

1Tim 23-11-05b

We're going to pick up our study now in 1 Timothy chapter 2, and once again, I cannot emphasize enough, and we have tried to emphasize it by way of coverage and review, this epistle from the Apostle Paul to Timothy is the description of the priorities of our lives as believers. What they used to call the Christian way of life. We are defined by these priorities.

We are challenged, we are exhorted, we are commanded to cultivate a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. We are commanded and exhorted to pray with the aim of leading a peaceable and quiet life in reverence and godliness. The aim is not ultimately prevailing in circumstances.

Circumstances will sometimes not resolve in a happy way. Tragedies occur, setbacks occur, we have to fall back and regroup, we are stressed, we are oppressed, we are wronged, we fail and wrong others. This world is full of tribulation, and from the lips of the Lord Jesus himself, in this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer.

I have overcome the world. Now, those who want to go down a progressive Christianity path of deconstructing and reconstructing have observed that there are abuses, there are misunderstandings, there have been bad things perpetrated by people who have not rightly divided the word of truth. I want to read you something from Gregory Boyd.

He is the author of the book that I commended to your attention about letters from a skeptic where he was corresponding with his father, and his father had been a lifelong atheist, but in receiving cogent and rational and reasonable answers to his objections, his father, very late in life, came to faith in Christ. And then himself suffered some very severe physical setbacks, but it just made his faith shine all the more. And he got a late start, but he came from behind and sprinted to the finish, Greg Boyd's father did.

And it's a really wonderful and inspiring story that it is never too late to get with the program. But in other areas, I am not arriving at the same understanding as Greg Boyd. He is a professor at a Christian university.

And part of where we part ways comes in the next verse. God in 1 Timothy 2, verse 4, desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. There is the temptation to believe that God's desires always come to pass.

And so if God desires all men to be saved, then all men will be saved. And this is the root and ground and one of the favorite passages for those who believe in universalism. Some people are just slower to respond and slower to accept and slower to be taken into the fold.

But if God desires all men to be saved, then all men will be saved because God can't

have an unfulfilled desire. Where this is found in scripture escapes me. I've pretty much done the Bible from the index to the maps and I have not found a place where it says every desire of God is like the Midas touch.

And if God thinks a thought and has a desire, it will immediately be fulfilled because he's omnipotent and there's no control over his omnipotence. If he wants all men to be saved, well, guess what? All men are now suddenly saved. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all come to repentance to change of mind, it says in another place.

And yet we know that there are unrepentant people who go to their grave unrepentant. So how can it be God's will that none perish and that all come to repentance and yet some don't? Well, it is possible for the will of God, his desire, his wish to not be fulfilled. Well, you need go no further than the Old Testament description of God's relationship with his people, Israel, where he says all day long, I have held out my hands to a disobedient and stiff necked people.

All day long, I have held out my hands to a disobedient and stiff necked people. So how is it that God could make an appeal to Israel and not have them return to him? Obviously, if God decrees free will, then God will limit himself from forcing that free will into what he might desire. Parents understand this, you have children, and when they reach a certain age, parents have goals and objectives, even expectations.

And you would love for your kids in their teenage years, in their 20s, to have the wisdom that comes from living a couple more decades than that, but they don't. And you can turn yourself into an obnoxious factor if, as a parent, you try to impose your will, your expectations, your wisdom on an adult child. And parents learn, most of them do, that you have to step back and let people learn the way we learned.

We weren't any smarter than them when we were in our teens and 20s, and we made our mistakes and learned from them. And everybody has to, as the old saying goes, you've got to hoe your own row. You've got to focus on your assignment and do the best you can with what you've got.

You can certainly listen to advice and loving counsel and people who have your interest at heart. But if they try to force you, if they try to hem you in and limit your options, this is one of the big crises of children who are in the process of becoming adults is how and when and to what extent do you take the harness and the leash off and let the child make their own decisions and go their own way? You know, you set a curfew or you forbid them to go to a certain school, I won't pay if you go there, you've got to go here. And we understand in the human realm, we don't have the problem of having omnipotence and, you know, I could make you, but God does.

But God, in creating free will, automatically created divine self-limitation. There is divine

self-limitation, and there are things that God wishes. There are things that God wants.

They do not come to pass because he has ordained free will, and he will not interfere with what he has created. He will not. That's the point of free will.

He gave it to the angels, and he has given it to us. So God can desire that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. We've seen in another place where Paul says men should lift up holy hands in prayer, and not all men do.

Not all people do. Men here is anthropos, it's the human race. God wants us to be faithful, and to be loving, and to be hopeful, to have the Christian virtues manifest.

He wants us to abide in the vine and bear the fruit of the Spirit, but we often don't. Well, whose fault is that? There are actually strands of Reformed theology and Calvinism that will say, well, you know, God just didn't ordain that I would be faithful and obedient today. Now, most of them don't, but there are some that do.

There are those who believe in double predestination, that God only ordained some to salvation, and others He did not, and they are inevitably, intractably, and forever consigned to the lake of fire because of double predestination. And others say, no, He predestined some to salvation, and He just doesn't predestine the others. Well, if you can only be saved by predestination, how is that any different? But it takes away the function of genuine free will, of volition, that God has granted to angels and men.

Would it be God's will that Satan revolt and rebel and take a third of the heavenly population with him? Seriously, you think it's God's will that God wills evil? No, but He allows, and there are evils perpetrated in the world that God wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil, and He wills evil God allows. Well, this is something that creates a sense of need. We recognize that sin and evil are a huge problem, and it needs to be solved, and we do not have the power to solve it.

We cannot escape. We cannot deliver ourselves. There's nothing we can do to atone, to remedy, to escape.

It is like cancer. There is not a cure. So, when Paul says, God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, even those who are saved, many of us don't come to a knowledge of the truth.

That word knowledge is our old friend, Epinosus. This means a functional, experiential, practical, applicational knowledge of the truth. We not only know it, but it changes the way we think, speak, and act.

This is functional knowledge. I know how to change a flat, and so when my tire goes flat, guess what? Epinosus, I change it. I use my knowledge.

There's no need to call the tow truck and call some guy and wait an hour and a half for him to show up and change my tire. I have functional knowledge. I've done it in the past.

I know exactly how to do it. I can get myself back on the road much more quickly because I have Epinosus about changing tires. That's what this is.

God desires all men to be saved, to be delivered out from the power and the presence of sin, and to come to an experiential, practical, applicational knowledge of the truth. Well, how many of us as believers have that? There's only a fraction. Why doesn't God make it happen? Why doesn't He just get out the giant spiritual hypodermic and just squirt that knowledge into our soul? It is the function of free will, and God is looking for those who are looking for Him.

You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. People who aren't looking for God don't get Him. That's why you have the lake of fire.

And people who do not want to experience life with God don't have to. God isn't going to force Himself on them. You don't want to go into the eternal future.

You're not sympathetic with God's values, His morals, His justice, His righteousness, His plan and purpose. You don't like it. You think it's unfair.

You've got a better idea. Well, so did Satan, so did a third of the angels, and they are going away. And human beings who follow in that same attitude and make that same decision are going away.

In my view, it is not eternal conscious torment. The Bible doesn't teach that. When you cast something into fire, what happens? Anybody that's ever burned a brush pile, you start out with a bunch of branches and logs and scrap wood and whatnot.

And when you throw it into the fire, it is consumed and it is gone. It is never coming back. You can't go out there and retrieve something and say, you know, now I suddenly have a purpose for this.

When you put something in a fire, and this is universally understood since Adam and Eve left the garden and had to start a fire to stay warm, when you put something in a fire, it is consumed and destroyed. This was the miracle of the burning bush, that burning was not consumed. How strange is that? People going to the lake of fire are not the burning bush.

Angels and people that go into the lake of fire will be consumed and destroyed and will be no more. I think it is the grace of God that they don't have to suffer endless torture. It

would be equally torturous to be forced into a kingdom and to chafe, as many of them will for a thousand years in the millennial kingdom.

The millennial kingdom, among many other things, is a demonstration of what happens if you try to tolerate those who don't love God, aren't seeking God, don't like God, don't want to have anything to do with Him, hate Him and anything that reminds them of Him, and well, let's just try incorporating them anyway and maybe they will come around. That's one of the demonstrations of the ten centuries of the millennial kingdom. Unbelievers will be forced to comply under the rod of iron, and they will comply or suffer judgment, but at the end of that time, with extended longevity, with great health, with prosperity, there's not hunger, there's not sickness, there's practically no death.

It is a wonderfully reconstituted environment. You can find no complaint. Everybody has everything they need.

And yet, when Satan is released, because God has reserved him and brings him out of the hell, when he comes out, hordes flock to him. There are enough to surround Jerusalem and the camp of the saints. They can't wait to get out from under the opprobrious, oppressive, chafing, grinding rule of God, who has done nothing but bless and provide for a thousand years.

And they will out themselves by doing the same thing the third of the millennium where the angels did. They will flock to Satan. He's like a magnet drawing the iron filings out of the sand.

And having self-identified and said, we don't want this man to rule over us. Do you remember the parable that Jesus told about the nobleman who is called to a far country to receive a kingdom? And there are those who don't want this man to rule over us. And they send messengers saying, I don't want this man to be king.

And while he is gone, he entrusts his servants with resources. And he comes back and judges those servants on what they did with the resources, with the talents. And then he says, now bring those before me who did not want me to rule over them and slay them in my presence.

All of the people who want to say that God is fully revealed in the Lord Jesus and the fullness of deity and bodily form, and we'll see some of these in a moment, will never go to that passage or they say it's spurious or the apostle that wrote it misunderstood. It's a misquote. Jesus would never say, bring these people before me and slay them in my presence.

That's not the gentle Jesus. That's not the non-violent, non-judgmental, everybody will be happy over their Jesus. But it is.

And it is a mercy that they do not have to chafe and grind and suffer any longer under

the kingship of somebody that they despise and want to have nothing to do with. They've made their choice. They do not assent.

They do not comply. And they are eliminated. And it's better for the king.

It's better for the loyal subjects. And it is better for the people who don't have to suffer under something they just can't stand. You essentially go to sleep and never wake up.

You don't arise to an eternal nightmare of living under a kingship that you can't stand. Well, so how does this mediatorship work? There is one God. This goes back to Deuteronomy 6.4. The Lord our God is one Lord.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one. There is one God. There is one mediator between God and men, Anthropoi, the Anthropos, Christ Jesus.

He partook of human flesh. And he is of that flesh evermore. This is the proper understanding of the Lamb in Revelation.

The Lamb as it had been slain. You can't slay God, but you can slay a Lamb. And the Lamb speaks of the humanity of Christ.

Who gave himself a ransom for all. Ransom. This is the word, and I'll apologize in advance for the Greek here, but lutron.

Lutron comes from luo, which means to loose or destroy. And lutron is the word that means ransom. It means a substitute.

It was used in Greek for ransoming captives, ransoming prisoners. There are prisoners that we know about in the news today. And if there was a way to pay a certain amount of money and get those people freed and back to their homes and their families, people would want to try to pay that price.

That is what lutron is. It has always meant that. It meant it in ancient Greek.

It meant it in Koine Greek. It means it in Greek today. Lutron.

It is a ransom price. You give somebody the money and you get the person. You ransom them out.

There is an exchange. There is a substitution. You have this person and I have this price.

I will pay this price and I will get this person. We call that in theology, penal substitutionary atonement. You know what the word penal means? The penal code.

This is legal. It's law. There is a law that says if you pay the fine, the ticket goes away.

If you serve the time, you are no longer penalized. You have a sentence to serve. You

serve it.

Maybe it's just community service. Maybe you pay a fine and community service. Maybe you have to go to jail for some period of measured time appropriate to the offense.

There are laws. There is structure. There are judgments.

There is a process whereby these things are determined. What is the penalty for this kind of crime? That's the law. So when you say penal, this means according to the law.

Substitutionary means there is a lutrone. There is a penalty that has been assigned because of a particular crime or set of crimes and this has to be paid. Atonement is that this price is paid not out of a reservoir of cash, but by a self-sacrificial act.

Something has to be sacrificed. In the Old Testament ritual, this was a lamb or a goat or an ox. These were the blood sacrifices that pictured the substitutionary atonement that the Lord Jesus would accomplish on the cross.

They were shadows that taught about it. I want to read you something by Greg Boyd, the aforementioned Greg Boyd. If asked what Jesus came to do and how He did it, what would you say? He came to save us from our sins.

It was said at His birth, wasn't it? You will call His name Yeshua. Why? He will save His people from their sins. Notice it doesn't say He will save all men from their sins.

He will save His people. It turns out that His people are more than just believing Israel, it's also believing Gentiles. But His people are uniquely His.

He will save His people from their sins. Very good. This is what Greg Boyd says.

Most contemporary Western Christians would automatically say something like Jesus took the punishment from God that I deserved. Does this not reflect Scripture? The wages of sin is death. All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The Roman road that people have often used for evangelistic purposes. We are sold under sin. How can we escape? We have to be delivered.

We can't do it by our own efforts or works. By grace you have been saved through faith. That not of yourselves.

This penal code that allows for the payment by someone else. Suppose it was just a fine. You ran over a traffic sign and there is a \$600 fine.

You were speeding in a school zone or whatever. Could somebody else pay that fine because you don't have that kind of money laying around? They could. The law allows anybody to write the check.

The law could specify, sorry no, it has to come out of the hide of the person that actually committed the offense. And if you don't come up with the money then you are going to jail. And you are going to stay in jail until you do come up with the money.

Of course in jail you can't earn the money so you are going to be perpetually in jail. But that is the law. The law says as long as the fine is paid, I don't care who pays it, you are off the hook.

It will be on your record but you are free. That is our understanding. Jesus took the punishment from God that I deserve.

The wages of sin is death. This was pictured in the Old Testament by the death of animals. There are two or three thoughts we have to hold in mind here to get through this.

Western Christians say Jesus took the punishment from God that I deserve. This is what is usually called penal substitution view of the atonement. It emphasizes that Jesus was punished by God in our place.

You notice there has been a little change in vocabulary. Instead of paying the price now it is punishment. He is going to be punished.

And you get the idea that there is anger and wrath and that there is some sort of anger that needs to be satisfied instead of a legal requirement that is incurred by this crime, by this sin. So we have to right away, words mean things. And there is a shift here.

It emphasizes that Jesus was punished by God in our place. His sacrifice appeased the Father's wrath toward us and thus allows us to be saved. So now this is sort of a subjective view.

God got really angry and He wants to smash something. He wants to crush somebody. Somebody is going to die for these unpaid for sins.

Well, I'll put my son on the cross and I'll punish him. I'll get rid of this anger by making him suffer. Now that is a cartoon and a caricature, a straw man that Greg Boyd is now going to set fire to.

This view has been dominant view in Western Christianity since the Reformation. It's all Luther and Calvin's fault. Nobody thought this before them.

Paul certainly didn't think it. Jesus didn't think it. Those rascally reformers came up with this punishment idea.

Now has Catholicism encouraged the notion of punishment and purgatory and light candles and pay money and we'll get your relatives out of punishment? Completely unbiblical, practiced for centuries, yes. But it captures a profoundly important biblical

truth. Jesus did certainly die as our substitute and the cross certainly expresses God's judgment on sin.

But I have a number of unsettling questions about the idea that God had to vent His wrath on Jesus in order to forgive us. Here are a few of them. He's actually got ten questions.

I'm going to go through this pretty quickly because we are looking at God's desire that all men are saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. It doesn't say God has a desire to vent His wrath and satisfy His anger and punish somebody for sin. It is God's goal that there be deliverance and salvation and relationship and life.

Jesus not only said, I am come to bear witness to the truth. What else did He say? I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. Jesus' substitutionary atonement on the cross is the means to an end.

And that end is not biblically so that God can vent His wrath and expend His anger and feel good enough now to let us in the door of salvation. That is a misrepresentation that provides a foundation for Jesus to be changing scriptural truth and changing the fundamental tenets of Christianity, which is what Greg Boyd is about to do. 1. Does God really need to appease His wrath with a blood sacrifice in order to forgive us? If so, does this mean that the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the ultimate description of God's character? And if this is true, anytime somebody says, and if this is true, they haven't actually established its truth, but they've put it out there and now they're going to treat it like it's true.

It's a very often used debate technique. You can see it on UFO and ghost investigation stories on TV. Is this shadow in the photograph a ghost? And if it is, does this mean that so-and-so needs to come and exercise it? And if so-and-so needs to come and exercise it, what sort of equipment do we need to capture it on film? It's a fairy castle built on an initial false assumption that is immediately then treated as truth.

Well, that's what he's doing here. So, does God really need to appease His wrath with a blood sacrifice in order to forgive us? You know the Scriptures well enough. What does the blood of Jesus Christ do? If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship each with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son appeases the wrath of God.

Is that what 1 John 1.7 says? Does it say it in 1.9? If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and He won't be angry anymore. That's not what it says. The work of Christ on the cross is not directed at God the Father.

It is directed at us. It is a picture for us, just as the Old Testament shadow sacrifices are a picture for us to learn from. God doesn't have an anger problem, and the only thing

that will fix it is blood, blood, blood.

Sluice enough blood my way, and I'll make sin go away. Do you ever see that thing with the blood running down the ziggurat that Mel Gibson made, some kind of apocalyptic or whatever? People want to caricature the God of the Bible in that way. No, this is a human idea that the gods have to be appeased by men and women and maidens chained to the cliff or whatever.

No. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is a picture for us of self-sacrifice.

What is the goal of 1 Timothy? What is the goal of this instruction? Appeasing God's wrath? Keeping Him off our backs so His anger doesn't rain down on us? What is the purpose of this? The goal of our instruction is what? Say it out loud. Love. What does John 3.16 say? Love God was so angry at the world that He sent His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes in Him will not perish and will not suffer the anger and eternal torment that God wants to vent.

God loved the world. Jesus said greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. The impact of that, if the man lays down his life, he's gone.

Who remembers that act of self-sacrifice? The friends. And what do they remember? Well it's a good thing the wrath of God was appeased. No, you remember the love that resulted in the ultimate sacrifice.

We have many examples of this. So this is wrong headed from the outset. The first block in the foundation of this argument is crooked and everything built on it is going to be crooked from this point forward.

God's motivation for sending His Son to the cross was not anger, it was love. Do you not know John 3.16, Dr. Boyd? God was so mad at the world. It's not what it says.

Read 1 John. It is all about love. We love because He first loved us, not He sublimated His anger elsewhere so that He could get along with us.

Anger is not the issue, love is the issue. The goal of our instruction is love. And you need a pure heart, a good conscience, and a genuine faith.

Not faith in some fairy castle because you don't want Jesus to be violent. And I will tell you the motivation for this starts with its conclusion and works backward. Society hates violence.

Why are there demonstrations in the street about what's going on in Israel and in Ukraine and the rest of it? Violence is horrifying. The death of children is horrifying. Orphans, widows, suffering, hospitals overflowing, lack of supplies, thirst, hunger.

The world has ever been thus and this is the effect of evil. This is the effect of sin. God loved us and desires to deliver us from a fallen and evil nature that produces a fallen and evil world.

The world wouldn't be this way except for human nature. In fact, I think this is a point Greg Boyd makes in his book, *Letters from a Skeptic*, talking to his dad. His dad says, if there's a God and He's got the power, why does He let suffering take place? Greg Boyd makes what I think is a very effective point to balance my unhappiness with this particular argument.

He said, you know, it has been calculated that in the world there are enough resources. There is enough grain. There is enough vegetation.

There is enough meat to feed everyone in the world. We produce enough food that nobody in the world is hungry. It's not God's fault.

People don't distribute food to those in need. They will hoard it. They will waste it.

They will charge a price for it beyond what it needs to be priced at. If the world was unified with a good heart, a good conscience, a good faith, you could feed the world. We have enough to feed everybody, to clothe everybody, to house everybody.

There is enough. The reason it isn't equitably distributed is human nature. Man's humanity to man.

Look at the supplies they're trying to get into Gaza. The terrorists divert it and secrete it down in the tunnels for their own use. And the people there ostensibly fighting to deliver our suffering and dying up top while they're munching down on UN goods and medicines and what not.

And they are purposely diverting it away from the people. Why? Fallen human nature. And we've all got a fallen human nature.

So is God demanding an eye for an eye? If this is true, what are we to make of Jesus teaching that the law is surpassed by the law of love? Jesus did not teach that the law that demands satisfaction of justice, that there needs to be payment for sin, is not superseded by the law of love. If it was, God so loved the world that he sent Jesus, who healed and fed and blessed and clothed and did all of the things that are the measure of the kingdom. You've done it to the least of these, my brethren.

You've done it unto me. Well, that's what Jesus did. He fed and clothed and housed and freed the slaves out of the slave market and rescued the oppressed and opened the prisons and everybody went free that the Romans had jailed.

Because it's just all about love. Jesus went to the cross to demonstrate that sin and evil

are so horrific. These are the consequences.

There is a lot of death. There is a lot of violence. There is a lot of selfishness.

There is a lot of suffering and oppression that takes place because of sin and hardness of heart and rejection of God. And that rejection requires a penalty to show that God takes sin and evil and rebellion and selfishness and greed and the other avaricious expressions of a fallen nature seriously. It's not a small thing.

It's not something to be brushed aside. Oh, that's okay. Oh, you ran over somebody in the street by accident.

You turned the corner too fast. You had a little to drink. You ran over them.

Well, that's okay. I love you anyway. I love you even though you ran over somebody.

We assign penalties to careless and selfish and criminal behavior to stress that these things are wrong and should not be done. And they have consequences. And God has created consequences for sin beyond its outworking in the environment.

Well, if you're hateful, you're going to hurt people's feelings. Look, that's a penalty. That's a consequence.

Look at that person's hurt feelings. The person who perpetrates it may be insensate. Their conscience has been seared with a hot iron.

So how do you impress upon them that is wrong? You assign a penalty to it. The wages of sin is death. And in Old Testament Israel, you see these animals, there's a lamb that dies in the morning and there's a lamb that dies in the evening.

You know why? Because you are sinful. Your sin cost that animal its life. And you ought to think about that and you ought to be looking for a permanent remedy to sin.

You can't keep slaying animals. The blood of goats and bulls can never take away sin. It requires something only God can do.

It requires new life only God can provide. So these notions that, what about the instances in the Bible, Boyd asks, God forgives people without demanding a sacrifice. This is a misunderstanding that God has somehow required that somebody somewhere has got to die or I can't forgive a sin.

It's not for God's benefit. Give God some credit. The picture of sacrifice is for our understanding to teach us, to impress on us how severe departure from God is.

It's for us. The fact that God can forgive without a blood sacrifice just means He doesn't have to remind us every single time. If somebody has already acknowledged their sin

and the guy beating his breast instead of the Pharisee saying, Lord I thank you that I am not like other men.

And this guy is beating his breast saying, Lord have mercy on me a sinner. Peter at the boat, Lord depart from me, I am a sinful man. You don't need a sacrifice to accomplish what has already taken place.

I know I am sinful. I know I need salvation. Now we can look to the completed work of Christ on the cross and realize that there is a way.

There is truth. There is life through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is all completely twisted and misunderstood.

If God's holiness, number two, requires that a sacrifice be made before He can fellowship with sinners, how did Jesus manage to hang out with sinners without a sacrifice since He is as fully divine and as holy as God the Father? Again, this misses the point. What his conclusion is going to be, you can look these up. Greg Boyd has an entire website devoted to his progressive Christian deconstruct, reconstruct revolution.

And that's what he calls it. It's a revolution. He says, Viva la revolution at the beginning and end of his introductory video.

But his point is that we should not, we should not think of God as ever being violent. There is one paragraph where he talks about God being humble. God is humble.

And he uses the word humble referenced to God ten times in one paragraph. The humble God is non-violent. And in humility he subjected himself because he's trying to woo and that God is non-violent because Jesus is non-violent.

And he goes to the passages where Jesus is the full revelation of God. Jesus is the full revelation of God. And the fact that there are times and places where He is non-violent and He is merciful and long-suffering doesn't mean that He is never going to punish anyone.

He is never going to instigate a war. He is never going to bring perpetrators to justice. He is never going to send those who hate God to the lake of fire because, well, Jesus didn't do it during His incarnation.

Have you seen the wrath of the Lamb in Revelation? Oh, that's all spiritualized. Have you seen what Jesus says about those who are cut in two and apportioned their lots with the hypocrite? Well, that's just figurative. The Romans where Paul says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against those who suppress the truth and unrighteousness.

So, God has no wrath? You're in direct violation of Scripture. So, this truth is important. There is only one way to enter into life.

There is only one way to enter into peace. There is only one way to have a peaceable and quiet life characterized by reverence and godliness, and that is through accepting the atoning, sacrificial, substitutionary work of Christ on the cross. Anything else you do, any charity you perform, any feathers that you smooth, any comfort that you give, if it is not a reflection of and powered by God so that people see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven, it is going to melt with the fervent heat.

It is going to go up in smoke when the heavens are rolled like a scroll because only the things that count on eternity count at all. Any unbeliever can fund relief to the oppressed, but when it comes from, and you can do the very same thing, you can engage in wonderful, charitable, up-building, fruitful, therapeutic work when it comes from a heart that is doing it out of recognition that this is God's will. This is God's way.

This is a part of love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. We can do the very same things, but when God looks at the heart and sees the thoughts and intents there, I am doing this because I love God. I am doing this because I want to abide in the vine and be fruitful.

The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace. The world can pursue those things and fail, but my love and my joy and my peace can be a blessing to others because they are sourced in God. And our presence matters.

Our light shines. People see what we do that is good and are illuminated and become curious and want to be drawn to the light of the Father with His love and His grace, and He can do for them what He has done for us. And that is the ultimate goal.

The goal of our instruction is love. Well, this mediatorship came at a price. This salvation came at a cost, and our motivation to get out of sin, to avoid evil, to not support and enter into that which is fallen, and that which is mortal, and that which is ephemeral, and that which fades away, is because the Lord Jesus has mediated, has made a way, and has connected us across the great gulf, one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus.

There is only one source for true love, true joy, true peace, and all of the other fruits of the Spirit, and it is God. The Lord Jesus is the way. He is the truth, and He is the life.

No one comes to the Father, and therefore no one enters into the blessings, and the fellowship, and the purposes, and the wonderful privileges that are ours in and before the throne of God, going boldly through the rent veil, which is the torn flesh of the Lord Jesus. That flesh was torn, not because God was angry and decided to rip up the furniture. That curtain was torn so that we could enter and come boldly to the throne of grace for help in time of need, and we do it through prayer.

Well, this is so fulsome. It is so fraught, and Paul says this is the top priority. This is what

we need to understand above all.

I urge, I exhort, first of all, these things. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer. We'll pick up and look at this appointment.

Paul is going to come full circle to his appointment as a preacher and an apostle, and we find that each of us has an appointment. We have been ordained just as certainly, just as fully, just as importantly as Paul himself to our calling in this life, and that's what we'll look at next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose love was expressed self-sacrificially for our benefit. We pray that as we seek to represent Him in this life, that our love will be equally sacrificial to self and to beneficial to others, that as we grow in grace and knowledge, full knowledge of the Savior, that the fruit of the Spirit will be manifest, that those who are susceptible, those who are seeking will be drawn to that light and drawn to relationship to You through the Lord Jesus, and that we will have the privilege of speaking that truth in love until the day when the Lord Jesus comes to take us to Himself, whether that's by our death or by the arrival in the air. We want to be ready in either case, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will impress these Scriptures on our hearts so that we can be ready on the day when the Master returns.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.