

DID JESUS JUST PREACH LOVE

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I have been speaking the last couple of weeks about the Fear of God. Even believers should fear God?

I commented that there's little Fear of God in the world today. Churches are not exempt.

Many don't believe in a God at all — but even many who believe in God ... don't fear Him. They've only heard of a God who loves everybody — always. A God who loves unconditionally.

Many churches ... TV evangelists ... refuse to preach about sin ... repentance ... and coming judgment. They tend to shun or avoid those topics. They “don't want to offend” — especially their donors!!

So ... they focus on God's love. “God is love”. “God so loved the world” — John 3:16.

But this picture of God is unbalanced and downright inaccurate.

A God who loves everybody ... always — no matter what. Endlessly kind ... inoffensive. Go contrary to His instructions and He won't do anything about it.

That isn't likely to be a God that people fear? Just a “nice old grandfather-type figure”.

There are hundreds of places in the Bible which mention the Fear of God. There are very few scriptures which mention His love. About 1 verse out of every 1,000 verses!

First ... a quick re-cap.

Romans 11:20-23

20 Well said. **Because of unbelief** they were broken off, and you stand by faith. **Do not be haughty, but fear.**

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.

22 **Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God:** on those who fell, **severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.**

23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

Goodness and severity of God.

Paul preached both. How often today is the severity of God preached?

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

9 **Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.**

10 **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

We shall all appear before the Judgment Seat (Bema) — to be judged!

Paul is preaching that there will be a judgment seat that we will all have to appear before and give an account of what we have said or done.

Matthew 10:25-28

25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!

26 **Therefore do not fear them.** For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

27 “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.

28 And **do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Gehenna)**

Don't fear men! But — Fear God! He is able to kill both your soul and body in hell-fire.

It is unfortunate that today the message is so hopelessly unbalanced. It's all "Love ... love ... love" ... people are rarely challenged to examine their lives and make changes.

Several times this week I've "bumped into" the lopsided-message.

- One preacher claims he's "loving people into the Kingdom".
- Several claimed the Bible tells is to focus on God's goodness and love — that's how you bring people "to repentance". So they refuse to preach sin and judgment.

Today I'm going to review (again!) what the Bible actually says about the LOVE OF GOD.

When preaching to the unconverted — should the focus be on how much God loves them?

Is it true that God's goodness and love alone ... lead to repentance? So should we avoid preaching sin and judgment?

Romans 2:4

4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that **the goodness of God leads you to repentance**?

The goodness of God leads to repentance? But hold on! Context!

Romans 2:1-3

1 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.

2 **But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.**

3 **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?**

"Judgment of God" mentioned twice. Judgment — especially on hypocrites.

Romans 2:4-10

4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, **not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

(The goodness of God leads to your repentance — of hypocrisy)

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,**

6 **who “will render to each one according to his deeds”:**

7 **eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good** seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

8 **but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—** **indignation and wrath,**

9 **tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil,** of the Jew first and also of the Greek;

10 **but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good,** to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

So ... in context. There is coming righteous judgment ... wrath ... indignation ... anguish ... pain ... and gloom!!! But Eternal Life to those who do good.

Paul’s warning is of judgment and destruction. God is patient ... He gives us the opportunity to repent and change — or else!!

Some people try to relegate “Fear of God” to the Old Testament — the “harsh God”. But when we come to the New Testament — it’s “gentle Jesus ... meek and mild” — the God of love and grace.

Yet — Jesus spoke often about punishment and/or hell-fire. Jesus spoke more about hell-fire than anyone else.

Matthew 5:20-22

20 For I say to you, that **unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.**

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, **You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.**’

22 **But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.** And whoever says to his brother, Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But **whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.**

Danger of hell-fire!

Matthew 13:39-42

39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

40 **Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.**

41 **The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,**
(*lawlessness = sin*)

42 **and will cast them into the furnace of fire.** There will be **wailing** and gnashing of teeth.

Fire. These people are wailing/angry. They know what they have lost. Jesus is preaching hell-fire.

Matthew 13:47-50

47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,

48 which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.

49 **So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,**

50 **and cast them into the furnace of fire.** There will be **wailing** and gnashing of teeth.”

Goodness and severity!

This is real. There is a severe judgment — some people ending up in the furnace of fire.

Matthew 18:7-9

7 **Woe to the world** because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offence comes!

8 “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. **It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.**

9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. **It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.**

Everlasting fire. Hell-fire.

This is Jesus preaching. Not “God loves you just as you are ... unconditionally”. Rather — “Sort yourself out” — or hell-fire!

Matthew 22:1-3

1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:

2 **“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,**

3 **and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.**

Matthew 22:10-14

10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. **And the wedding hall was filled with guests.**

11 **“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.**

12 **So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.**

13 **Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’**

14 **“For many are called, but few are chosen.”**

Cast into outer darkness. Weeping and gnashing. Jesus is talking about some major punishments here.

Matthew 25:14-18

14 **“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.**

15 And **to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability;** and immediately he went on a journey.

16 **Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.**

17 **And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.**

18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.

Two of the servants traded their talents.

Matthew 25:24-30

24 “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘**Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.**’

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

26 “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘**You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.**’

27 **So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.**

28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

29 For **to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.**

30 And **cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’

The unprofitable servant was cast into the outer darkness.

Jesus makes it plain. Some people are going to a bad place. A very unpleasant place!

These are warnings from Jesus — so that we don’t end up there.

Many preachers of “love and grace” avoid any bad news.

Matthew 25:31-33

31 “**When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.**’

32 **All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.**

33 **And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.**

Matthew 25:41-42

41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, **Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:**

42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

Matthew 25:46

46 **And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."**

Luke 13:22-28

22 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them,

24 **"Strive to enter through the narrow gate,** for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, I do not know you, where you are from,'

26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.'

27 But He will say, **'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'** (*You who practise lawlessness ... you who sin*)

28 **There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.**

Jesus the most effective preacher? But His message has a "bite" to it. Not just fluffy "love" and grace?

Matthew 11:20-24

20 **Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:**

21 **“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!** For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

23 **And you, Capernaum,** who are exalted to heaven, **will be brought down to Hades;** for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But **I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”**

Jesus rebuked entire towns. He cursed them: “WOE”!

It will be bad for them in the Judgment — and there will be one!!

It wasn't just the “wicked Pharisees” that Jesus rebuked — though they certainly deserved their condemnation.

Revelation 3:14-16

14 **“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:**

15 **“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.**

16 **So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.**

Spew you out! Love?

Revelation 3:19

19 **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.**

Jesus rebukes and chastens!

And they'd better repent! Stop sinning!

Revelation 2:1-2

1 **“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,**

'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

2 **"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;**

Revelation 2:4-5

4 Nevertheless **I have this against you, that you have left your first love.** *(Not lost their first love — but — they have left their first love)*

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent and do the first works**, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—**unless you repent.**

Repent!! Or else!

This is Jesus preaching. Not all sentimental "love ... and carry on just as you are".

There's more to the Gospel than just this so-called unconditional love.

There are severe penalties in the Judgment. There is hell-fire.

It is a good idea to listen to Jesus and avoid it.

Hebrews 12:28-29

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, **let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.**

29 **For our God is a consuming fire.**

Our God is a consuming fire!