

Knowing God Series #10

"Our Unsafe but Good God"



Review

I. The nature of God

A. God is Spirit

B. God is personal

C. God is a Triunity (three in one)

D. God is infinite

II. The Attributes of God

A. God is infinitely GREAT in His ability / capacity

B. God is infinitely PURE in His morality

God is infinitely good in all His relationships

1. God is HOLY

He is infinitely separated from all that is contrary to His own moral character and law.

He expects and enables all His children to do the same.

2. God is RIGHTEOUS / JUST

God perfectly and continually conforms to His own standard. He expects and enables all His children to do the same. He is Holy and we are to be holy. He is Righteous and we are to live righteously. The Theological terms associated with the possibility of us being holy and righteous are "justification" and "sanctification". Get a hold of the notes from the past several messages to explore more on the subject.

Introduction

Today I want to tackle a most sensitive subject. Contemporary Christianity tends to ignore this aspect of God's character even though it is mentioned nearly three times more than any other subject in the Bible. In times past, the wrath of God rang loud and long from America's pulpits. Jonathan Edwards a preacher/theologian in the 1700's played an important role in the First Great Awakening in the colonies with his 1741 sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" The vivid imagery contained in that message so moved people that all through the message people cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?"

God's wrath and anger naturally flow out of His infinite purity. Given the fact that He Himself is infinitely separated from all that is contrary to His own moral character and law (holy) and that He perfectly and continually conforms to His own moral character and law (Righteous / just), it follows that He would have some sort of reaction to anything that does not conform to Him and His standard. C.S Lewis characterized Aslan in the Chronicles of Narnia as not safe but good. Our God is definitely not safe but He is good. There are three basic reactions to evil or impurity in His world.

1. Wrath/Anger

2. Jealousy

3. Judgment

3. God is wrath / Anger

Understanding Anger

Old Testament Terms

The Old Testament uses some 20 different terms expressive of God's anger or wrath occurring some 580 times in the Old Testament. Many of the terms come from some physiological manifestation such as snorting through the nose, burning. These terms are translated by words like wrath, anger, fury, burning indignation, hot displeasure. The cause of God's anger always has to do with a reaction to the evil practiced and perpetuated by His creatures. The expression of His anger varies and it is clear that He does not execute punishment for evil behavior quickly. He is described as slow to anger. He is so long-suffering that it wasn't until every man's heart became evil continually that He employed a worldwide flood to execute judgment.

New Testament Terms

“ORGE”

The New Testament translates this word by either anger or wrath. It means to be puffed up, excited; a natural impulse, temperament, disposition. Other terms associated with this root “orge” are used to indicate “a strong desire.”

*1 Tim 3:1 **desire** to be an elder*

*1 Tim 6:10 **longing** for money*

*Heb 11:13-16 Those who **longed** for a city whose builder and maker was God.*

“THUMOS”

This term comes from a root which means smoke or steam. The New Testament translates it by anger, wrath or indignation. Other terms associated with the root word indicate an emotionally charged thinking process

*Matt 1:20 Joseph **considered** what to do concerning Mary*

*Matt 9:4: 12:25 Jesus knew their **thoughts***

*Heb 4:12 Word able to judge the **thoughts** and intentions of the heart*

As can be seen the two terms are similar in meaning and are used interchangeably. Both terms are used to describe God's anger and anger in men. Both terms are used to describe a godly anger or an ungodly fleshly anger. The morality of the emotion is not indicated by the word itself but by the intent or motive of the person and the outward expression of the emotion.

Any significant difference in meaning between these two terms lies in their expression.

Orge - is a more deeply settled emotion.

Thumos -- is a more on the spot reaction or flare of emotion.

The English words wrath and anger appear **412** times in the Old Testament and **64** in the New. It is obvious that it is a significant topic of discussion. If you combine these with all the other translations and the subject appears nearly 600 times.

The nature of anger

We consider anger an emotion. Most emotions arise through a thought process. We think about something that triggers or stirs the emotion or something happens to us or around us that sparks

an emotion or a thought that incites an emotion. Since God does not possess a physical body yet experiences or feels anger, we must assume that anger is not primarily a physical feeling but a soul response that may affect our physical bodies.

***Anger is an involuntary
inner mental/emotional stirring
that stirs or empowers me to respond to perceived or actual
events, people or circumstances
perceived as wrong, evil or threatening.***

God's wrath/anger naturally arises from a violation of His established values and requires some sort of voluntary action or response to that evil.



God naturally reacts and responds to anger. It is the natural response to anything that violates His moral code. The chart demonstrates the natural course anger follows. First is a trigger or event that stirs an emotion based on His value system. That emotion requires reflection (also based on internal values) as to the best response (based on character and values.)

Example: Moses

God called Moses to deliver and lead Israel out of Egypt. Moses dug up every excuse he could think of as to why he couldn't do it. Finally he flat out told God to use someone else. Moses told God, "NO!" God responded.

*Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." **Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses** and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs." Exodus 4:12-17*

Example two: God's response to a stubborn heart.

Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. Romans 2:3-5

In this case God chose to extend kindness and forbearance and longsuffering intended to lead to repentance. That will not always be the case. Just because He does not immediately respond with the judgment required of just judge doesn't mean He is not angry. The reality is that the continued stubbornness and impenitent heart continues to store up wrath for a later time. They are not given a pass, only a temporary delay of judgment.

The fact of God's Wrath/anger

There are nearly 600 passages to choose regarding anger. Not all refer to God's anger but a majority of them do. Obviously time constrains us from citing them all. The truth is abundantly clear: Evil stirs anger in God.

A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; the LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; He dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither; the blossoms of Lebanon wither. Mountains quake because of Him, and the hills dissolve; indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, the world and all the inhabitants in it. Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken up by Him. The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him. But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, and will pursue His enemies into darkness. Nahum 1:2-8

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. Rom 1:18-19

And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Rev 19:15-16

Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! Psalm 2:12

The Bible records a vast multitude of actions stemming from God's wrath. The expression of God's anger generally came through some agency such as His angels, His people the Israelites, Gentile nations, illness, plagues, famines and other forces of nature. Many currently experience the consequences of rejecting Him as God in excruciating torment. The ultimate expression of His wrath will be unleashed on the "Day of Wrath".

And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" Rev 6:15-17

God does not always fully express His wrath.

Their heart was not steadfast toward Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant. But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; and often He restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath. Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and does not return. Psalm 78:37-39

LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy. Habakkuk 3:2

O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your wrath. Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed. And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You,

O LORD—how long? Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness. For there is no mention of You in death; in Sheol who will give You thanks? Psalm 6:1-5

How long, O LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever? Will Your wrath burn like fire? Psalm 89:46

To the wicked God says, "What right have you to tell of My statutes and to take My covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you. When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you associate with adulterers. You let your mouth loose in evil and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver. He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God." Psalm 50:16-23

God's anger and wrath stem from His holy and just character which reacts to evil. Such a reaction also stirs in those made in His image. The problem is that our values are not pure and our perceptions not always accurate and our actions are not always directed by godly motives and values thus the anger of man does not achieve the righteous of God. We have covered this aspect of anger in man in a previous series.

What stirs God's anger?

A study of God's anger is really as study in how to please God. If you understand what stirs His anger you will also understand what pleases Him. The following list only summarizes some of the evil (according to God's standard) that angers God. Any violation of God's values by neglect or by intent stirs God's anger. Just as we react to any violation of our values, so God's anger stirs wherever and whenever evil raises its ugly head.

Here is a Biblical list of anger rousing specific behaviors.

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. Colossians 3:5-7

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 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; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Ephesians 5:1-10

Abuse of the temple aroused Jesus' anger followed by appropriate action.

Job's three friends stirred God's anger by their misrepresentation of Him. Job 42:7

Moses stirred God's anger by refusing to accept His call on his life. Exodus 4

God revealed to Isaiah a list of anger producing behavior in just the first 5 chapters.

Rebellion (1:2,5; 3:8)

Lack of knowledge of God (1:3; 5:13)

Despising God by turning away from Him (1:4; 2:8)

Speaking against the Lord (3:8)

Plundering the poor (3:14)

Unchecked affluence (2:7; 5:8)

Drunkenness (5:11, 22)

Ignoring God's Word and work (5:12, 24)

Expect God to cater to them (5:19)

Being wise in their own eyes – pride (5:21)

Reject God's standard (5:24)

Israel's refusal to step out in faith angered God (Heb 3-4)

Ingratitude to God and complaining angers God (Rom 1)

Involvement in things associated with Satan angers God.

Any failure to live according to God's values stirs anger in God and leads to judgment or discipline. Since all have sinned – all deserve judgment.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Ephesians 2:1-3

How can we escape the wrath of God and His judgment?

The only hope of escaping God's wrath and judgment is through Jesus Christ.

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. John 3:36

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. John 5:24

Everyone faces temporal consequences for sin.

As parents we feel anger at the disobedience of our children but our love for them prevents us from annihilating them. We feel anger and love.

We exercise judgment and mercy. God deals with us in love and mercy.

Only those who refused God's offer of salvation through Jesus will face eternal judgment.

There will be a final eternal judgment.

Near is the great day of the LORD, near and coming very quickly; listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers. I will bring distress on men So that they will walk

like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; and their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the LORD'S wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth. Zephaniah 1:14-18

We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." Rev 11:17-18

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:10-15

Those who embrace Jesus and put their trust in Him will escape that ultimate wrath of God.

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. Romans 5:8-9 You turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

Since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. 1 Thess 5:8-11

The only reason we will escape the deserved wrath of God is because Jesus not only bore our sin but the wrath that followed it.

For thus the LORD, the God of Israel, says to me, "Take this cup of the wine of wrath from My hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. They will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them." Jeremiah 25:15-16

Is this the cup that Jesus pled to avoid? We will never appreciate the glory of our salvation until we understand the gravity of our sin and offenses against a holy and righteous God and the fierce wrath that must follow.

As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Isaiah 53:11

*In Christ alone, Who took on flesh, Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness, Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid, Here in the death of Christ I live.*

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (satisfactory sacrifice) for our sins. 1 John 4:9-10

This truth demands one of two responses.

1. Confess our sin and trust Jesus for our salvation.

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." Romans 10:9-13

2. Celebrate our salvation and thank God for our salvation.

*When Satan tempts me to despair And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied To look on Him and pardon me.*