



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Does God Give Up?

SPEAKER Elder Lok Vi Ming

THEME The End of Time – Titus 2:11-13

DATE 16 & 17 Jan 2021

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In reference to the end-times, Elder Lok taught on Romans 1:18-32 where he elaborated on the increasing lawlessness which we will witness in the world, the wrath of God in response to lawlessness, and the consequence of persistent lawlessness.

GOD'S WRATH

According to Romans 1:18, God's wrath was against godlessness (Man's offenses against God) and wickedness (Man's offenses against Man).

A sinner who keeps on sinning is likened to a person whose feet is on slippery ground (Deut 32:35) where a fall is inevitable at any time. In the same way, a person who persists in lawless acts will have to eventually face the wrath of God.

Using the words of Jonathan Edwards, on the day of judgement, the wrath of God will be "everlasting", "an exquisite, horrible misery of boundless duration which will swallow up our thoughts" leading to "absolute despair" of having any deliverance or mitigation. It is facing a merciless punishment that never ends.

As such, we are reminded that we are living in a period of grace, where we still have the chance to recognize and acknowledge our sins through the love, mercy and grace of God and receive salvation from this eternal hell.

REASONS FOR GOD'S WRATH

God's wrath is due to the increasing wickedness of man despite knowledge of Him.

The lack of knowledge of God is not an excuse, as creation and the created world points to the existence of a creator. In addition, there is the failure to worship God by exchanging wisdom for foolishness and exchanging the glory of God for images of birds, animals, and reptiles.

The reminder for us is to pause to think about the value of our relationship with God and what He really means to us. By pondering on his Word, rediscovering a new love for Him through prayer, and by remembering His power and deliverance in our lives, it will provide us with a fresh understanding of Him born out of gratitude and thanksgiving.

Then, we will return to true worship of God, and not foolishly exchange God who is of immeasurable worth with created things which are temporal.

CONSEQUENCES OF GOD'S WRATH

Those who persistently reject God will have to bear the consequence of God's wrath where God gives them over to sinful desires of their hearts, shameful lusts, and a depraved mind. Sinful desires of the heart arise from impure desires resulting in sexual perversion. Shameful lusts will cause both men and women to abandon their natural sexual designs and engage in unnatural relations with each other. In the sermon, it was highlighted that the words "gave over" (*paradidomi* in Greek) is the same words used in Romans to describe God giving up Jesus over for the judgement of our sins (Romans 4:25, Romans 8:32).

In other words, God will give up the wicked, the disobedient and those who do not value or treasure Him and deliver them to judgement. As a result, these people will be filled with every kind of wickedness, greed, and depravity. This will come in the form of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossips, slanderers, God-haters, boasting, insolence, disobedience to parents, arrogance, infidelity, lack of love and invention of new ways of doing evil.

In addition, these people will not only do these things, but they will also approve of others who practice them. We are reminded not to sin and to not try to rank our sins.

CONCLUSION

So, when we look at the severity of our sins, the purity of God and the inevitable judgement that awaits, we wonder: What is it that prevents us from experiencing the wrath of God?

It is the mercy of God. We are reminded that as much as the book of Romans provides warnings for the wicked and unrighteous, it also commends good and faithful men and women who have laid down their lives for a God whom they believe is deserving to be served.

When we realize the depth of God's love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord, that we are more than conquerors in Him, and that God is greater than any entity that is against us, then this would cause us to hold on to our faith in God in the face of increasing lawlessness.

For the gospel is the power of God to bring salvation to everyone who believes. It is in the realization of the true value of God's love for us and the power of His redeeming act of salvation in the death of Christ Jesus, that would enable us to hold on to Him and not give him up for the things of this world.

QUESTIONS

1. Much of what is preached in the church focuses on God's love but not God's wrath even though the Bible speaks of His wrath at length. What is God's wrath focused on? What are the reasons behind His wrath? What do godlessness and wickedness mean? How are they different? List out some examples which you may have encountered in your daily life.

(Leader's notes) Recall question. God's wrath is unlike the wrath of humans. It is righteous and it is incurred when humans indulge in wicked and godless behaviour like failing to worship God and exchanging His glory for the likeness of birds, animals and reptiles. God is not only a Loving Father but also a Father who will not hesitate to set us right when we go against His moral order. In the sermon, godlessness is defined as Man's offenses against God and wickedness is defined as Man's offenses against Man. This provides members with an opportunity to recall the definition and to identify their personal encounters of godlessness, wickedness and suppression of truth.

2. Reflect on your walk with God: Have there been times where you have exchanged your relationship with God for the things of this world? Or have there been times when you have given up the things of this world for God?
Share your experience to encourage members in the cell.

(Leader's notes) Encourage members to share about their relationship with God. For experiences where they have lost focus of God in their pursuit of the world, help to identify lessons to be learnt. For experiences where they have been faithful to God, encourage them to share in greater detail, so that other members can learn from their experience.

The God who unleashes His wrath upon those who intentionally sin against Him is the same God who showed mercy upon us by sending His Son to die on the cross for our sins. How are you living your life in response to this undeserved grace and mercy? Are you actively sharing Him to pre-believers around you? (As a cell, prayerfully identify the ungodly beliefs or obstacles which are preventing them from coming to know Christ. Set aside time to pray for them.)

(Leader's notes) *If God did not exercise mercy and restraint towards us, we would most certainly be doomed to eternal suffering in hell, as we commit offenses towards God even subconsciously. Having received the exchanged life, we should not be foolish to exchange it back. We should live in fear and reverent awe of Him, so that we would be worthy to receive His grace and mercy. As Christians we are committed to sharing the good news of the gospel and His name. Encourage members to focus on the urgency of these last days, the reality of an eternal hell for those who do not believe, as well as the power of God to save through the death of Jesus Christ our Lord.*