

Title: God Is Angry

Text: Romans 1:18-23

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Theme: Romans

Do you ever get angry?

It angers me to be driving down the road with my cruise control on and somebody speeds up and passes me, gets in front of me, and then slows up. Does that kind of stuff bother any of you?

It angers me when I try to put something together, following the instructions, and I do it wrong. I like to win, I like to get it right and I do not like to fail. Does that bother you too?

Most of the things we get angry about really aren't that important to life. Tomorrow, or the next day, I probably won't even remember what I was angry about today.

But there are some things that should make us angry. You may claim righteous indignation, but I will lump it in a category with anger. We should get angry at hunger. It's wrong that people around the world are starving and we fill our plates at the buffet so high that we cannot even finish what is on our plate.

We should get angry at the public displays of nudity and immorality that the media seeks to push on us as normal.

We should get angry when politicians seek to manipulate us into accepting positions that clearly contradict the laws of God.

What about our God? Does He get angry? What is his perspective of the world?

Romans 1:18

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

I. God is angry with wicked people who seek to cover up the truth by their wickedness.

* Norman Vincent Peale was an encourager. He wanted his listeners to discover the potential that could be found in Christ.

I remember a story that he told about his youth. He was with his friends in an alley where they discovered a cigar butt that still had some length to it. Boys being boys they decided to light it up and do some secret smoking. Just about the time that Norman was about to take a big puff, who should walk around the corner but his dad.

Quickly, Norman holding the cigar in his hand put it into his pocket, still lit.

As his dad approached down the alley, Norman quickly looked around for something to say. Seeing a poster about a coming circus he remarked, "Hey Dad, can we go to the circus?"

Norman's dad looked him in the eye and said, "Son, never ask for a gift while holding a smoldering disobedience!"

- A. People do try to sneak their sins past God.
 - a. They want to believe that he is too nice or polite to say anything.
 - b. Their sins are not as bad as the next guy.
 - c. Maybe God is so busy that he won't notice.
 - d. But God does know.

- B. And wickedness does make Him angry.

Ephes. 5:6

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

Col. 3:6

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

* The dictionary defines wrath as violent anger or rage. At the very least it is a divine chastisement, a punishment for an offense or a crime.

My Bible tells me that this is not a wrath that flows from an unpredictable mythical god, with whom Paul's audience would have been familiar. Wrath is God's response to the corruption and distortion of his good creation because of sin.

Paul is revealing to us why the revelation of God's righteousness is necessary.

II. God is not keeping this a secret.

- A. It has been God's intent from the beginning to make known His desire for us.

Romans 1:19-23

¹⁹since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

* A DVD that we have watched several times is called "National Treasure." The story is about a family, who for decades, have been searching for a lost Masonic treasure.

Like any good story, there are good guys and bad guys who find clues that lead to other clues that lead to other clues. Benjamin Gates is convinced he will find the treasure. Most think that he is deluded or just crazy.

Of course, to have a successful ending, he and his friends find the massive treasure.

Are you, like some of the Christian community who are seeking to discover God's little clues that will lead them to some final treasure? God is not keeping secrets.

- B. He and His way have been and are still today very visible.

*I was talking with a young lady who is convinced that the Bible is not really understandable and that God doesn't want us to understand it.

Then, to my way of thinking, if it cannot be understood then it cannot be used as a measuring stick for life. How can I be held responsible for issues that I have no knowledge of or am unable to control? If God is a secret, then I should not be held accountable for my actions.

- a. Paul tells us that God's eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen.
- b. We, therefore, do not have an excuse.

*Have you ever been caught in a situation where you just didn't have a valid excuse? Like when Adam ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden; His excuse was that Eve gave it to him. God didn't buy it then and He still doesn't.

So, God's wrath is directed toward those who have made wicked decisions.

Romans 1:21-23

²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

III. You may know of God but unless you accept Him and obey Him, your empty lives are doomed.

- A. If you have accepted Christ as your Savior and Lord, then you will seek to glorify Him in all that you do.
- B. Without Him we are doomed.

* I was just reading the other day about Noah. Once the rain started there were no late arrivals. That is what Paul wants us to understand here as well.

The Message says it this way...

Romans 1:21

What happened was this: People knew God perfectly well, but when they didn't treat him like God, refusing to worship him, they trivialized themselves into silliness and confusion so that there was neither sense nor direction left in their lives.

- C. Even though you may put on the appearance of being an educated or knowledgeable person.
- D. Notice the downward spiral into sin.
 - i. First, people reject God;
 - ii. Next, they make up their own ideas of what a god should be and do;
 - iii. Then they fall into sin—sexual sin, greed, hatred, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, and gossip. Finally, they grow to hate God and encourage others to do so.
- E. Claiming to be wise, they become fools.
 - i. God does not cause this steady progression toward evil.
 - ii. Rather, when people reject him, he allows them to live as they choose.
 - iii. God gives them over or permits them to experience the natural consequences of their sin.
 - iv. Once caught in the downward spiral, no one can pull himself or herself out.
 - v. Sinners must trust Christ alone to put them on the path of escape.

* Do you recognize any of this in our contemporary culture?

1. A steady progression into that which we once thought was wrong or sin.

2. We are allowed to choose our own way.
3. We begin to experience the natural consequences of our choices.
4. Suddenly, or not so suddenly, we cannot stop the overwhelming evil that surrounds us.
5. Our best minds and our government leaders, usually not the same, are not able to get us back on a better path.

* In “Life Application Notes” the writer says it this way, “When Paul says that men exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images of birds, animals, and reptiles, he seems to deliberately state man’s wickedness in the terms used in the Genesis narrative of Adam’s fall (see Genesis 1:20-26). When we worship the creature instead of the Creator, we lose sight of our own identity as those who are higher than the animals—made in the image of God.

Conclusion: God made us in his image and has set the bar high.

* Many of you have pets: dogs, cats, fish, birds, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs and turtles. Some of these seem to have qualities that endear them to you in exceptional ways.

As special as they are, none are capable of doing what a human being can do. Even if they can drive, they can’t make the decision of driving to church or to the grocery store. These are decisions relegated to a higher life form. God assigned these kinds of decisions to humankind.

God expects us to turn away from sin and choose Him. We can choose righteousness. Or we can choose wickedness and experience His wrath.

Some want to believe that they are not that bad.

* I love my spouse but if I consistently and willfully choose to disregard her desires, needs, and wants she would begin to doubt my love. If I choose to deliberately hurt her, I have no doubt that she would become very angry, as I would be if it were happening to me.

She expects me to love her with my heart, soul, mind and strength.

If you do not love God in that way, you have chosen a wickedness that calls forth the wrath of God.

What am I asking you to do?

1. If you have slipped into this wickedness lifestyle, ask God to forgive you.
2. Quit putting your concerns first, that spot belongs to God.
3. Start living like a Christian, like someone who really wants to be a part of God's family.