

Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Wrath of Love**The Wrath of Love - posted by Mattie, on: 2009/12/30 10:52**

The Wrath of God by Darren Hufford
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I spoke on the subject of the wrath of God several years ago, and I was amazed that before I even got five minutes into the sermon, people began to get up and walk out. I made the mistake of telling them the subject I was speaking on before I preached it. They didn't want to hear it. They didn't want anything to do with that topic because they'd been beaten over the head with it so many times and for so long.

The wrath of God is one of those subjects that most of us are secretly disturbed by. Even people of the grace persuasion tend to graze over this topic, not sure what to do with it. It's especially frustrating when we see it mentioned in the New Testament. It's not as though there is no such thing as God's wrath because of Jesus. It's still talked about in several places after the resurrection took place. Most of us can't pinpoint where those places are because we've trained ourselves to emotionally graze over them when reading our Bibles. We've become experts in putting it out of our minds and promising ourselves to deal with it or think about it another day.

Even more interesting, are the people who actually feed on the wrath-verses. Their entire Christian existence is based on their fear of ever being at the receiving end of God's terrible wrath. It's the topic of grace that terrifies and frustrates these people. They rely on wrath to keep themselves in line. They love it. The moment anyone suggests a God of love and grace to these people they get angry, vindictive, and even fearful. They need their perspective of wrath because it's the power force they live their lives by. Grace seems pitiful and weak. Wrath has power and force. They honestly don't believe there is any power in grace whatsoever. I have found that people like this are actually attracted to wrath because it kills others. It gives people what they deserve. They like it because they hate people.

One gentleman interrupted me when I was speaking on the subject of love, so he could dispute what I was teaching on the heart of God. He was visibly angry because he wasn't hearing the gospel the way he liked it. It didn't come seasoned with fire and brimstone. The thing he had grown to rely on to motivate him to follow the rules was mysteriously absent from my words. This man attributed his recent life change to his fear of God's wrath and eternal hell. He even boastfully informed us that we were fooling ourselves if we thought love was going to overcome the evil in the world. It was sad. For this man, wrath was a threat from God. He feared God's wrath so much, that he straightened up and quit sinning.

What is the Wrath of Love?

Firstly, I want to re-term "The Wrath of God." I think that term has been abused and twisted so much that it brings up bad feelings for anyone hearing it. The Bible says that God is love and so the proper term that would hit the bulls-eye of our understanding would be "The Wrath of Love."

Already, when you hear it put that way, you can feel a different meaning peaking through the muck of past religion. It does not discount or diminish the wrath of God, but it defines it more clearly. It defines who that wrath is aimed towards and who it's NEVER aimed towards. That makes all the difference!

I have found that the wrath of love is as violent and awful as love is great and beautiful. Where there is love, there is wrath. As much as you love, you will have wrath on that same level. The two cannot be separated. They live in harmony with one another. They are essentially the same. Wrath is love and love is wrath.

I remember one summer, long ago, my father picked us up and took us to the mountains in my aunt's 1970's style camper. We went up to go camping together for the weekend. I didn't get to see my dad more than about one week a year, since he left us for another woman, so it was a special treat. Any time at all spent with him meant the world to me.

We were only there for one night. He called it "two days" because we drove up the first day and came back the second. I remember feeling like I'd been ripped off in the deal. I still recall sitting up late at night with him and giving him several scenarios in which to respond to. We'd ask him, "What if a bear came out of the mountains and tried to eat us?" He would assure us that wouldn't happen, and then tell us to go to sleep. "What if a man came up to us and tried to hurt us? What

would you do?"

His answer was more important than he knew at that time. We didn't need to be pacified with a stupid, "that will never happen" answer, and sent to sleep; we needed something much bigger. To an eight-year-old boy, this question held within it the very picture of my value. What did I mean to him? How much did he love me? Where did I stand on his priority list?

I remember waiting for the answer and secretly hoping it would be as gory and viscous as possible. In a tired voice, my dad said, "If that were to happen, Daddy would beat that man up so bad that he could never walk again. I'd probably kill him." He said, "Daddy won't let anyone ever hurt you like that."

Without a moment passing I darted back, "Then what about a bear? Would you kill the bear too?" His former answer wasn't OK with me, and he was beginning to see that. "Yes I would" he replied. "I would kick him in the teeth, smash his head, and beat him to a pulp."

Those were the words that both excited me, and comforted me. Thirty minutes later, I was safe and sound asleep.

The need for wrath

There is something in each and every one of us that NEEDS wrath on our behalf. From my earliest memories as a boy among boys, on the playground at school, we held imaginary competitions between our dads. The "my dad can beat up your dad" conversation was as natural to us boys as climbing trees, playing mud-war, and dragging G.I. Joes behind our bikes. Every kid did it and every kid believed his dad was the strongest and the best. It must be that way. Each of us needed to know our dad could kick anyone's ass on the block. Even fictional characters like Superman or Spiderman couldn't stand against our dad. We needed to believe that. Something inside of us had to know we were safe with our fathers.

The wrath of God is NEVER pointed towards His children! It is ON BEHALF of His children.

A true understanding of the wrath of God should cause you to run to God, not from Him. He disciplines those He loves and He has wrath for those who attempt to destroy those He loves.

The wrath of God is your daddy being able to beat up every other daddy in the universe. You NEED to know that.

If a man broke into my home and tried to harm my wife and children, I can guarantee you this: he would experience the wrath of Darin in ways he'd never imagined in his worst nightmares. I promise you that he would die a very painful and slow death at my hands. This may sound unloving to you, but I assure you that it's the product of the strongest dose of love I've known in over forty years. My family is everything to me. The same drive within me that loves them, protects them.

It reminds me of Jesus warning anyone who would cause a child to sin. He says it would be better for that person if they were tied to a millstone and thrown into the sea. In other words, he was stroking the love that existed within each and every parent standing there listening to him. He was speaking love's language. The language that parents throughout the world know all too well.

The next time you hear someone threaten you with the wrath of God, don't for one moment be fearful or apprehensive. It should never intimidate you. It should excite you.

Darin Hufford