

God's Righteous Judgments

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Bible Text: Romans 2:1-16
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We read the scripture this morning in Romans 2. If you are familiar with the book of Romans, you know that Romans 1 begins by saying, at least one of the things it says in verse 18, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven." The wrath of God. And then chapter 2 begins this way and we'll read the first 16 verses of Romans 2, it begins this way,

1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. 3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

And now it explains what that rendering is. First of all,

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality [he renders], eternal life: 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness [this is what he renders], indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 11 For there is no respect of persons with God. 12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law [that is written], are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their

thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

That's the reading of the holy scripture this morning.

In the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 4 is based on passages like that where in the back of the psalter on page 4 in Lord's Day 4 we have Questions 9 through 11 which conclude the section then on the knowledge of man's misery, just Lord's Days 2 and 3 and 4. Lord's Day 4 asks in Question 9,

Q. 9. Doth not God then do injustice to man, by requiring from him in His law that which he cannot perform?

A. Not at all; for God made man capable of performing it; but man, by the instigation of the devil, and his own wilful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts.

Q. 10. Will God suffer [or permit] such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

A. By no means; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins; and will punish them in His just judgment temporally [that means now] and eternally [and that means forever], as He hath declared, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Q. 11. Is not God then also merciful?

A. God is indeed merciful, but also just; therefore His justice requires that sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul.

The sermon this morning is about vengeance, the sermon this morning is about wrath, the sermon this morning is about anger, the sermon this morning is about vengeance and repayment, but it's not about your wrath though you may have wrath, sinful or not, it's not about your wrath, it's about God's wrath, and it's not about your paying someone back, it's about God's paying men and women back. The sermon this morning is about hell. It's not a very nice topic, if we can talk about nice topics. It's not a subject of the word of God that anyone would choose to have the preacher preach about, but it's a subject that must be heard. Wrath and vengeance, extreme punishment, everlasting punishment in body and soul in hell, that's what the sermon this morning is about. And if that's shocking to you and disappointing to you and maybe makes you angry, then listen to the word that is preached this morning and hear with ears of faith that this message also is a part of the

gospel. I pointed that out in the psalter that we sang, the good news, the glad tidings includes that God is coming in justice to judge men and women.

That's part of the gospel and no one wants to hear about hell and that reminds me of a story that I heard just this week from a good friend of mine who, because of the circumstances in his life, he was asked to do a funeral of a very very wealthy man for whom he had worked for a number of years, a wealthy man in this area who knew my friend as an employee of the wealthy man, as a Christian, and so the wealthy man who grew up in the church but was no longer a church-goer, asked my friend to lead devotions every year at the Christmas party. And so he did, and when this wealthy man years later, many years later, became sick and was about to die, the wealthy man asked my friend if he would visit him and my friend visited him and brought the gospel to him, and makes no judgment about that man's eternal destiny but then by the family was asked to conduct the funeral. My friend, not ordained, not a minister, but because the man and his family had no church connections, they asked him to do the funeral. In preparing the funeral, he heard, my friend did, from the man's friends who said to him, "Just tell jokes." Think about that. Just tell jokes. That's what we want to do at a funeral because we don't want to think about the reality of death and the fact that when we end this earthly existence, we must meet the Judge.

Just tell jokes. No one wants to hear about hell, although in swearing and cursing if they're angry with you, they will ask God to damn you, and they would probably tell you to go to hell but they don't want to hear about God's damnation and about the end of men who don't repent, who are going to be in hell. That's the point today. That's really what this last section of the Heidelberg Catechism on man's misery deals with. You've followed the reasoning of the Catechism, haven't you? We have to deal with our misery. We need to know in the first place, how do we know what our misery is, and the answer was the law of God. We needed to answer the question what's the nature of our misery, and we learned the answer that we're prone by our nature to hate God and our neighbor. We need to learn how it came to be that we are so, and we learned that it's not God's fault because God created us in his image, and it was on account of our fall and disobedience that we became so, and we were in Adam when Adam sinned, and so we are responsible for that sin. Then we had to ask the question last time how bad is it, and the answer we learned to make is that our natures are totally depraved. There is nothing in us by nature and in our old man that is good.

But there's one more question that must be asked and that is: is it possible for us to escape the consequences of our sin and our sinfulness? Is it possible that though we can't do any good and are full of corruption and live daily in sin, is it possible that God not judge men for their sins? And so Lord's Day 4 has man feinting and dodging and asking all kinds of questions to escape the reality of God as a just God. Doesn't God do injustice to man? Isn't that unfair? He requires us to do what we can't do. And we learn that the answer is, and we emphasized this last time too, no, because God made man capable and man fell.

So the next question: will God maybe permit such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished? Will he just wink at sin, ignore it, do nothing about it? Is that possible? And

the answer is, no, God is terribly displeased with original sins and actual sins and he's going to punish them temporally now and eternally after men die.

Well, is it possible that we just appeal to God's mercy? Isn't God a God of mercy? Doesn't Jesus teach that God is a God of love? And the answer of the Catechism is very quickly, of course, God is merciful but you may not talk about God's mercy and you will not learn about God's mercy except first you learn of God's justice. "Of mercy and of justice, my thankful song shall be." Who is singing that? David, of course, but David is a type of Christ. Christ will sing to you and declare to you of mercy but first of justice. Don't try to escape the reality of justice and punishment. Men do that today. They're always saying, trying to find a way out of the reality of justice. They don't want to be punished so parents don't punish their children anymore, they give them a time-out. And the nation doesn't punish criminals anymore, they send them over on Ball Street to a correctional facility, not a penal institution. The government won't even call it that anymore, a place of punishment, it's a place of rehabilitation probably, a place in which a man learns to be corrected so that he doesn't make bad decisions anymore. You read that and hear about that. And the athletes who want to keep playing for their colleges or their pro teams make bad decisions to drive drunk and confess to making poor choices, they're all trying to escape the reality that we are sinners and that there are consequences for sin.

Stand before now God this morning and hear that God is a God of justice so that, and hang onto this, so that we may know the precious work and person of our Lord Jesus Christ upon whom all of the justice of God and judgment of God was poured for you and me, and trust in him. We're going to come to that but first we need to see that God's judgments are righteous judgments. Let's see that God's judgment is fair, let's see that God's judgment is terrible, and let's see that God's gospel alone, then, is comfort.

God's judgment is fair, that is, when he comes to punish men, that's a stranger sound today in pulpits, I pray that it isn't a strange sound to your ear but to the ears of many, and you feel bad for them because the preachers have not done justice to the scripture for many the people would hear a message like I'm bringing today as though they're in a museum looking at a guillotine, that brutal instrument that beheaded people quickly for crimes that they committed. "Oh, that's what they used to do," children will learn when they go to a museum. Or see a platform upon which was a rope hanging from a fixture and a noose and they'd say, "Oh, that's what they used to do to criminals." Or that wooden contraption that was called stocks that had holes for hands and holes for feet and holes for a head in which they would put people to shame them. "Oh, that's what they used to do. We're sure glad that that's not the way it is anymore." That's how many look at the message that I am bringing today about God's justice, "Oh, that's what they used to talk about or perhaps that's what the Old Testament spoke of, but that's not the gospel. Jesus didn't speak of that." But that's not true. The gospel speaks of the justice and vengeance and judgments and wrath and indignation and fury and fire and brimstone of God. You must come into the presence this morning of God, and as Moses saw God on that mount and was terrified, so we must stand before the presence of God and realize that if we do not find shelter in this one, the man Jesus, you must be terrified. God is a God of judgment and his judgments are fair and that's a part of the gospel.

I'm going to, this morning, take most of the time in the first two points to have the Bible open so that if you wish to do that with me, it will make it clear to you and see exactly what the Bible teaches about God's judgment and justice. And I want to start in Romans 1 and 2 where we began reading, and point out that this is a part of the gospel. In Romans 1, the apostles says after his introductory remarks about wanting to come to them and not being able to do so, gets right to the point in verse 15 and says, "as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." And verse 16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," and that word "gospel" simply means "good news," because at the end of verse 16, the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation." And verse 17, "For in it," that's what that word "therein" means, in the gospel "is the righteousness of God revealed." And then verse 18, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven."

Now that's a part of the gospel. He begins explaining the gospel by explaining God's wrath and judgment, and then he repeats that in chapter 2 when in verse 16, well, first of all, in 9, the end of 8, indignation and wrath and tribulation and anguish. Then he concludes that section in verse 16 speaking of the day when, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ," judge, "according to my gospel," that is, the good news that I am preaching includes the important reality of judgment, punishment, wrath, indignation.

In 2 Peter, Hebrews, James, Peter, in 2 Peter 2, this is New Testament remember, this is not Old Testament, the New Testament is going to be referring to the Old Testament and speak at the beginning of chapter 2 about false prophets that are going to come among you who, at the end of verse 1, "bring upon themselves swift destruction." Verse 2, "many shall follow their pernicious ways." And verse 4 the Apostle Peter will begin to spell out some examples of God's damnation and judgment. Verse 4, "God spared not the angels that sinned." Do you realize that God did not even give opportunity to the angels to repent? It was simply the end of them. The elect angels stood, the reprobate angels fell and there's no remedy for them. God didn't spare them. Verse 5, God did not spare "the old world," and the reference is to Noah and the flood. He judged them. This is New Testament gospel as to a part of the warning to those who would follow false teachers. Verse 6 God turned "the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow."

That's the New Testament. Though he delivered Lot out of them, he destroyed them and Sodom and Gomorrhah became an example to us to warn us, which is the history that's repeated, now go farther in the New Testament to Jude, the last book of the Bible but one, right before Revelation, the book of Jude which parallels 2 Peter in many respects and says in verse 14 that Enoch prophesied of these wicked people saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment." To execute judgment. That's what the Lord is going to do when he comes. Jude had said already in verse 4 that there are certain men who crept into the church, unaware of the church, who were ordained to condemnation, ungodly men. And so verse 5 Jude says, "I want to put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, destroyed them that believed not." He delivered a people who

believed and he destroyed those who didn't believe. Verse 6 is another reference to those angels who didn't keep their first estate but left their habitation. What did God do? God reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the day of judgment, the great day. And then there's reference to Sodom and Gomorrah. At the end of that verse, Sodom and Gomorrah is an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. This is a testimony of the word of God that God is a God of judgment.

You don't need to turn to Amos but let me read a very important verse in Amos. God says about the wicked, "Though they dig down into hell," and that's a reference to the grave, "to hide from me, from there my hand will take them and though they climb up to heaven," that is, to hide from me, "from there I will bring them down, and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel," find the most distant mountain high as you can find and hide from God, "I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea," try that too, "from there I will command the serpent," and there at the bottom of the sea, the serpent will bite them.

That's the message of the word of God and if someone then says, "But Jesus didn't preach that, Jesus preached love, God so loved the world that he sent his Son in that manifestation and demonstration of love." Then I just remind you, you haven't read the New Testament if that's what you say. Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew and Mark and Luke and John.

In Matthew 23, for example, he talked about the Pharisees who were making disciples for themselves, they were called proselytes in those days, followers of these Pharisees, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You are making your children twofold the children of hell than you will be."

In Matthew 25, Jesus taught about everlasting punishment in hell, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, the righteous into everlasting life." Read the parable of the judgment in Matthew 25.

In Luke 16, the parable of the rich man. The rich man was suffering the torments of hell and longed for a cup of water, even a drop of water on his tongue and didn't get it.

And in Mark 9, it's better for you to enter into life maimed," that is, cut off your hand if it offends you, it's better to enter into life maimed than to go into hell into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.

"Do you think, O man," Paul says in the passage we read, "you who judge other people, that you're going to escape judgment when you do the very same thing as those whom you've condemned in their sin? Do you think you will escape judgment after the hardness and impenitent heart? Do you treasure up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" Righteous judgment of God. God is sometimes painted as a wild man in his fury, randomly and carelessly condemning this one to hell and taking this one to himself, and that one to hell and this one to himself. That's not true at all. God's judgments are fair. Fair. The Catechism really emphasizes

that, doesn't it? Doesn't God do injustice to man? That's the question. Isn't God unfair? I want you to look up now again the passage that we read together and see in verse 2 that's going to be the theme now of the rest of the first point that God's judgments are fair. Verse 1 of Romans 2, "you are inexcusable, O man, you who judge." Then verse 2, "we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth." Another translation, a modern translation translates that properly when it says "rightly falls upon, the judgment of God rightly falls upon men who commit such things." Men know when they violate the law of God. They do. Whether they have sat under the preaching of the gospel as all of you have, or whether they never heard one word from a preacher, whether they've been able to read the word of God all their lives, as most of you have, or whether they don't even know what a Bible is, God is going to judge them fairly. Read today Romans 1 where Paul began talking about God's wrath and ends that section by saying they are without excuse, that is, those who did not grow up in the church and never heard the gospel, they're without excuse because God revealed himself to them in creation and they knew him, and knowing him they didn't worship him but changed the glory of God into an image and made bulls and calves and serpents and everything else to worship. They knew and therefore the word of God says they're without excuse.

So you may be judged without the law, that's what Paul said again in chapter 2, the Jew first, also the Gentile, there is no respect of persons, verse 12, "as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." Why? How can God judge them when they never read the law, never had it preached to them? This is why: the works of the law were written on their heart. God testified to them so that they knew. They knew. Every man knows what you and I know, "Thou shalt not worship idols." They know that but they worship idols anyway and say trying to cover, "Just tell jokes. Just tell jokes. We don't want to hear about God and Christ. We don't want to stand in the presence of God because we realize that he is a God of justice and his judgments are fair, they rightly fall upon men."

So the angels who fell are not going to say at the end, "God, you were unfair." They're going to say, "God, you were right in consigning us to everlasting chains and reserving us for the fires of judgment. You were right." And Cain will say, "You were right." And the people who perished in the flood will say, "You were right." Some of them Noah preached to, they were near enough to hear his sermons of righteousness, Noah was a preacher of righteousness, some heard, others scattered far and wide and didn't hear. Every one of them will say, "God, you were right. Your judgments fall upon us rightly." The Egyptian armies who perished in the Red Sea will say, "God, you were right and fair," and Pharaoh will say though God hardened his heart, "I hardened my own heart and God's judgment of me is right."

God put unrighteousness, Isaiah 59 says, "as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence." That's simply the message of the Bible from beginning to end because God is a God of justice

and his justice is right, his judgments are fair. We know, we know that God judges according to truth. We do. Everyone does.

But that's not the worst of it. The worst of it is the second point of this sermon, that God's judgments are awful and his condemnation and punishment is so awful that I hardly want to describe it but it must be described because Jesus described it. It's hell. It's God's wrath. It's fury. It's unending, unending, unending wrath of God. "Away from me. Out of my presence." And then not do your own thing, live in your own little jail cell and watch television and exercise and eat good food, that's bad, but God's judgments are far far worse because this isn't a correctional facility where God consigns men and women forever and ever, it's a penal institution, it's a place of judgment and wrath.

That's what Romans 2, if you have your Bible open to Romans yet, look at verse 8 and 9 of Romans 2. At the end of 8, this is what God renders, that's the verb that the sentence begins with in verse 6, God "will render to every man according to his deeds," what he renders to the wicked is at the end of verse 8, "indignation and wrath." That's from God's point of view. He's indignant. He's full of wrath. And from your point of view if you suffer this, it's tribulation and anguish. Tribulation is what you feel outwardly, the squeezing and pressing, and anguish is what you feel inwardly, the despair of soul.

That's what the word of God teaches us today, God judges and his judgments are terrible, they're right, they're fair, but now you need to see how terrible they are. We're not going to look, first of all, into the eternity of hell but we need to remember what the Catechism teaches that the judgments of God are right also in time and history, and God's judgments fall upon men and women, and upon nations and families, and upon churches, before they die and are everlastingly destroyed.

It's been a long time now, some of you children don't even remember when those Twin Towers in New York City were destroyed by an attack of terrorists. What is that? Judgments falling upon a nation, the judgments of God are falling upon this nation, and if perhaps you don't feel that now, be aware that they're going to come again and worse. They are. A nation that murders how many children in the mother's womb daily. A nation whose largest industry is entertainment at the center of which is immorality and pornography, makes more money in that, pornography, than all in the entertainment industry, than all of the other television stations, the network stations put together. That's our nation and the judgment of God is going to fall upon our nation sooner or later, and probably sooner. We try to reform criminals, laudable goal but not punish them? That in the public schools for the most part teach godless atheism that God didn't make the worlds, and that man is good, and that you don't need the Lord Jesus Christ? The mass shootings and the murders that you read about every day, what are they but God's judgment upon the nations and our nation.

But come closer and hear about God's judgment on churches and denominations, judgments that are fair and rightly fall upon churches. And though we may talk about those other churches, perhaps that ordain homosexuals and approve that kind of lifestyle, and those other churches that allow women in office, and those other churches that teach

arminianism, and those other churches that are loose and liberal, we ought not look at those other churches but realize that the heavy hand of God can fall upon a denomination that's proud, that looks at all those other churches as though we would never do that, the heavy hand of God in judgments may fall upon a denomination so that the light of the gospel is taken away from that denomination that lives in such a way. And the judgments of God are fair in that they rightly fall.

And the judgments of God fall on families and you can see that too. The father and the mother lead their children in ways that they ought not, walk in those ways, they see their children running in those ways, and there's an old saying that as the old birds sing, the little birds peep. They follow, except it's the old ones that peep, as it were, little sounds and the young ones make bigger sounds and go further. The judgments of God fall upon families. Parents walk in the sins, children run in them.

And the judgments of God fall upon individuals and then don't look out there, you may peek out there and see what happens to the movie stars and the rock stars, how they die early and die in their own vomit and filth, and commit suicide because they despair. The judgments of God fall upon men and women today, today, today, during their lifetime. It's the anguish in their conscience that they feel. They do. God's judgments fall upon them rightly. There's a Proverb about the conscience, that a bad conscience is worse than a thousand judgments. And so you see men and women prospering outwardly, apparently doing well, gaining in wealth, I ask you to look in their conscience when they go to sleep at night and that's why they drink and take drugs and spend money, and do all kinds of things because they have a bad conscience and they try to drown out their conscience.

There is no sin that men get away with, nations, churches, families, individuals. There are no sins that men get away with unless, unless, but as bad as all of those judgments are in time, far worse are the judgments of God in eternity and those judgments rightly fall upon man then too. This is horrible to talk about but it must be heard, the judgments of God about hell. You can't describe hell in its breadth and depth and length. You can't describe heaven in all of its fullness. It's impossible and you don't understand it. You can't describe hell either in all of its awful judgments and wrath of God. You just can't but you must listen to what the word of God says about it and maybe make analogies like this: just as in heaven the sun never goes down, in hell the sun never comes up. Never. Just as in heaven the people of God live in hope always knowing that the next day is going to be better, the old poet said above hell is written, "Abandon hope all ye that enter here," no hope for those who go to hell. It's awful. Every day they know is going to be worse than the one before and it's never ever ever going to get better. That's hell, everlasting judgments. That's the word of God, ever dying and never fully dead. Always being consumed and yet not ever fully consumed. Utterly alone, forsaken by God, and never fellowship with anyone. That's hell. That's awful. The judgments of God are mighty deep.

Forever and ever and ever and ever, and you know who has the worst in hell? Those of us who heard sermons like this, who had the Bible opened to them and know that the judgments of God are right, who've seen the Lord Jesus Christ standing in all of his beauty and all of his glory, who've seen him and know him. The judgments of God in hell

for them are going to be far far worse. I declare to you plainly today, people of God, and if you for a moment perhaps imagine that this declaration is wrong, then read Lord's Day 31 of the Catechism. I must declare publicly to all of you who do not repent, who live in your sin, who imagine that you can get away with them, who put on a facade for others, I declare to you publicly if you stand impenitently until the day you die, you will forever and neverending, forever live under the wrath of God. It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter what people think about you. It doesn't matter. God is no respecter of persons. Remember we read that in Romans 2? You may be a Jew who everyone in those days respected because they were the upright, or you may be a Gentile. It doesn't matter. God is not a respecter of persons. You may have grown up with the law, you may have never known the law. It doesn't matter. God is no respecter of persons.

He's a judge who is a righteous judge and his judgments are awful, and all of that, people of God, so that we may be led to see the beauty of the Son of God who came, the Son of God who came and said, "Give me all of your guilt and give me all of your shame. Give me all of the condemnation you deserve, every bit of it, impute to me every sin you've committed, even the ones that you committed during this sermon, impute to me all of it. I'll take it. I want it. For you who believe on me, this is what happened." And Jesus said, "As the Son of God I'll come down, I'll live among you and I'll be a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, and this is why: because God is going to judge me for you. God is going to put all of his wrath upon me for you. God is going to abandon me for you. He's going to do it forever for you. He's going to make me feel the fires of God's wrath, all of the lava of that volcano, as it were, come upon me," Jesus said, "for you, for you." And that's why the only comfort for any of us is the gospel, and the gospel is so comforting exactly because we understand the background of it is the wrath of God, the judgments of God that are fair, just, right. He doesn't do any injustice to us if he punishes us for actual sins, presumptuous or otherwise, or our original sins. He doesn't do any injustice to man, you or me, if he punishes us with everlasting extreme punishment of body and soul, tribulation and anguish outward and inward that starts the day we die and ends never never never. The preciousness of Christ is magnified to us when we see what he endured for us. Hell for us.

And when we come to Christ and we know that all of the temporal judgments are only chastisements because all of the punishment went upon him, upon him. Hold him here and we look at all of the suffering you endure, all of the chastisements you are experiencing, not one of them is God's wrath upon you because God's wrath went upon his Son for you. The word of God says he'll avert all evil for you, and if he doesn't, he's going to turn it to your profit, and what feels like the judgments of God, the wrath of God, if it is wrath in any respect, it's the wrath of a father who loves his son because whom the Lord loves, he chastens. But the wrath of punishment went upon him, Christ, and all of our eternal judgments, we're going to die someday, we're going to die soon someday, and when we lie on our deathbed if God gives us opportunity to think about that for a little while, we must not be afraid because all of the eternal judgments that men impenitent in their sin are going to endure went upon him and I can die in hope, and I can enter that place over which gates say hopeful eternity, blessed eternity, fellowship with

God with all of the saints and not afraid of the judgments of God because they went upon his Son.

It's only the gospel that comforts us. I submit to the judgments of God, then, the temporal chastisements because I know I deserve far more, far more, I deserve what he got. But he took what I deserve. I don't complain about those temporal judgments. And then I'm sorry for my sin too. I say to myself when I sin, "How could I sin if I see Christ? And I know what my sins did to him, how can I continue in sin? How could I think about sin? I do. How could I not be sorry for sin?" I don't have any piece of my sin if I know Christ, and I tell my children something about that too by punishing them, and when I punish them I don't call it punishment, I call it chastisements and correction, and tell them that we who believe in Christ have all of our punishment put upon him. "I love you but I'm going to teach you to learn that there are consequences for sin." And then someday I may have to say to my son or my daughter, you might have to say to them, "My son, do you realize that if you don't repent, there are eternal consequences for sin?" But there is Christ in whom there is forgiveness and everyone who in Christ finds forgiveness repents of his sins and turns from his sins and says, "I'm a sinner. Be merciful to me." And then they're able with Christ to say, "I sing of mercy and of justice." It's a thankful song. Amen.

Let's pray.

Lord God in heaven, we thank thee for the gospel, what our natures do not want to hear of the judgment and wrath and vengeance where the worm that eats the bodies of the dead does not die, and the fire that gives pain never ends nevertheless, Father, we know it's gospel because that was inflicted upon our Lord Jesus. We thank thee for him and we pray that we may never take that for granted, and that we may go home today repenting, and that if there are any of us who live in sin impenitently and covering our sins, uncover them, Father, break our hard hearts and bring us to faith in Christ where is mercy. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.