

Wrath And Mercy

.....you'll never understand how great God's love is unless you know how great His hate is. I mean, if you understand that God hates sin so profoundly then you will find it all the more amazing that He can love sinners. So that without an understanding of His hate, His love is crippled too in our thinking. Love and grace are favorite terms, but they are void of meaning if God does not hate." John MacArthur

Let's begin in heaven, and see God as he is worshipped in his holiness and purity.

Isaiah 6:1-8

Holy, Holy, Holy

Everything was perfect, it really was paradise. And then Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree and it was over in a heartbeat. Suddenly everything changed, and they hid, from each other and from the Lord God. And God came looking for them.

The LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the

days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." **Genesis 3:9-19**

This was tragic. But embedded in this passage is the mercy and love of God. He had a plan, and though his wrath was awakened, his mercy was waiting in the wings to reconcile man and God once more.

The Love Of God

You know the story of how Adam landed us in the dilemma we're in— first sin, then death, and no one exempt from either sin or death. That sin disturbed relations with God in everything and everyone, but the extent of the disturbance was not clear until God spelled it out in detail to Moses. So death, this huge abyss separating us from God, dominated the landscape from Adam to Moses. Even those who didn't sin precisely as Adam did by disobeying a specific command of God still had to experience this termination of life, this separation from God. But Adam, who got us into this, also points ahead to the One who will get us out of it.

Yet the rescuing gift is not exactly parallel to the death-dealing sin. If one man's sin put crowds of people at the dead-end abyss of separation from God, just think what God's gift poured through one man, Jesus Christ, will do! There's no comparison between that death-dealing sin and this generous, life-giving gift. The verdict on that one sin was the death sentence; the verdict on the many sins that followed was this wonderful life sentence. If death got the upper hand through one man's wrongdoing, can you imagine the breathtaking recovery life makes, sovereign life, in those who grasp with both hands this wildly extravagant life-gift, this grand setting-everything-right, that the one man Jesus Christ provides?

Here it is in a nutshell: Just as one person did it wrong and got us in all this trouble with sin and death, another person did it right and got us out of it. But more than just getting us out of trouble, he got us into life! One man said no to God and put many people in the wrong; one man said yes to God and put many in the right.

All that passing laws against sin did was produce more lawbreakers. But sin didn't, and doesn't, have a chance in competition with the aggressive forgiveness we call grace. When it's sin versus grace, grace wins hands down. All sin can do is threaten us with death, and that's the

end of it. Grace, because God is putting everything together again through the Messiah, invites us into life—a life that goes on and on and on, world without end.
THE MESSAGE Romans 5:12-20

Who Is A God Like You?

Charnock says that God has a right to punish upon the first commission of a crime, but he warns men of what they have deserved, of what his justice moves him to inflict, that they have deserved, that by having recourse to his mercy he might not exercises the rights of his justice.

God sought to kill Moses for not circumcising his son. (Exodus 4:24)He sought to kill him by some evident sign, that Moses might escape the judgment by his obedience. He threatened Nineveh with destruction through Jonah, with the offer to void the prophecy through repentance.

He fights with men by the sword of his mouth, that he might not pierce them by the sword of his wrath. he threatens, that men might prevent the execution of his threatenings, he terrifies, that he might not destroy, but that men by humiliation may lie prostrate before him, and move the bowels of his mercy to a louder sound than the voice of his anger.

He takes time to whet his sword, that men may turn themselves from the edge of it. He roars like a lion, that men, by hearing his voice, may shelter themselves from being torn by his wrath. There is patience in the sharpest threatening, that we may avoid the scourge.

Who can charge God with an eagerness to revenge, that sends so many heralds, and so often before he strikes, that he might be prevented from striking? His threatenings have not so much of a black flag as an olive branch. He lifts up his hand before he strikes, that men might see and avert the stroke.

How Deep The Father's Love

OFFERING

Most Holy Gracious God