

sermon study summary

Foundational Truths of Christianity Part 6

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God is Holy and Just

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There are two kinds of fear. BAD fear paralyzes us from trusting God and doing what God calls us to do. GOOD fear alerts us to avoid doing destructive things. Of all the good fears, none stand out more in the Bible than the command to fear the Lord. Psalm 111:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

GOD IS LOVE. Because God is love and God is good, He is for us!

GOD IS HOLY. Because God is holy, He is against our sin and rebellion. We can never fully appreciate the LOVE of God and/or understand what it means to fear the Lord until we understand what the Bible teaches about the God’s holiness and justice! There is both a tenderness and a toughness to our heavenly Father’s love. God is not just loving and gracious, but He is also holy and just. God doesn’t conform to some holy standard. He IS the standard! He is without sin.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, their relationship with God was immediately fractured NOT because God is a mean, ruthless despot but because God is HOLY and good, and God cannot tolerate sin. God loves us, but He despises our sin. He despises sin and evil because He is fiercely protective of us and of that which is good, right and pure.

While God’s holiness is good and beautiful, there is an aspect of His holiness that is not safe. It’s not safe when we mess with what is good, right and beautiful. God is “a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29). Fire is a beautiful thing, a gift of God, yet if we fail to respect it, it can destroy us. It is in God’s nature to reject that which is sinful and evil and to protect and restore what is right and good.

Ever since man turned his back on God in the garden, God has been on a mission to restore righteousness, to restore our relationship with HIM and to restore our relationship with one another. God can’t help it, because it’s who He IS. HE IS HOLY!!!

GOD IS JUST. Because God is just, He cannot ignore sin or injustice, not only because sin is destructive, but because our sins are crimes against Holy God, and like any crime, they must be paid for. God’s wrath is directed toward sin and rebellion.

Wrath is not part of God’s basic nature. If there were no sin, there would be no wrath. God’s wrath is an expression of His love. God pours out His wrath on evil and sin because He loves us and because He is fiercely and forcefully opposed to anything or anyone that is set on destroying us or our relationship with the Lord. God’s wrath is an objective, rational response to sin and evil that comes from a heart of love. God wants us to take sin seriously because sin is destructive!

Fearing God in the right way and loving God go hand in hand. Like in a marriage, you will struggle and fail at times in your relationship with the Lord. As long as the direction and passion of your heart is to love and respect God and to follow Him, you can know you are in relationship with God even when you fall short at times and need to ask for forgiveness.

And here’s the amazing part: The more you get to know the Lord, the more you will see Him as a Friend to enjoy rather than a taskmaster you have to please.

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is one fear you have lived with? Have you overcome it? If so, how did you do it?
2. Who has demonstrated both tenderness and toughness in their relationship with you? How did it impact you?

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read Exodus 15:11, Psalm 99:9, Habakkuk 1:13, Romans 1:18, and Hebrews 12:29. What do these verses reveal about God's holiness and justice? How can we cultivate a healthy fear of Him?
4. Consider Psalm 147:11 and 1 John 4:18. How do these verses show that fearing God and loving Him go hand in hand?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. What are some ways we can misinterpret God's love for us? How can we develop a more wholesome and accurate view of His love?
6. How would you explain to someone the balance between God's love and His wrath? Refer to Ezekiel 18:32.

For Personal Reflection / Prayer

Who or what do you fear more than God? Repent of these idols and put them in their proper place. Let God's holiness, justice, and love lead you to take your sin seriously in your relationship with Him.

THE WORD (NIV)

Exodus 15:11

Who among the gods
is like you, Lord?
Who is like you—
majestic in holiness,
awesome in glory,
working wonders?

Psalm 99:9

Exalt the Lord our God
and worship at his holy mountain,
for the Lord our God is holy.

Habakkuk 1:13

Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;
you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.
Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?
Why are you silent while the wicked
swallow up those more righteous than
themselves?

Romans 1:18

The wrath of God is being revealed from
heaven against all the godlessness and
wickedness of people, who suppress the
truth by their wickedness,

Hebrews 12:29

for our "God is a consuming fire."

Psalm 147:11

the Lord delights in those who fear him,
who put their hope in his unfailing love.

1 John 4:18

the Lord delights in those who fear him,
who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Ezekiel 18:32

For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone,
declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, Gene and Karen Gibbs, Dave McMillin, Jem Ong, Sandi Somers, and Jorel Quemuel