

Topic	God of Love & God of Fury
Reference	John 3:16 – 21
Date	11 March 2018
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Those two attributes of God are actually complementary. Some think that they are incompatible, but I'll tell you, I would rather serve a God who loves us enough to uphold justice and virtue, beauty and truth, by judging and condemning evil, rather than just winking and looking me other way. What kind of God would do that? Some have a mushy concept of love, which actually judges God's righteousness and condemns it, because they think God is not fair, God is not just or God is not holy, God is just a God of love and certainly this verse John 3:16 is about love, but if we look to some of the later verses in the reading today we will discover that God also is a God of fury and wrath. C.S. Lewis said, when we say that we are bad, the wrath of God seems to be a barbaric doctrine but as soon as we perceive our own badness, it appears inevitable, a simple and mercurially to God's goodness. So the wrath of God and the love of God are two sides of one coin so to speak.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said of this particular verse. If we never had another glean of love from God's face again, we could live on this one text alone. Another famous preacher, Henry Moorhouse was invited to preach at D.L. Moody, a great evangelist in the 1800s in America. Henry preached for an entire week on that one verse John 3:16. He said, I have been trying to tell you how much God loves you. Suppose I could borrow Jacob's ladder, suppose I could ascend that shining stairway until my feet stood on the sapphire pavements of the city of God, suppose I could find Gabriel, the herald angel who stands in the presence of God, suppose I could say "tell me Gabriel, how much does God love the world". I know what he would say, he would say "Henry Moorhouse, God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life". That is how much God loves the world.

John 3:16 is considered to be one of the greatest Bible verses in all of time and it is sometimes referred to as the greatest gift.

- **God** is the greatest lover
- **so loved** to the greatest degree.
- **the world** is the greatest number
- **that he gave** is the very greatest act
- **his only son** is the greatest gift
- **that whosoever** is the greatest invitation
- **believeth** is the greatest simplicity

- **in him** who is the greatest person
- **should not perish** is the greatest deliverance
- **but** makes the greatest difference
- **have** gives us the greatest certainty
- **everlasting life** is our greatest possession.

This is sometimes referred to as the gospel in a single verse or a gospel in a nutshell.

While this is all interesting and its amusing, it does not do justice to the heart of God and his mission here on earth in saving mankind from his fallen sinful and depraved condition. God is love and God loved the world. When God sent his son into the world, he knew it was going to end up as a bloody sacrifice and that sacrifice was going to take place on a cruel and humiliating cross. In fact, our deliverance encompasses in John 3:16 both the idea of the blood and the cross.

Watchman Nee was a Chinese writer, he lived between 1920s. He wrote a book called Normal Christian Live and many believers closer to that time and the time I read the book sight this as one of the most pivotal and influential books in their lives, in the formation of some of their early Christian thinking and I wanted to share with you something that he says in that book. He states,

The blood deals with what we have done and while we shall see that the cross also deals with what we are, what we have done and what we are, we need the blood for forgiveness but we need the cross for deliverance. So in our salvation, we have both forgiveness and deliverance.

We see that objectively the blood deals with our sins, the Lord Jesus has borne them on the cross for us as our substitute and has thereby obtained for us forgiveness, justice and reconciliation, but we must now go a step further in the plan of God to understand how he deals with the sin principle within us. The blood can wash away my sins but it cannot wash away my old man, that old nature which we refer to as the flesh, that needs the cross to crucify me. When you see the symbol of the cross throughout the bible, it is always as representative of death. Jesus said, no man can be my disciple if he doesn't take up his cross and follow me. It means you cannot be a disciple unless you are willing to put the self, the old man, your old nature to death in cooperation with God. The blood deals with the sins but the cross itself deals with the sinner. We are apt to think that what we have done is very-very bad, our sins but that we ourselves are not so bad. There are some people who are very deeply self-loathing and may be even to the extent that they are not mentally healthy, we know of those type of people that exist but generally speaking we all sin and we use the phrase, "I am just human". So we do things that are in violation of God's law and we say, it is not such a big deal really. We minimize sin and sin is a principle and that lives in us that was passed to us from Adam. So there is something that is wrong with us and God is taking great pains to show us that we are fundamentally wrong. The root trouble is the sinner; he must be dealt with. Our sins are dealt with by the blood as in the

forgiveness of sins and ourselves we are dealt with by the power of the cross. The blood procures our pardon for what we have done, the cross procures our deliverance from what we are.

17 For 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 mission of God was not to condemn the world. We hear a lot of preaching that is heavy, it is condemning and people feel bad and there is a place for feeling bad and having a sorrow for your sin. Sometimes we talk about guilt, in America it is very popular to talk about how the catholic church uses guilt as a tool to make people comply, but I want to tell you, there is a place for guilt in the life of a Christian. What I am trying to say is that, there is a guilt which leads and produces despair and leads to hopelessness and that guilt comes from the devil and there is another guilt that leads to hope and a repentant heart, a Godly sorrow for sin and that guilt come from God and that may be something that is helpful to you as you deal with your own walk with the lord in life. I want you to know that God's mission on earth in sending Christ was not a rejection mission. He didn't come to tell us all we are going to hell and there is nothing you can do about it, that you are ungodly reprobate, some of these things may be true but that's not the end of the story, God's message was a message of reconciliation, of redemption because of the blood of Christ. His message is an inclusive message, it's one of the love of God. It is about life from above, for all those who are perishing.

Some examples that we see throughout the Bible is when Jesus dealt with the adulterous woman, and Jesus didn't condemn her. They were going to stone her and he rebuked the people that were picking up the stones to kill her. Then when he spoke further to the woman, he said I don't condemn you, go and sin no more. Recently Billy Graham died and perhaps more than any other preacher of modern times, he spoke to more people throughout the world and his message was the message of the love of God, of redemption. It wasn't overly critical and condemning and a lot of other Christians in the States, may be some more of the conservative type of Christians actually condemned him for not being more stringent on the need for repentance and nevertheless you can see the results of his ministry all around the world. God not only wants to save you from your sins, but he also wants to save you from the effects of those sins here and now and in the life hereafter.

Jesus also dealt with blind man, lame people, he healed many, some of those were people who they didn't endure their physical infirmity because of sin but some others were injured, even a lady died and was raised to life. The Samaritan woman who had been married many-many times when confronted by Jesus, he told her what she had done, he knew but he told her go and sin no more. So his message wasn't primarily a message of condemnation and rejection, though just

like the love of God and the fury or the wrath of God both are equally true. So he wants to save us from the effects of sin both here and now and eventually in the hereafter.

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

There are two groups of people here. There is a group that believes and it says they are not condemned. The second group is a group that do not believe and they are condemned already. So that's very important distinction that I will make. Why are they condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only son of God. The Bible tells us that there is salvation in no other than Jesus because there is no other name given among man whereby we must be saved. Not all who are perishing wants this promise from John 3:16 of eternal life or do they trust the one who offers it and so there is in reality a judgment, a dividing line between those who trust the one who comes bearing the love of God and those who cannot place their trust in him or will not. The inclusive love of God will not force itself upon those who chose to opt out or to ignore it. This whole section of scripture sometimes is referred to as the great divide.

It is the love of God, the message of reconciliation and redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross and it is also a message of God's fury and wrath because of those who are enemies of God, those who are condemned because they do not believe because they reject the name of the only son of God, Jesus Christ. So let's be clear that God is a God of love but he is also a God of wrath and a God of vengeance.

One of the things that I want to point out in this section goes back to those two groups. The first group is the one who believes. What does it say about those who believe? It says they are not condemned, but whoever doesn't believe is condemned already. So we have the second group, the nonbeliever, they are condemned. Where do you put the group that believes but is not the member of the right church and every church thinks that they are the right church. What do you do with the person that believes but has not yet been baptized or the person who believes but has never spoken in tongues. Are you going to put those people and others like it who no matter what the work of righteousness is that they have not completed? Are you going to put them among the condemned? I think the start of that verse is very clear and this should clear up a lot of Bible doctrine for you, about what different churches teach that is necessary for salvation. Whoever believes in him is not condemned. Are you going to put yourself in the place of God to say that if this person believes but they don't believe quite like you and they haven't done these things, they haven't taken all the sacraments, they haven't been baptized, they haven't spoken in tongues or any other list of what we would call or refer to as good works, are those people going to hell. I think we dare not do that. I mean the plain truth of the scripture is that belief is all that is necessary for salvation.

Acts 4:12 says there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among man by which we must be saved.

Philippians 2:9-11 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus himself said in John 14:6 I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the father but by me.

19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

More often or not the deeds that are done in the dark have become so habitual to us, so commonplace, so much a part of our everyday life that we barely recognize that this way of life is out of sync with Jesus. Yet believing in Jesus, trusting in him, well doesn't that mean being in sync with him, living in harmony with God's principles and in the love, the extraordinary love that God has manifested for the world through his son, Jesus Christ. We live in a day and a time in a culture here and elsewhere around the world where sin is no longer is exceedingly sinful. We don't really feel that bad about our sins that we need to repent and continually repent.

Jesus came as the light, he came to reveal God and his truth, Jesus is the standard by which all man will be judged. He came to shine the light of the glorious gospel to a lost and dying world. Here Jesus reveals the lust and the desires of man, they love darkness rather than light. They refuse to come to the light because they desire to please the flesh. Many today refuse the lord because they enjoy their sinful lifestyle too much to give it up for salvation. Just keep in mind that this life is brief, it is uncertain, the scripture tells us it is like a vapor that soon disappears. It is like grass that withers and is cut down.

The problems with Christians while we are still in this flesh, we struggle against that old man or old nature, that the cross so effectively deals with and sometimes we find ourselves doing things that are not pleasing to God and that also has to be reconciled.

20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

It kinds of remind me of Adam and Eve hiding in the Garden of Eden, hiding from the presence of God because they knew what they did was wrong and they did not want to be exposed.

Shakespeare's Macbeth said something that really represents with life outside of Christ or without Christ looks like. He says, "*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full... told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing*".

Roman 1:18 says

the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Roman 5:10 says,

10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Colossians 1:21-22

21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

Hebrew 2 says how shall we escape if we neglect so greater salvation. It also says it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

We have heard so much about the love of God and so little about the wrath of God, it actually has become dangerous. We have got that mushy thinking that God is not a God of holiness and righteousness, that God does not hate sin, his son died for sin. If you are the only sinner who ever lived, God would have still died for you, he loves you that much. The scripture tells us that death and hell are cast into the lake of fire, that Satan and his minions would be bound for eternity in the lake of fire. This is called the final judgment.

John 3:21 says

Whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his work has been carried out in God.

Jesus said I am the light of the world in John 8:12, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of eternal life.

The only life that God knows anything about is eternal life. We know life in a very limited duration but that was not God's original plan. As believers, we are obligated to let our light shine. It says in Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

We have a loving savior, a seeking savior who wants you and he loves you and he gave himself for you. The scripture tells us that we should make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lust thereof. We need to crucify the flesh. Solomon was a king and he was writing to his sons when he penned this phrase

Proverbs 23:26 (KJV) My Son give me thine Heart...

It is not just the situation because it is God's word and it is useful to us for instruction, it is not just Solomon speaking to his son, but it is God who is speaking to each one of us sitting here today and he says to us, give me thine heart. God wants your heart. The heart of God is searching for you today. He is searching you out, perhaps he is speaking to you now and his heart will not be quieted until he has found you or restored you. God wants all of you, so much so that the eternal God of all heaven humbled himself and entered our world as a young baby child in the manger. He was born in the crib just to die on a cross, a humiliating agonizing death and he did that for you. The word of God says to us today, give me thine heart. God is pleading for your heart, either to become a believer or perhaps to be restored.

Usually it is the created that says to the creator give me, a lot of what our prayers are about asking, but this verse 'give me thine heart' puts God in the place of being the creator who says to the created 'give me'. God wants something from us. The great benefactor has become the great petitioner. The great giver is asking to become the receiver. Almighty God wants to be in the place of a receiver, a receiver of your soul, your affection, your heart, give me thine heart. He is the owner who desires to become the tenant. He wants to take up his residence in your life. He is the provider who is becoming the beggar, the supplicant. He is the satisfier who is becoming the seeker. The door is seeking entrance into your heart. The living water is thirsty. The bread of life is hungry. The way pursues you because he desires an intimate relationship with you. The prince of peace himself is now the warrior or God fighting for your heart. Where do you stand? Why does God do this?

There is only one answer to that question and that answer is, because he loves you. Yet you may ask, who am I that God should love me. You are the one that God is seeking to rescue and restore today, it is not somebody else, it is you, it is today, it is here, it is now.

If you reject that relationship what hope is there for you. The Bible says, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.