



SERMON SERIES



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#### The Theme of Romans

# Romans 1:16-17 <sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

<sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

<sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

## Romans 1:18-32 <sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable

passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. <sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God

<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

<sup>29</sup>They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup> Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.





THE GOOD NEWS CHAPTERS 1-3

#### Four Weeks in Romans 1:18-32

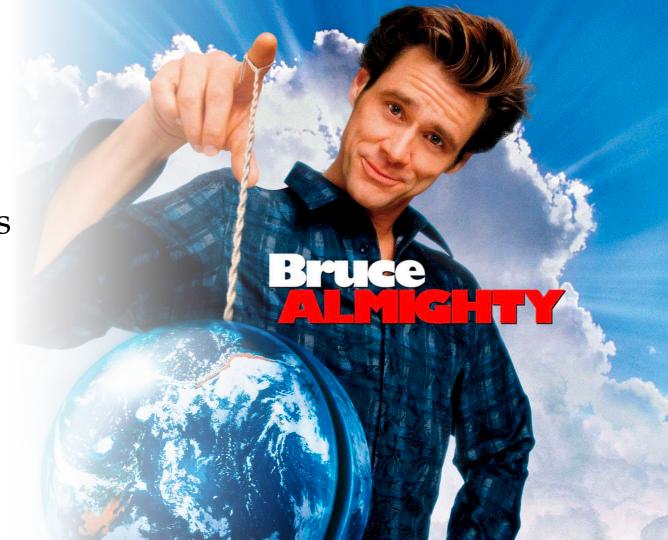
- 3. Natural for Unnatural
- 4. God's little "l" law

1. What is God's wrath?

2. Why is God's wrath good news?

3. When is God's wrath?

"God is a mean kid with a magnifying glass... Fine! The gloves are off, pal! C'mon, lemme see a little wrath! Smite me, O mighty smiter!"



#### What is God's wrath?

Fueled and funded by his love, wrath is God's consistent opposition to evil

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

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#### Romans 1:20-21

So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup>They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

### Why is God's wrath good news?

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Fueled and funded by love, wrath is God's consistent opposition to evil

When we think of God's wrath, we usually think of God's justice, and that is right. Those who care about justice get angry when they see justice being trampled upon, and we should expect a perfectly just God to do the same. But we don't ponder how much his anger is also a function of his love and goodness. The Bible tells us that God loves everything he has made. That's one of the reasons he's angry at what's going on in his creation;

He is angry at anything or anyone that is destroying the people and the world he loves. His capacity for love is so much greater than ours—and the cumulative extent of evil in the world is so vast—that the word wrath doesn't really do justice to how God rightly feels when he looks at the world. So it makes no sense to say, "I don't want a wrathful God, I want a loving God." If God is loving and good, he must get angry at evil —angry enough to do something about it.



### Why is God's wrath good news?

1. Love is in the driver seat

2. It's the solution to injustice

#### Romans 12:17-19

<sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Discomfort with the doctrine of God's wrath appears to be primarily a recent, Western development. By and large, pre-modern Christians didn't have a problem with the notion of an angry God. In fact, I'd be hard-pressed to find any major theologian before 1750 who would regard current objections to divine wrath as anything other than strange, alarming, and highly eccentric.

A God who judges evil was an assumed norm of orthodox, creedal Christianity for centuries. Nor did this point really distinguish Christianity from the other monotheistic religions. Maimonides, Muhammad, and Martin Luther were all agreed on this point...In the Bible, God's wrath is not the problem but the solution, not the offensive doctrine needing defense but the long-awaited vindication of justice after the tension of the prophets' 'How long, O Lord?'

1. What is God's wrath?

2. Why is God's wrath good news?

3. When is God's wrath?

Revelation 6:16
1. Wrath to come

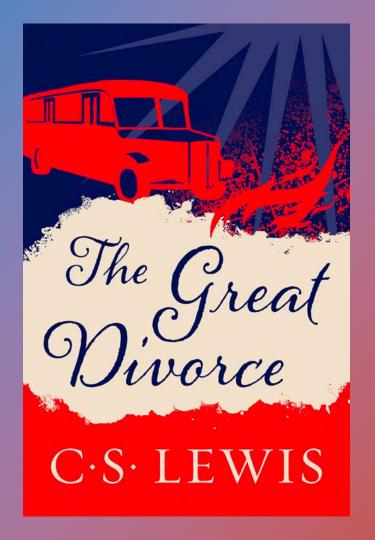
<sup>16</sup>They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?"

Romans 1:24-28 2. *Wrath...now?* 

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves...

<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions...and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error...

<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.



There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done."

# Romans 1:18 3. Wrath back then

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

# John 18:37-19:16 3. Wrath back then

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." <sup>38</sup> "What is truth?" retorted Pilate.

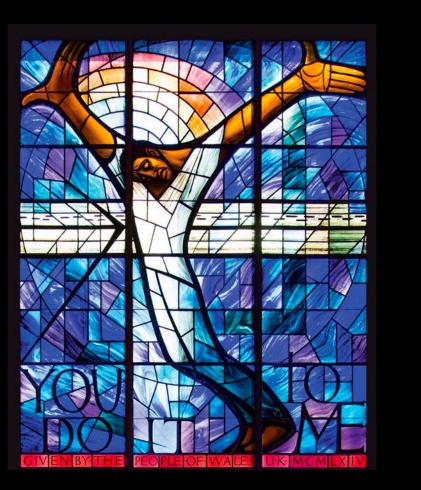
# John 18:37-19:16 3. Wrath back then

<sup>1</sup>Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. <sup>2</sup>The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe <sup>3</sup> and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

# John 18:37-19:16 3. Wrath back then

<sup>4</sup> Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." 5 When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" 6 As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"...

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.



In the crucifixion and its vindication in the resurrection, we see how every Power that wars against God has been and will be overcome and ultimately annihilated. It does not take a great stretch of the imagination to grasp how this may be linked with the cry of dereliction.

In this sense, we may say that Jesus Christ absorbs into himself the divine sentence against Sin and Death. When Paul says "God made him to be sin," he can be understood to say that in the tormented, crucified body of the Son, the entire universe of Sin and every kind of evil are concentrated and judged not just forgiven, but definitively, finally, and permanently judged"

Fleming Rutledge, The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ (Grai Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 50





#### 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

<sup>9</sup> For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

#### Gospel Application

1. Are you seeing God's wrath as good news?

2. Who needs to hear about the "burned over place" where wrath can't consume again?