

This is a STAGGERING statement.

PLEASE NOTE AGAIN

There is nothing veiled, nothing ambiguous in the words of Jesus on this matter of eternal consequence. The concept of Eternity is beyond us - The concept of experiencing the wrath of God for eternity is even more beyond us - He wants none to be misguided, so He speaks with a clarity that is INESCAPABLE. One must work very hard to BLUR the meaning of these words

1.) One must IGNORE the source of the words

John 1:14

14The word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld...

2 Peter 1:16

16We did not deliver to you cunningly devised fables...but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty

2.) One must DELIBERATELY cast their obvious meaning aside and then SUBSTITUTE one’s own opinion for the words of God, Incarnate!

THAT is exactly what is happening within “Christian” circles today. Substituting human opinion for Divine Truth. Which is one of the very reasons God is revealing His wrath.

Romans 1:18

18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

EXAMPLE:

Brian McLaren - Tries to explain away the Biblical doctrine of hell by way of a story of a fictional pastor and his daughters struggles concerning the doctrine of hell.

The daughter's crisis of faith 'If Christianity Is True, People I Love Will Burn in Hell'

Pastor dad says that his daughter wanted to know how did I deal with the fact that even one person could be tortured for an infinity of time for a finite number of sins?

Pastor dad said - I again put on my parental face, and this time I told her how a finite being's offense against an infinite God is an infinite offense, which she didn't buy and I didn't push because I myself couldn't imagine a biblical writer using that kind of argument.

Wow - Jesus just stated it – without any attempt to argue the point! But pastor dad has just thrown aside the words of God incarnate because pastor dad can't imagine it to be so

Then I told her about "conditionalism," the idea that hell is temporary and leads to extinction rather than eternal torment, another minority opinion in Christian theology regarding hell, which helped her a bit more, but only until the next morning.

He gives to his daughter a minority opinion

God's is not the author of "conditionalism."

CRUCIAL:

In [Mark 3:29](#) Jesus rules out any idea of there being a hell that is anything less than eternal in nature.

Jesus said -

29that there is a sin for which there will never be forgiveness.

Jesus said -

There are people who will never be saved. They are eternally lost.

[Matthew 25:41, and 46](#) - in speaking of the judgment takes place on earth immediately after the Battle of Armageddon, Jesus says in verse 41

41Then [the king] will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

And to make crystal clear that eternal means everlasting he says again in verse 46

46, These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

CRUCIAL POINT:

The punishment is eternal in the same way that the life is eternal. BOTH mean never-ending, Everlasting. Imagine if the life promised to us in Jesus was NOT FOREVER.

HERE'S THE POINT:

The description of the expression of God's wrath being ETERNAL and FINAL is an truly an incomprehensible

thought on the human level.

BUT - Despite that, Jesus did not try to mute or diminish the Certainty, the Finality, or the Severity of the wrath of God.

III. Jesus DELIVERS US from the wrath to come.

The Bible not only teaches us about God's settled anger toward sin, expressed in the repayment of suitable vengeance on the guilty sinner. The Bible, from cover to cover, affirms the fact that:

2 Peter 3:9

9God is NOT willing that ANY man or woman should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

John 3:17

17For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

The presence and power of God through the lives of Paul and his team resulted in these men and women in Thessalonica WAITING for Jesus, knowing that Jesus had RESCUED them from the wrath that IS coming!

Today there are those who try to say that Jesus never made clear the difference between heaven and hell and those who are delivered from the wrath to come and those who are not

AGAIN - McLaren from "The Last Word and the Word after That"

The daughter - "If Christianity is true, then all the people I love except for a few will burn in hell forever. But if Christianity is not true, then life doesn't seem to have much meaning or hope. I wish I could find a better option. How do you deal with this?"

Pastor Dad - My daughter's question stabbed me more painfully than I can adequately explain. She had found the Achilles' heel, so to speak, of my own theology, and with that one simple question, I felt something snap in me. No, it didn't snap: it softened, like a floor joist weakened by termites or dry rot. It sagged and crumbled and broke in stages over the days and weeks to come. I had generally avoided the subject of hell in my preaching over the years, touching on it only when necessary and even then doing so as gently as possible.

Whenever anyone asked me about hell, I'd give my best, most orthodox answer, but I'd secretly think, "I'll bet they won't buy it." If they did, I was surprised, because if I were on their side of the table, investigating orthodoxy from the outside instead of defending it from within, my answers would not have sufficed. (get a job!)

Pastor dad's response - I tried to help Jess that Saturday afternoon by telling her about "inclusivism," an alternative to the "exclusivist" view she was unhappy with. While exclusivism limited eternal life in heaven to bona fide, confessing Christians, inclusivism kept the door open that others could be saved through Christ even if they never identified as Christians.

First of all, what the heck is a - "never identified as Christian?"

The Bible talks about CONFESSING that Jesus Christ is the Lord!

I'm pretty sure it's a reference to the person of another "faith community" who would never admit to being a follower of Jesus but doesn't lose his temper as fast as one of the ushers at church. The nice Buddhist or Hindu that gives the peace sign when he's cut off on the freeway instead of the half peace sign.

SECONDLY - and most important - The intellectually honest person would see that true exclusivism would be described as NO INVITATION EXTENDED, Go away, God didn't invite YOU, because God doesn't want YOU in here.

PROBLEM

GOD HAS BEEN INVITING MAN since Genesis 3!

There are those who say that the Gospel message is filled with HATE. It is anything but that! It is the GREATEST LOVE MESSAGE in the universe. God has not merely been INVITING man since Genesis 3, He has been CHASING man, Even those who weren't looking.

EXAMPLE:

He appeared to Abram in the Ur of the Chaldees, uninvited, He goes to a single man and calls him out of idolatry so that He could make a nation from him through who the savior of the world would come.

Romans 10:20-21

20Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." 21But of Israel he says All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.

Luke 14:21-24

21...'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' 22And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' 23And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. 24For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'

If THAT were not enough, He Even calls himself Emmanuel, which means God with us.

John 1:14

In the beginning was the Word and the Word WAS God - and the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us and we beheld His glory as of the Only begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth.

How UNWILLING is God that you NOT have to endure that WRATH?

So UNWILLING that He sent His son to die in our place.

Paul is completely clear that Christ has come to RESCUE US and INVITE everyone who will listen so that they might BE RESCUED!

2 Cor. 5:18-21

18All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

ANYONE who wants to steal away that truth doesn't understand TWO very simple things

1. The FINALITY and SEVERITY of God's wrath
2. The COMPLETENESS of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

They don't understand the CUP that He took to Himself.

They don't understand that Jesus cried out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me" BECAUSE God poured out on Jesus the WRATH that we deserved, that Jesus hung there as our SUBSTITUTE. We WILL NOT experience the WRATH OF GOD that will be poured out upon fallen angels and Christ-rejecting humans

Because we have been RESCUED from the wrath to come.

We have an incredible HOPE and DESTINATION to look forward to, and I can't wait.

If we don't give to the Church the Blessed Hope, we are robbing it of a crucial facet of what should be happening in our lives as believers

It is a purifying hope in this hopeless world!

IF we really believe what the Bible says about the REALITY of, CERTAINTY of, ETERNITY of God's wrath we should:

1. We should forever adore and exalt Jesus because He delivers us from the wrath to come.
2. We should be broken over the certain end for the lost around us - without Jesus they are ETERNALLY LOST, facing the wrath of God.
3. We should be longing for and laboring for them to come to faith in the One who alone can deliver them from the wrath to come – and allow them to join the redeemed in exalting Him.

Copyrights:

- The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®
Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles,
a division of Good News Publishers
All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked "NKJV™" are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

