

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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Does God Bring Judgment Upon the Wicked Today?

April 5, 2020

Sermon Text: Romans 1:16ff

Scripture Reading: Romans 1:16-32

This morning I feel it is necessary and appropriate to deviate from our study of the Gospel of Matthew in order to deal with a very common and wicked perversion of the gospel of Christ. I have come across it repeatedly and did so again this last week. The people who expound it claim to be Christians. They claim to know what God says, who God is, what God does, and what the Bible says. But their god is an idol – an invention of their evil imagination. They are arrogant and hate God's truth.

Let me see if I can state what they so boldly and shamelessly announce as "Christianity," –

God is love. God loves everyone. God accepts everyone. God never brings any kind of judgment upon us. Jesus never judged anyone. We are never to judge anyone. Anything that is painful or evil is never sent to us by God. Such things are simply the result of a fallen world where bad things happen to people. But none of these things ever comes from God. The Bible, they say, never says anything else but that God always acts in love and kindness toward everyone.

I have had numbers of experiences on social media and in person with these kinds of people. They detest any claim that famine, pestilence, plague, or any such thing is sent by God. So any suggestion that, for example, the terrible things that occurred on 9-11 or this present virus pestilence is abhorrent to them and anyone who would say such a thing is cruel and hateful. When you rebuke them for this false gospel, this idolatrous notion of

God, their fangs come out and they judge you to be a very wicked person.

And so here we are in the midst of this present pestilence. Actually, the reality is that we live in a world where pestilence and famine and wars and death and oppression of innocents happens every single day. It is easier, or *apparently easier*, to explain evils that more obviously come directly through the doings of evil people: wars by the Hitler type tyrants, abortion at the hands of wicked abortionists, and so on. (Though it is an error even in these cases to say that God did not decree them – yet without sin, without any taint of evil in Himself).

But what we specifically want to think about today is the kind of calamity we face with this present pestilence. It is the kind of calamity we might call “natural,” because it seems to come from “nature.” It is of the category of volcanoes, floods, earthquakes, the black plague, hurricanes and tornadoes, etc. (though it may turn out that evil men had more of a hand in its origin than we might know).

But here is the question before us: *does God send things like plagues, earthquakes, storms and such calamities upon the world? Upon nations? Upon us? And if He does, why does He do it? Does God every invade this world in temporal (as opposed to the final) judgment?* That is the question before us. That is the premise that these counterfeit “Christians” absolutely and energetically deny. They detest any such suggestion.

Now, I want to demonstrate to you something that most of you already know, but I want to make it very, very clear from Scripture so that no one who desires to know God’s truth will be misled by these false teachers. And it is one of these subjects that is difficult to know how to begin with because *the truth that God does indeed enter into judgment with a wicked world and with wicked people is on most every page of the Bible!* The horrid and incredible arrogance of people who deny this truth and who claim to be Christians and who claim that they know what the Bible says is nauseatingly apparent. I always tell such people (and they hate me for it) that if in fact they believe what they

are saying, then there is no way that they are Christians. That they are not born again, that they do not know God and that He does not know them.

Alright then, let's just pick a place to begin and address this subject.

I. God is Indeed Good and He does not Desire that Anyone Should Perish

1 John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. (8) Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Psalms 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

1 Timothy 2:1-4 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, (2) for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. (3) This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, (4) who desires all people to be

saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God is love. God is good. In fact, love and goodness find their origin in God, and in God alone. All aspects of love and goodness – mercy, kindness, grace, generosity, blessing – all originate in God. There is no evil in Him. God cannot sin. God cannot be unjust or unrighteous or unkind or unloving, because to do so would be a contradiction of who He is in His very essence. God is not just loving, or good, or kind – God IS love, He IS goodness, He IS kindness.

But our question this morning is this – *does God, who is love and goodness and mercy and kindness – does this God every bring judgments upon man?* And I suppose what we should do before we proceed in seeing what the Bible says is to define our term. What is *judgment*?

Judgment is the determination of guilt or innocence, truth or error, right or wrong. To judge, the act of making a judgment, is to declare such a determination. In the Bible in respect to God and His creation, judgment is most

often spoke of in the sense of condemnation – of the pronouncement of guilt.

Romans 2:1-3 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. (2) We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. (3) Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?

Now, is it possible for God, who is love and who is goodness, to *judge the wicked, to pronounce condemnation upon the guilty, or to punish them?* The answer is obvious. *Justice is good. Justice is love. If God does not judge the guilty, then God is not good and God is not love.* Would you say that a judge who refuses to condemn the guilty is good? Is such a judge acting in a loving manner by refusing to exact justice for the victim?

II. Does this God Who is Love and Goodness, Bring Calamity

Upon the World, Upon Nations, Upon Us?

As I said earlier, this is the thing that these false Christians insist upon – that calamities and plagues and pestilence and hurricanes are not sent by God. That these things are just events that happen in a broken world. God is grieved about them and He loves everyone, but He would never send such things and certainly never in any kind of judgment.

Before I give you some of the many examples in Scripture that refute such nonsense, let me ask you to think for a moment about the implications of this false teaching.

If evil events and calamities are just things that happen in a fallen world, and if God has no part at all in them, then this world and its evils – the hurricane that comes, the tornado, the flood, the virus – is out of His control.

Understand? If God does not decree all things that come to pass (yet without sin), then God is not sovereign. He is

not omnipotent. This often quoted verse cannot be true:

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Nothing in this verse is possible if God does not order all things. ALL THINGS. Want to be afraid and terrified of the virus? Then embrace a “god” who does not control and direct viruses and follow that assumption out to a logical conclusion. Pray? Oh no, you can’t pray. You have no one to pray to except an impotent idol.

Alright then, here are just a few of myriads of examples in the Bible that tell us God sends judgment upon the world:

Genesis 3:13-19 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” (14) The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. (15) I will

put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (16) To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” (17) And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; (18) thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. (19) By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

What you will find when you deal with these people who insist that God never judges men and that nothing in this world is to be interpreted as even possibly being sent upon us by Him, is that they are liars. They will carelessly reference some scripture, but in fact they don’t know what the Bible says and they don’t want to know. In this case, one of them told me that God’s

expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden was not a judgment. He was protecting them. So they twist and pervert the Bible to suit their own idolatrous theology.

Job 1:8-12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" (9) Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? (10) Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. (11) But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." (12) And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

1 Kings 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

Acts 5:1-5 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, (2) and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. (3) But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? (4) While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." (5) When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.

1 Corinthians 10:1-12 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, (2) and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, (3) and all ate the same spiritual food, (4) and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. (5) Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. (6) Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. (7) Do not

be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." (8) We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. (9) We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, (10) nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. (11) Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. (12) Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

1 Corinthians 11:26-30 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (27) Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. (28) Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (29) For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. (30) That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

1 Timothy 1:18-20 This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies

previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, (19) holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, (20) among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, (5) you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Romans 1:18-25 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (19) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. (20) For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (21) For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (22) Claiming to be wise,

they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (24) Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, (25) because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

This past week Franklin Graham was interviewed by the news media because his organization, Samaritan's Purse is setting up a field hospital in Central Park in New York City. It is an excellent facility and a very good work he and his group are doing. Very well done. Some 70 doctors and nurses and they go all over the world.

As he was interviewed, he made it a point to say that God loves us, that He sent Christ into this world to take the sins of man upon Him and show God's love for mankind. We all need to turn to God.

The problem is however that this is not the complete state of affairs that the

Bible teaches. It is what Graham left unsaid that is the problem. These false teachers I am speaking of here would have no problem at all with what Graham said. Here are errors:

- God does not love all mankind in the same way.
- Christ's death on the cross does not automatically save everyone (I don't think Graham believes that but he was not clear enough)
- There is a reason things like this plague come upon us.
- We all need to consider what it is that God is teaching us through these calamitous times.

III. Why Does God Bring Judgments Upon Us?

Alright then, realizing that these false teachers in their arrogance will have stopped listening already, I am just speaking now to those who have ears to hear. Given that God does send calamities into this world, we must ask – why? He is sovereign and rules over all things, including this fallen world. No tornado comes without His permission and decree. No pestilence.

Nothing. So why does He bring these things to us.

Well, let me suggest that the answer *depends upon who you are*. That is, are you a rebellious, sinful person living your life as if God was irrelevant to you? Or are you a Christian who belongs to Christ? You see the distinction here for example:

John 3:17-21 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (19) And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. (20) For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (21) But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

Who you are in God’s sight depends upon what you think of His Son. Do

you believe Christ and obey Him, or do you reject Him and go your own way?

The Message of a Calamity to a Rebel

If you are living your life your own way, going about your life as if really God is irrelevant to you, pronouncing yourself “good” enough for God, then when a pestilence or other event that rocks your world arrives, you can be quite sure that God would have you *consider your ways*. That you would at least consider the possibility that God is at odds with you, that He has been very patient with you (he could have just wiped you out by now, but he hasn’t), and that He is working to get your attention.

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” Matthew 17

Many, many people in this country have heard the good news message of Christ and His death on the cross for the sins of all who believe in Him, as the only Savior through whom God puts us back in right standing with Him, but most have refused to listen. And if you

are one of them, there is indeed a message from God for you in this present viral pestilence.

Isaiah 1:18-20 “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (19) If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; (20) but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

One day, if you persist in the hardness and arrogant pride of your heart, then that final judgment day is going to arrive and it will be too late, too late for you to repent. You will be lost forever.

The Message of a Calamity to the Christian

God does not always keep His people untouched by the calamities He sends into this world. You can be sure that there will be people who love Christ and serve Him perish from this virus. Being a Christian does not give us a “get out of the plague free” card while living in this world. This life is

temporal. Our present bodies are wearing out. We are not to love this world and live as if this life in it were our real life.

And I suppose that this is one of the messages the Lord would remind His people of in such times:

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

I want to go fishing on the ocean this summer. This will be the first summer in many years that Verla is going to be able to go with me because she is retired now from her job. I have everything ready. The boat is all serviced and set up. All the rods and reels are ready with leaders and lures attached. We know how to fish now on the ocean and how to haul in the fish! But all the ports are closed! I don't know how long it will be

before we can go. I hope only a few more weeks, but the fact is, what if due to this virus or some other event unforeseen by me – I never get to launch that boat again?

This world is passing away. This world is not right. This world has death in it. This world has evil and evil people in it. Things are not the way they should be. And all these things are some of the truths that God would have His people remember as He brings trouble into our lives.

Philippians 3:18-21 For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. (19) Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. (20) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

God most certainly does bring calamity and judgment into this world, to the wicked for their rebellion against Him,

and even touching His own people for their good:

Hebrews 12:5-6 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. (6) For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”