

GOD'S OTHER SIDE

Psa. 103: 8-10

Intro: There is no doubt but that David ~~was~~ literally overwhelmed by the mercy of God as he wrote this Psalm. (The Hebrew word is TOPI.)

He mentions it ⁴x:

(1) v. 4 - translated "lovingkindness."

(2) v. 8 - "plenteous in mercy."

(3) v. 11 - "so great is his mercy."

(4) v. 17 - "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting."

Not only does it speak of the kindness of God, His grace, His mercy, but Benjamin says, "The primary idea seems to be that of eager and earnest desire, ardour, zeal by which one is actuated" (p. 331).

"His benefits" are the result of "his mercy."

It is God's nature to be kind, merciful, gracious.

Bridlestone suggests that the parable of the good Samaritan illustrates all that is found up in this word - MERCY! Cf. Luke 10:30-37.

This is primarily why David says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul..." All of God's dealings with him have been in mercy.

But - WILL YOU NOTE THAT IT COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE?

God has another side.

The expression, "slow to anger," indicates this.

So do "diseases" (the present fruit of sin), "destruction", or the pit (the future consequences of sin), and verses ⁹⁺¹⁰ imply the same.

The reason for this is stated in v. 1. His name is a "holy name." And because He is "holy" He "executes" (works or does) righteous acts and justice.

He is a God who has never committed sin, and who will not tolerate sin.

Therefore, when men ~~face~~ sin, they face the prospect of experiencing the wrath of God.

First of all, then, in understanding "God's anger," let us look at

I. THE THREEFOLD PICTURES OF SIN GIVEN IN THIS PSALM.

A. In v. 3 you have the word "iniquities." It is repeated in v. 10.

This word speaks of the way in which man has sought to thwart and to pervert the purposes of God.

He may do this consciously or unconsciously. He may not even have stopped long enough to think that maybe God does have some purpose for men, that life today is not what he intended it to be.

By our "iniquities" we have turned life upside down (its use in Isa. 24:17).

All sin is a perversion of life, and v. 3 indicates that they are sins which must be forgiven. We cannot escape responsibility for them.

THEY STIR UP THE WRATH OF GOD.

"Iniquities" are wrongs, wrongs because they are not right in the sight of a holy God.

So here we have man as a wrongdoer, facing the judgment of God.

B. The second word is "sins."

You find it in v. 10a.

Here we see man in his weakness.

It seems to be an advance over the first word in that here we have a person who is trying to please God. He wants to do right. He may even know what is right. BUT HE CANNOT DO IT BECAUSE HE IS WEAK.

He tries and fails.

He tries and falls short.

He tries and misses the mark.

He is a SINNER.

This is a part of the effect of sin upon the human race.

"How to ~~find~~ ^{find} that which is good" we "find not" (Rom. 7:18).

Righteousness is not an option which God places before us; it is an absolute necessity.

c. The third word is "transgressions" (v. 12).

Here we see man as a REBEL.

He is in revolt against God; he refuses to subject himself to the authority of God.

He wants no limitations.

Here again, knowledge is not the problem. But there is an unwillingness to stay by the Word of God.

This is God's lament in Isa

1:2,

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled (transgressed) against me."

All of these may not apply to you, but one certainly does. It hits everyone. And anyone brings us under the wrath of God.

However, the Psalmist is talking as a child of God. He is praising God that this awful problem has been settled.

In v. 3 he had praised God that his sin was "forgiven", meaning it was pardoned, he had been cleansed, and that he was now enjoying the favor of God.

No wonder he is praising God for his

mercy.

But in looking at God's other side He worships Him (and remember that v. 8 is like a doctrinal confession of faith for Israel) - that He can see in retrospect

II. THE SOLEMN AND YET WONDERFUL PICTURE OF GOD.

He is capable of anger, terrible anger - but God is "SLOW TO ANGER."
Just what does this mean?

← "Slow" is a word which in Psa. 23:6 is translated "for ever".

It means that when you and I look back over our lives it seems like it takes God forever to get angry.

Can you read the OT without being amazed at the patience of God?

Or, even more so, can you look on your own life, and fail to praise God that He is "slow to anger, plentiful in mercy"?

No wonder Charles Wesley wrote:

Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners spare?

I have long withstood His grace,
Long provoked Him to His face;
Would not hearken to His calls,
Grieved Him by a thousand falls.

Think of the times when He would have been perfectly righteous in stating our doom! But He is "slow to anger."

Psa. 76:7,
78:21, 31, 35,
39, 44, 50, 58,
59.

Because of this -

(1) v. 10 tells us two things that God has never done with His children and

(2) v. 9 tells us two things which some day He will never have to do again.

What has He never done to His own?

He has never "dealt with us", worked, or done, according to our sins, and He has never give us what we deserve ("rewarded us") because of our sins.

One sin makes us worthy of death - physical and eternal. And yet God has spared us, reluctant to bring us under wrath, anxious to display His mercy.

WHAT A MARVELOUS GOD WE HAVE!

But what is it that God will never have to do again.

Look at v. 9.

How much more you and I can understand about this than David could, and yet the Lord let David enjoy this truth too!

The day is coming when the Lord will no longer have to "chide" us. This means to discipline us, to contend with us, lit, to seize us by the hair.

He won't do this any more.

"Neither will He keep His anger for ever."

This means, not that He will one

day let His anger be manifested against His own, but that the day is coming when He will no longer continue to use it, or reserve it for future use.

Why?

David would say, Because it is forgiven, removed, cleansed.

But even more - Psa. 17:15

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

John say,

"We shall be like him, for we shall see him as He is"

(1 Jn. 3:2).

Concl: Christian, can you keep from praising God with David?

Not only has He been "slow to anger" in spite of our sin, but He has so completely settled the problem that the day is coming when for us He will put away His anger for ever.

And this He does through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know Him as your Saviour? God's wrath fell upon Him, that you and I might receive His mercy.