

God's Love Saves Us

Westlake VBS 2017

“But God demonstrates his own love to us [in] that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Much more, then, having now been justified by his blood, we will be saved from the wrath [of God] through him” (Rom 5:8–9).

The Wrath of God: Though God is a loving God who wants what is best for us, he cannot overlook sin, and because we have all sinned, we deserve his wrath (punishment).

1. The word *wrath* (Gr *orge*) is used 36x in the NT (12x in Romans) and can mean either “a state of relatively strong displeasure, with a focus on the emotional aspect; anger” or “a strong indignation directed at wrongdoing, with a focus on retribution; wrath” (BDAG).

(The root [Gr *orgao*] literally mean “to teem or swell up” and metaphorically “to constitutionally oppose” [HELPS].)

2. Yet, more than simply denoting emotion, *wrath*—especially when applied to God—often refers to the subsequent “judgment” or “punishment” – Rom 5:9.

3. The wrath of God includes both temporal and eternal aspects—temporal in his discipline of sin now, and eternal in the coming punishment of sin in hell – 1:18; 2:5.

4. God is right in punishing sin, and when we stubbornly disobey Jesus, we deserve the full expression of divine wrath – 2:5, 8; Eph 2:1–3; 5:3–6; Col 3:5–6; John 3:36.

5. However, it is possible to avoid and even appreciate the wrath of God. If we put our faith in Jesus, we will not be condemned – 1 Thess 1:9–10; Rom 5:9; see 8:1; 12:19.

The Death of Christ: The only way that God could avoid punishing us (sinners) was through the death of Jesus Christ—Jesus dying in our place.

1. The central theme of Rom 5:8–9 is that the death of Jesus is the ultimate demonstration of the nature and extent of God’s love for us – see John 3:16.

2. Though some debate whether the death of Christ is substitutionary or representative, it is evident that what Jesus did for us removes sin and wrath – Rom 5:8–10; Isa 53:4–12; 2 Cor 5:20–21; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 2:24; Mark 10:45.

3. Accordingly, the blood of Jesus justifies, reconciles, purifies, cleanses, releases, purchases, redeems, and unites us – Rom 5:9; Col 1:20; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Rev 1:5; Acts 20:28; Eph 1:7; 2:13; see also Matt 26:28; 1 Pet 1:18–19.

4. The specific focus in Rom 5:8–9 is on the certainty (“much more”) that the blood of Jesus can make sinners righteous and provide us with hope.

(Interestingly, there is only one other direct reference to the blood of Jesus in Romans. Rom 3:25 highlights the public and propitiatory nature of Jesus’s blood.)

5. The death of Christ insures that those of us who have been justified will not experience wrath, and his life guarantees that we will be eternally saved – 5:9–10.

The Plan of Salvation: That Jesus has died for us and will rescue us from wrath is the message of gospel, but we must obey it to experience this salvation.

1. There are elements of the gospel that are more prominent than others, namely the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ – 1 Cor 15:1–8.
2. Yet, the gospel is not merely something that must be heard; it must be obeyed—lest we be eternally separated from God – 2 Thess 1:6–9; see Rom 1:1–6; 2:5–11; 10:12–17; 16:25–26.
3. We obey the gospel by conforming to the gospel. Since Christ died, was buried, and was raised, we must do the same – Rom 6:3–5; see Acts 22:16; 1 Pet 3:21; Mark 16:16.

(We are saved by the grace of God when we hear the gospel, believe it, turn from sin, confess Jesus as Lord, and are buried with him in baptism.)

Conclusion: As sinners, we are subject to the wrath of God, but because of his love for us, Jesus died for us so that we can be justified. If we will obey the gospel, we can be saved from our sins and enjoy eternal life with God.

In Christ Alone
Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend
Eb-3-Sol

1. In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;

This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

2. In Christ alone, who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the one He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For every sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.
3. There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.
4. No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.