



RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

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14 NOVEMBER 2004

IS GOD ANGRY WITH ME?

God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day. (Psalm 7:11 NKJV)

Do you often feel like God is angry with you? The Bible says He is angry with the wicked every day. But are you 'the wicked'? If you have been born again, you are not 'the wicked'. You are a new creation. You are the very righteousness of God in Christ. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* (2 Corinthians 5:21 KJV).

Yes, God is a just God. He is angry at sin. And sin must be punished. We have all sinned. And we all continue to sin at times. And so we deserve that God be angry with us and punish us.

When you read in the newspaper or hear on the radio about some horrible crime that someone has committed, what is your reaction? Probably you think, "I hope they catch the criminal and punish him for what he has done." It is right to feel that way. The Bible tells us that we are made in the image of God, and God is a just God who punishes sin.

But we have all sinned greatly against God. And we all deserve God's anger and God's punishment. That is why Jesus died on the cross for us. Someone had to be punished for our sins. God loves us so much that rather than punish us, He punished His dear Son Jesus on our behalf. That is why they tortured and beat Him. That is why they killed Him. He was paying the penalty for your sin and my sin. He was taking our blame and paying our punishment. The price has been paid. Our punishment is complete. Just before He died, Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is finished!" There is no more punishment to be paid, for those that accept and trust in what Jesus did for us. Amen?

All of God's anger and all of His righteous judgment was taken out on Jesus. So for those that put their trust in Jesus and are born again, there is no more punishment to pay! God is no longer angry with you! *And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.² Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.³ Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* (Isaiah 12:1-3 KJV)

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"In that day you shall say". In which day? The day that you put your trust in Jesus and in the fact that He paid your punishment! And every day that follows that day! Are you born again? Are you trusting in Jesus that He is your salvation? Then today is the day for you to cry out, "*O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.² Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*" God is no longer angry with you! He was angry, but his anger has turned away, and now he has sent his Holy Spirit to do what? To comfort you! Even when you fail, He will not punish you, because Jesus took the punishment! Jesus is your salvation! Say with me, "Thank you Jesus!" God is not angry with you! Let's say it together, "*O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.² Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*"

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Say with me, "God is angry with the wicked every day. But I am not the wicked. I am a new creation. I am the righteousness of God in Christ. I am a saint. I am a child of God. Jesus paid my punishment. Now God is not angry with me." Amen!

So why do we still feel and believe at times that God is angry with us and is punishing us? Because we don't understand the extent of what Jesus did for us on the cross. And because we do not understand the difference between punishment and discipline.

Today we are going to begin to look at the difference. God will not punish you when you fail- Jesus already took the punishment. But God will discipline you when you fail. What is God's discipline?

Let's look at Hebrews 12:1-13. We'll read the whole passage then we'll go back and look at the different points that the writer is making.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2 KJV). In other words, brothers and sisters, many millions of people have already run the Christian race; they have already been down this path. Be encouraged by all of them, run with God, throwing aside everything that would get in your way. Let's get our eyes on Jesus, who began this work in us and will complete it. Let's be inspired and encouraged by the fact that he suffered and He still made it. Let's do this thing!

³ *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.⁴ Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* (Hebrews 12:3-4 KJV) If we want to follow Jesus, as we have said before, we are going to have some suffering. But look at how he suffered and he endured it and still finished the race! Remember that he was perfect- and still he suffered. So if suffering or struggles or trials come in your life, **it doesn't mean God is punishing you.** It doesn't mean He has abandoned you or is mad at you. Some of it is just part of living in a fallen world, some of it we cannot explain, but we know God is using it for the good. And some of it is persecution from those that hate God. Sometimes we suffer because we are doing what is right!

⁵ *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* (Hebrews 12:5-6) OK, here we are. Sometimes God will discipline us- and that will hurt and involve pain and a little suffering. But don't be discouraged! God disciplines EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH. And why does he do it? Because he's mad at us? Because he wants to hurt and punish us? NO! Because He loves us.

⁷ *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.* (Hebrews 12:7-8 KJV) The fact that God is disciplining us shows that we are his sons. If he didn't discipline us, it would mean that we were not his sons. So be encouraged when God disciplines you- it shows you he loves you and you are his precious child! Say after me, "God loves me. I'm his child. So he disciplines me because he loves me."

⁹ *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?¹⁰ For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* (Hebrews 12:9-10 KJV) Why does God discipline us? "For our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness". Punishment is not designed to change or help a person. It is simply designed to make a person pay for something he has done wrong. Discipline is entirely different. It may involve a little pain, but it has a purpose of helping us change, for our own good. To correct our paths so that we can walk in more holiness, freedom and peace.

I have a beautiful German Shepherd dog called Goldie. She is a very obedient dog BUT, when I take her for walks, she goes crazy when she sees other dogs in our street and starts pulling at the leash and barking uncontrollably. The rest of the time she is very obedient but when she sees these dogs she ignores my commands. This has been very frustrating for me. At times I have wanted to punish her- by just beating her because she is disobeying. But a few days ago as I was walking her I was thinking about this message I am preaching, and I realized I must find a way to discipline her- to help her change her ways, for her own good. Punishing her will not help. Disciplining her will help. So I got a long thin stick. And now, every time she ignores my command to stop barking at these dogs, I lightly but firmly strike her on the nose with my stick. I cause her a little pain. And she is already doing better! Am I punishing her? No. I am training her. In time she will associate that little bit of pain with her disobedience to commands, and she will realize that it's in her own interests not to bark when I tell her to be quiet. I am doing it for her profit. It is controlled and it has a purpose. I am disciplining, not punishing. This is what God does with us. And I make sure that when she does well I praise her, and that she receives plenty of affection at different times in the day so that she will know I still love her. Do you realize how often God is telling you that he loves you?

Punishment and discipline are two entirely different things.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (Hebrews 12:11 KJV) How many of you like to be disciplined? How many children beg their parents, "Please discipline me Mommy or Daddy, it's so much fun!" Not many! Of course discipline is not pleasant while it is happening. But afterwards, we realize the blessing that it has brought to our life.

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;¹³ And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. (Hebrews 12:12-13)

In other words, folks, let's be encouraged. Our Heavenly Father LOVES us, and so he will discipline us and when we receive that discipline it will help us enormously in our lives. Let's remember he's not mad at us and he is not punishing us. Jesus paid the price. God loves us and he disciplines us because we are his dear children. Let's listen to his correction, receive it and keep running the race that he has set before us. Trials will come. They don't necessarily mean God is disciplining us. They certainly don't mean he is punishing us. God, teach us the difference between your loving discipline, and the punishment that we so often expect from you but which Jesus already paid. Is God angry with you this morning? Not if you are born again. Does He love you? He most certainly does. Amen. God willing we will continue on this subject next week.

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