

LOVE OF GOD: CONCLUSION

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INTRO: Some time ago I did several messages on the seven reference points I found of these great words; love, mercy, and grace. Then I did one concluding message, summarizing those three words. I covered the word love first and then grace and mercy. When I covered grace and mercy I saw there was a point I had missed on the word love. I then covered that point, but when I was done I was not at all happy with how I had covered that. What I could not find is that God loves lost man, present tense. The reason I could not find that is because there is no relationship of love between God and lost man. God has such a relationship with Christians.

Well, that has caused me to do a lot of study and so I am redoing that message. Since some of this is unchanged, bear with me on that with which you are already familiar.

I believe that in modern Christianity, by and large we have lost the fear of God. We have a God who loves unconditionally; His grace is unconditional; and He keeps us unconditionally saved, even if we die by suicide or as a drunkard or an idolater or an adulterer we may go to heaven. Beyond all question, we need a fresh glimpse of a holy God.

Here is what I see that happened. Let me just briefly tell you what I see. Up until the mid 1800's or so, the teaching of the holiness, righteousness, justice and judgment of God gave the picture of a very severe God. Then the love of God began to be preached. That was in the days of D.L. Moody. Slowly the severe view of God was changed until our view of God became one of our buddy up above. Now love, mercy, and grace became the Christian's main diet with God's holiness, righteousness, justice and judgment took a back seat. And today, the Church has almost entirely lost any fear of God.

So to refresh our minds on the seven reference points of the word *love* I will give those once more:

First, there is the one who loves.

Second, there is the meaning of love.

Third, there is the reason why this person loves.

Fourth, there is the person or the persons who are loved.

Fifth, there is something in person two that causes another to love them.

Sixth there is the aim (or purpose) of love.

Seventh, there is the final fulfillment of love.

What I am most interested in, in this message, is reference point 5. There were a few things I was grappling with that I did not understand well enough and therefore I am redoing that message.

So rather than reviewing the three words, I want to cover one point on the word love that I missed. For many years I have pondered the word love and slowly, over time, I have come to further insights.

In reference point 3 we asked what there was in God that caused Him to love man and I recommended that it was His goodness and His righteousness. In reference point 5 we asked what there was in man that caused God to love man. I answered that question by saying that God extends His love to man when man repents and puts his trust in Christ.

But this is God's love for man when and after man repents. The question I did not see that needs to be answered as well is: What was there in man that caused God to love man while man was unsaved and had no use for God? What caused God to love man to such an extent that He sent His only Son to die for him, before man even believed in Him? When God sent Christ to die for the world, He loved the world before the world responded to Him in repentance and faith. What caused Him to love man when man was at enmity with Him? What was there in man that caused God to love man? Well, I would be happy for any corrections or further insights than what I have found. I cannot find anything good or anything commendable or anything at all in man that would cause God to love him. As I said, I would be glad for insights I might have missed.

I. WHAT IS LOST MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD?

Let me begin by asking what God's relationship is to the lost.

What I found was new to me and I can say that it shocked me. It is fearful. As I was studying this, a number of times I pondered the saying, "God loves the sinner but hates the sin." Let me recommend for you to think that saying through. I understand this saying comes originally from Augustine some 1600 years ago. He was the originator of the teaching known today as Calvinism. If you want to know what difficulties that saying presents, type it into the search engines on the internet and see how some Christians struggle with that.

One article I read was titled, "Rethinking, 'God Hates the Sin but Loves the Sinner.'" The writer said, and I quote: "'God hates the sin but loves the sinner.' That's what we're tempted to tell non-believers, especially our friends who identify as LGBT. The Bible teaches that every person is guilty of crimes against God and deserves to be punished, but that message doesn't give non-believers a warm, fuzzy feeling. So, we attempt to soften the blow of this bad news with a cliché. There are at least two problems, as I see it, with this statement. One is practical, and the other is theological."

This writer then goes on to give the practical problem. He says:

"The practical problem is that many people who identify as LGBT have told me they have a hard time making sense of this statement. In their mind, being gay is who they are, not just what they do. Plus, the word that stands out the most from that sentence is 'hate.' They think, *If God hates the sin, then God hates me. And my Christian friends? They probably hate me too.* In other words, we intend to communicate that we love them and God loves them, but the cliché often has the opposite effect," end quote.

<https://www.str.org/blog/rethinking-god-hates-sin-loves-sinner#.XeWFduhKjIU>

So I ask, why does the saying, "God loves the sinner but hates the sin," not resonate with LGBT people? It seems they understand that their sin is not just what they do, it is what they are. Their sin is not something separate from

who they are, it is what they are. It is not our sin that is sinful, it is we that are sinful.

What has happened today is that modern Christianity does not want to tell people they are lost and going to hell. So we begin on a positive note like Dr. Bill Bright's four spiritual laws, "God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life." If I am correct the original tract did not have the word repentance in it at all. The latest tract I checked had the word repentance in brackets one time. That is a minimization of sin. And repentance was defined as turning to God from self. There is truth in that but it is, more importantly, and first, turning to God from sin.

In our North American culture, and probably wider spread than that, the teaching of unconditional love has so distorted the true message that people need to be told how horrible sin is and how horrible their sin makes them. The Apostle Paul wrote a long tract on salvation. It is the book of Romans. He begins by showing that all Gentiles are sinners, chapter 1. Then he shows that all Jews are sinners, chapter 2. Then he shows that all mankind is sinful, chapter 3. And then he shows how justification from sin takes place. Then he shows how sanctification from sin takes place. And the key issue all along is sin and how to deal with it. Sin is man's problem.

John the Baptist came preaching repentance. That is a change of mind about one's sin. It must cause a turning away from sin. Jesus came preaching the same word. And the good news is that two thousand years ago God did all He can possibly do to save us from our sins. And He did it because He so loved the world and we will look at that later! So the good news is that Christ took our place of death on the cross. But in order for His death to be of any value to us, we have to repent of our sins, because we are abhorrent to God because of our sin. When we have repented, then we must put our trust in Christ for salvation. We can never save ourselves. And if we do those two things, God will save our soul. He will be merciful to us, extend grace to us and love us, present tense.

Now I ask you, does God love the sinner? Yes. But through my studies on mercy and grace, I pondered the fifth point regarding love and I wondered if I had missed something

somewhere. Let me read for you what I do find and then talk about this love. You will want to jot these Scriptures down to think through them. We begin with Leviticus 20:23:

23 *'And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore **I abhor them.***

What does God feel toward those who live in sin? Abhorrence!

What does God abhor; what these people do or the people?

Well, the verse says He abhors the people. Why? Because of the sin they live in.

Listen to Proverbs 6:16-19:

16 *These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:*

17 *A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,*

18 *A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,*

19 *A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.*

Does God hate the proud look, but not the looker? Does He hate the lying tongue but not the one who wags the tongue? The hands? The heart? The feet? Well, listen to verse 19, He hates a false witness that speaks lies. Does He hate the lies or the liar? The liar! He hates a false witness who speaks lies. We have seen what horrendous things lies in a church can bring about. Then the Proverb says He hates one that sows discord among the brethren. Does He hate the discord, or the one who sows discord? He hates the person who does those things. What is a lie apart from a liar? Without a liar there is no lie. How can He hate a lie apart from the liar? This Proverb tells us what God hates.

Listen to Psalm 5:5:

5 *The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; **You hate all workers of iniquity.***

Note, it does not say, "You hate all the iniquity of the workers." It says, "You hate all workers of iniquity." He hates the sinner. These are very plain words. Listen to Psalm 11:5:

5 *The LORD tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.*

What does God's soul hate? The deeds of the wicked, or the doer of wickedness? He hates the doer! No doer, no wickedness. And He hates the one who loves violence! That is the person, not the sin. Listen to Psalm 7:11:

11 *God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.*

Note again, it does not say God is angry with the things the wicked do every day. He is angry with the wicked!

Now we might say, "Well, that is how the OT puts it. But in the NT, after Christ died for man, things are different. Grace works so much better than law. Love works so much better than hate or anger." Turn to Ephesians 3. Paul will show us what believers of the Church age were like before they got saved. We begin in verse 1:

1 *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*
2 *in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*
3 *among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

What are the lost before they get saved? The sobering fact is that the lost are the children of wrath, God's wrath! In Romans 9:13 the Apostle Paul quotes from Malachi 3. Malachi says in 1:1-3:

1 *The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.*

2 *"I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved;*

3 *But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."*

Why did God love Jacob, or Israel? Because Jacob, though a man of failure, lived by faith. Why did He hate Esau? Because Esau refused to submit to or trust God. He was a friend of the world.

But there is worse news. When those who once believed turn their back on God, the time comes when God's love runs out for them too! That is true in both the OT and the NT. We go first to Psalm 136. The passage speaks of Israel, God's own people. We'll begin in verse 34. There is much more in the previous verses but this will suffice:

34 *They (God's people) did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them (the command was to destroy them):*

35 *But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. (There they learned to love the world which is at enmity with God. Verse 36)*

36 *And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.*

37 *Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,*

38 *And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.*

39 *Thus they were defiled by their own works, And played the harlot by their own deeds.*

40 *Therefore the wrath of the LORD was kindled against His people, So that **He abhorred His own inheritance.***

Look at what God's own people became to Him. His own inheritance became an abhorrence to God! What did He abhor, what they did, or them? He abhorred them, His own people!

My wife does her Bible reading in the morning and sometimes she asks about a verse and other times she says, "Listen to this." And a while ago she said, "Listen to this." Well, turn to Hosea 9 to look at what she read that morning. God is speaking to His people who have backslidden until His patience has run out. He had blessed them so often in Gilgal, but now they were living in sin in that very place. We go to verse 15:

15 *"All their wickedness is in Gilgal, For there I hated them.*

Did He hate what they did or them? He hated them! And why did He hate those He once loved? We go on:

Because of the evil of their deeds...

God hated those He once loved. He had a relationship of love with them and now He hated them! And now listen to the next words:

I will drive them from My house...

God would drive His people out of His house! This could not speak more directly against the teaching of unconditional love! Nothing more dreadful than being driven out of God's house, the temple, could befall them. And God says in Gilgal, there He now hated them. We go on:

I will love them no more.

No unconditional love here. God's love with that generation had come to an end. Many years ago I outlined the book of Hosea. What is amazing is that it is a book of the love of God. As I outline this book it has two messages. The first message is from 1:1-2:23. In message one we have the picture of God's steadfast love. First is the blight, and then the blessing. First it is the night and then the light. Then we have the proclamation of God's steadfast love, and again we have first the blight and then the blessing.

The second message follows the same pattern and goes from 3:1-14:9. In 3:1-5 we have the picture of God's blessing and the blight as well. It is a short passage so let us read it. We begin with the blight in 1-4:

1 Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

2 So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:

3 And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.

4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim:

That is the long night of Israel. They are still in that night. But when they turn to God His love for them will once more restored, and that will come in the millennium, verse 5:

5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

Well, in the proclamation of God's love we once more have the blight and that is chapters 4-13:3. And so our passage comes in this blight or night part. They are now just before 722 BC when Babylon came and destroyed Jerusalem and removed them from the house of the Lord. And God has just said in our verses that He will drive them from their house. If we took time to explore that we would see horror story after horror story. God hated His own people. That means He would no longer meet their needs because they had forfeited all rights to them. Now let me read verse 15 once more:

15 All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers.

Why would God love them no more? All their princes had become revolvers against God! All their leaders are rebellious against God. You see, sin can bring God's love for His own

people to come to an end. Ephraim, which is Israel, had been God's beloved. In Gilgal He had shown them mercy over and over. These were not the unbelievers of the world. These were those who once believed but they had now forsaken God. What does this verse do to unconditional love? God said, "I will love them no more." Why? Sin! Evil deeds! Rebellion! By whom? His own people!

Well, someone will say, that is the OT. In the NT we are saved by grace and once we are saved we are always saved. That is what it is like now that Christ has come.

Turn to Hebrews 10. God does love believers, present tense. But God stops loving a believer who turns his back on God. Look at Hebrews 10:26-29:

26 *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,*

27 *but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*

28 *Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.*

29 *Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

That is self explanatory? Now go to John 3. This is the famous chapter on the new birth and God's love for the world. Go to verse 36. The unbeliever here is not somebody who has never believed. It is the believer who turns his back on God and stops believing. Jesus said:

36 *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

When it says, "...he who does not believe..." we could translate the present tense as, "...he who does not go on believing..." What abides on the one who fails to continue to believe?

Unconditional love? No, it was the wrath of God. It was the very same judgment that was already hanging over the people in Hosea's day.

So does God hate sinners? I was surprised to learn what the Bible says. He does. The moment the lost die they go to hell. Does God love the sinner? That is also a "Yes." And the question is, how can both be true? Some have tried to explain this paradox by saying it is like a parent with a rebellious child. The child is living in sin and the parents hate what the child is doing, but no matter what those children do, the parents still love the child. But there is a problem with that explanation. As soon as one reasons like that one has moved from *agapee* love to *phileo* love. *Phileo* love is family or friendship love. It is emotional love.

But God does not ever *phileo* love the unsaved. He *agapee* loves them. He has no friends among the unsaved! Jesus Christ has no friends, *philos*, among the unsaved. Who are God's friends? Those who live by faith! Abraham became the friend of God. How? By living by faith. Those who repent of their sins and put their trust in Christ become His friends. The only friends God and Jesus have among mankind are saved people.

Now if all that is true of God's relationship with man, why did God so love man that He gave His only begotten Son to die for him? Let me begin by explaining what I believe it means that God loves the world.

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT GOD "SO LOVED THE WORLD"?

Our question now is, what does the Bible mean when it says, "For God so loved the world?" Well, the word for love is *agapee* love. It means, as I understand it, that God gives of Himself for man's legitimate need! And that raises this question: What is man's legitimate need? Is man's legitimate need health? No! Is it to have a big car and a lot of money? No!

Man's legitimate need is salvation from sin! Man's great need is to be told what the consequences of sin are and then to hear the Gospel and be given the choice to be freed from

sin! It is to be given the choice to be freed from sin's consequences, which is hell and to be freed from sin's power. And so how could God meet that legitimate need? Well, He could do that by taking the responsibility and punishment of man's sin Himself. He did this by giving His Son to die in sinful man's place. Man must then be given the message and the choice to repent from his sin and put his trust in Christ. Christ's death on the cross is God's demonstration of His love for man. It is not the emotional attachment of *phileo* love. It is a rational love willing to pay a price beyond comprehension, to deliver those He finds an abhorrence, and those who abhor Him.

Now what God requires from man to qualify for this salvation is true repentance and true faith. And what do those two things do? They require man to relinquish his pride. They require man to humble himself. And through this man is delivered from sin! These two things make such people friends of God and Christ! They bring about a present tense relationship of love between God and the sinner.

So, does God hate the sinner? Yes. What does that mean? It means if that sinner dies in his sin God will immediately send him to hell. Does God love the sinner? Yes. What does that mean? It means God has done all He could to save the sinner from hell! That is *agapee* love. Now the ball is in the sinner's court. He now has to choose whether his master will be sin and Satan, or righteousness and Christ.

III. WHAT CAUSED GOD TO LOVE MAN?

Now to the question we are dealing with. It is this: what is there in lost man that caused God to love man? Here is my proposition for you: There is nothing good in any person that causes God to love him or her. Here is what man is. In the eyes of God he is a lost, vile, filthy, sin loving, God hating, personal being. God made man in His own image and for His own glory, and now he brings shame, not glory to God. You might think that this is an overly harsh view of man. Study the Bible and see if you get a different picture than that. Read Romans 1-3 and see what picture

you get. Ponder the passages I will yet give, and see if this is not the true picture of lost man.

Let me give you another proposition: this God hating, sin loving human being who is lost never, ever experiences the love of God. He does not live in God's love. He is right outside of God's love. He is estranged from God's love. There is no relationship of love between God and the sinner. Listen to John 3:19-21:

19 *"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

20 *"For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*

21 *"But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*

Lost mankind loves darkness rather than light, and when we live in darkness we hate the light. What does it mean, that those practicing evil hate the light? The light is spiritual truth. God is light. Men hate the light. Men hate truth; that is spiritual truth. Why do the lost hate spiritual truth? Because the truth reveals what they are morally. The nicest of people who are unbelievers, hate spiritual truth. But he that lives in the light, the true Christian, comes to the light. And the great event of Christ's death for the lost is He died for them while they yet hated the truth!

James wrote to professing believers who were involved in much wrongdoing. And in 4:4 he says:

4 *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

These believers were falling in step with the world. And James tells them most plainly that friendship with the world is enmity with God. The world is at enmity with God. They hate God and they hate spiritual truth! That is the nature

of the lost, no matter how nice and moral they may appear on the outside.

As I pondered all this, and could find nothing good in man which would give God a reason to pay such a huge price for man, I began to see another great truth. I was amazed as I thought about it. God created man to bring glory to Him. But instead, man fell into sin, and brought shame to Him. But what is amazing is that the potential to glorify God was still there in man after man sinned! That is amazing. But to bring that potential to fruition, God would have to pay a most horrible price. One person of the triune God would have to become man in human flesh. That Person would have to lay His glory aside and take on human flesh and die for man.

So let me read that great love of God for sinful man in the words of Philippians 2:5-8:

5 *Let this mind (this kind of thinking) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

6 *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

7 *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

8 *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

That is the price of sin from God's side, if man is to ever to be able to glorify him after he sinned. Christ would die, not for His friends, but His enemies. But in order for that potential in man to be realized, something would also have to happen to man.

Let me try to illustrate that. Somebody tell me, if you have a wild horse that has never been ridden, what is it called when you are able to make it obedient and useful for your service? It is called 'breaking' the horse. You do not break the horses' spirit. You break its will. That is what has to happen to man before man can bring glory to God.

Over 2,000 years ago there was a boy whose dad bought a horse at a huge price. It was a huge black horse. But it was mean. Nobody could break this horse. And this boy asked his dad for the horse and said if he failed to break it he would pay for it and it had been bought at a huge price. Now do you know how useful a wild horse is? You get near and the ears are laid back. And if it can take a bite off your backside when you are not looking, it will do so. And if you give it a chance it will turn its backside to you and kick you. And if it can, it will kill you and never bat an eye. It can break fences. It can chase colts and foals and kill them. Unless you can break that horse, it will do nothing but damage.

Well, this boy saw potential in that huge, black horse. Who was this boy? He would grow up and be known as Alexander the Great. At this time he was about 12 or 13. When he was 20 years old he claimed the Macedonian throne and killed all his rivals. He became king. At 25 years of age he ruled the entire world. But when he was about 12 or 13, so history says, he broke this black horse and he named it Bucephalus. It became a very famous horse. This mean horse became useful to Alexander the Great. But it had to be broken.

Here is my proposition: Rebellious, sinful, God-hating man has the potential of bringing glory to God. That is the potential of every human being. According to history, Alexander the Great learned something about that horse by which he was able to break it. He learned that this horse was afraid of its own shadow. I expect that when it was trying to throw its rider, when it saw the flying shadows, the horse went wild and nobody could stay on. So when Alexander broke this horse, he would not let it see its shadow.

In order for man to become one who brings glory to God, God has to break him. That subject alone needs a whole message. You see, there is something in man that God knows, through which He can get man to reach his potential of glorifying God. He has to break man. To break man He has to bring man to the point where he sees how exceedingly sinful he is

and he has to be brought to repentance by the truth of the Gospel. Man has to become humble; broken. But God does not humble man, he seeks to bring man to the point where he humbles himself. And when any person gets to that point, he is broken.

Listen to these words I have read for you numerous times. They come from Isaiah 66:

- 1 *Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"*
- 2 *For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.*

Such a man is broken. And then, when God has brought man to the point of humility and repentance, now that man has to learn to live by faith. And those who live in true repentance and in true faith become those who reach their potential, and they glorify God.

CONCL: So we conclude. Does God hate sinners? I can see no way around that. He does. Does God also love sinners? Yes. What does that mean? That means He will do all He can to meet their legitimate needs. His love has nothing to do with feeling good about them. He will do what is in His power to save them, and He has done that 2,000 years ago. It is now up to us to give them the message. If we don't, they die in their sin.

What causes God to show mercy on sinners? Humility! Repentance! Faith! What causes God to extend grace to people? Repentance! Faith! Humility! What causes God to enter a relationship of love with man? Repentance! Faith! Humility! How does sinful, rebellious man enter a relationship of love with God? Man has to be broken. If man does not break and humble himself before God in repentance and faith he will go to hell.

As preachers, we have failed to bring about a healthy fear of God! As preachers, we have failed to bring about genuine repentance! I believe the preaching of unconditional love, unconditional grace and unconditional eternal security have

largely made God to us, altogether such an one as we are. We have humanized Him. He is not the high and holy and just and righteous God. We don't see Him that way, and it is the pulpit that is responsible for our wrong view of God.

To every unbeliever; to every backslidden believer, like John the Baptist, the warning is to flee from the wrath to come. Every unbeliever, you hang over the flames of hell every moment. If we were honest, we would all realize this by the deaths that occur every day. Today is the day of salvation! Today is the day to turn. Today you could enter hell fire or God's love! Today you could find His mercy! Today you could go to the throne of grace and find mercy and help in your time of need, which is right now! God would embrace you in a moment of time! But now you stand outside His love; outside His mercy and outside of His grace. As you are now, there is no hope for you. If you died this moment, you would burn in hell the next.

I quoted some time ago to you from a Mennonite preacher and writer who said that hellfire preaching has lost its punch. He said that in Western society such preaching is basically seen as a sick joke. But it is Western society that is sick. Western society is wrong and hell is real.

To every believer, fly to the throne of grace at any moment of need. Keep yourself in the love of God (Jude 1:21). Let me assure you of this God loves the true believer! He cares for them! Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. He has mercy for you! He has grace for you! Do not play with sin. Do not backslide. There comes a day when God does not love the backslider any more (Hosea 9:15).