

The Lord is a Man of War, Part 2

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[0 : 00] Please remain standing as I read the text that we'll be looking at today from Exodus chapter 15, beginning in verse 1. Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise him.

My father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his hosts he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea.

The floods covered them. They went down into the depths like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. In the greatness of your majesty, you have overthrown your adversaries.

You send out your fury. It consumes them like stubble. At the blast of your nostrils, the waters piled up. The floods stood up in a heap. The deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

[1 : 06] The enemy said, I will pursue. I will overtake. I will divide the spoil. My desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword. My hand shall destroy them.

And then you blew your wind. The sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

You stretched out your right hand, and the earth swallowed them. Let's pray. Lord God, as we now turn to your word, would you please open our hearts to the message you'd like us to hear.

Through your Holy Spirit, Lord, may you minister to each and every person in this room according to your specific purposes for them as an individual. While simultaneously, Lord, as you promised to do in Ephesians, would you build us up together so that we form an appropriate body revealing your goodness and glory to the world.

Lord, we pray that you would bless not only our church this morning, but the many other churches who are gathered in your name, who are taking your word seriously, and who are trying their best to present Jesus to the world.

[2 : 13] We pray you had your blessings not only on Providence, but the many churches, both in this country and around the world, who are gathered in your name. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. You can be seated.

We'll dismiss our kids to children's ministry. There's a saying going around in my particular kind of slice of evangelicalism as a pastor, and that saying is, no problem passages.

No problem passages. What does that mean? Well, that simply means that I have resolved, people who use this phrase, and I would use this phrase, have resolved to have no problem passages in the Bible.

And that is because the Bible is not the one with the problems I am. And so the idea is, is that I'm not going to be embarrassed by any part of the Bible.

Rather, I will let the word of God be true and every man a liar. We've been examining a particular part of redemptive history where God is very hard on his enemies.

[3 : 22] He's very good to his people, but he's also very hard on his enemies. He is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart and all of that so that he might destroy Pharaoh and his armies in the Red Sea.

And that's really what Exodus 15 is. Exodus 15 is an accounting of God's execution of his enemies. And what we have when we get to a passage like this is a very important opportunity to learn how to just take the Bible straight with no mixers.

What we tend to do, whether we realize it or not, as evangelical suburban Christians in particular, is we can tend to expect our preachers to become kind of like college bartenders, who when they get to a passage where it's really a hard taste of God's roughness, of God's wrath, we expect the pastor to be a kind of college bartender who mixes in a bunch of sweet things so that you no longer taste the hard thing in the text.

And so we have come to expect our pastors to find a certain passage like this and explain it away and qualify it and add so much, what's the word? Oh gosh, just lost it.

But just add so much sentimentality is the word I was trying to think of, as to essentially ruin the entire point of the passage. The entire point of this passage is the Lord is a man of war, deal with it, right?

[4 : 48] That's the entire point of the passage. And not only deal with it, but divide in it. Because we don't only see the description of God's executing vengeance, but we see his people represented in Moses and Miriam, not just tolerating this insight about God, but rejoicing in this insight about God.

So I don't only want to see hard things in the Bible and say, well, I guess I have to put up with it. It's in the Bible after all. Well, that's not me adjusting myself to the word, is it?

What I want to do is I want to see what God says about himself, and I want to rejoice in what God says about himself. Simple as that. You know, years ago, I watched a documentary called Catfish. Have you all seen this? It's pretty old now. But I think about this documentary all the time. Now, you don't need to listen to this as some kind of recommendation. I don't remember the language or anything like that.

Some of you probably know that, like, I shouldn't even be talking about this. I don't know. I don't remember it that way. I just remember the basic idea. Catfishing has become a term that is used now, especially in, you know, dating apps and so on and so forth.

[5 : 58] But at the time, this was kind of a new idea. And the documentary is of a young man who meets a young woman online, and they begin to have conversations, romantic conversations, and develop a serious sort of emotional bond.

And then at some point, he decides, I want to go visit so-and-so, right? I want to go visit this girl.

And so he drives, I think, over to the East Coast somewhere and finds that the girl isn't real.

She's actually a middle-aged woman who's married, who lives on a farm in, I think, upstate New York or something like that. And the whole third, the whole last act of this documentary, if you will, is this strange sort of coming to terms with, like, you presented yourself falsely.

I fell in love with this thing over here. And you're not that thing. You know, I have genuine, I've walked with the same generation, my whole ministry, I have genuine concern for the state of young people.

And not just young people, but I do have a genuine concern for them. And I see all the deconstruction that's happening. And I feel like, in many respects, believers have been catfished with a false picture of God.

[7 : 15] An overly sentimental picture of God. A sugary sense of God. And then, whether through their own trials or just through reading the text for themselves, they kind of feel catfished.

They see that the God of the Bible and the God of actual reality, the God of providence, isn't as sugary sweet as he was presented by the people who were telling them about God.

And so I think some of the deconstruction stuff going on right now is actually just because sometimes pastors think they know better. And they will actually take a hard text that is simply, God destroys his enemies, yay, that's the text, and qualify that to such an extent that God, the God who is presented in the passage, is no longer in the passage.

So that's kind of our goal today. We want to not only understand the God that is revealed here, but we also want to delight in the God who is revealed here.

No problem, passages. That's the idea. Well, first thing I thought maybe would help us to do that is to just understand that this is a song. Exodus 15 is usually considered to be the first song of the Old Testament, the first song of the Bible.

[8 : 32] But I want you to see that this is a very normative song for Scripture. This is the first song in many significant respects.

This is like almost all the other songs. That's a very important thing to note. I did an easy word search on logos today, or the other day, where I searched two terms, enemy and foe.

And I just wanted to see how many times those terms showed up in the Psalms in particular. And I think this one shows over 110.

I got another number that was something more like 86. But the point is, is that think about that for a minute. Think about God gave us a songbook, right?

He gave us a songbook. And what's in the songbook? The songbook is so that we praise him. But what's in the songbook? The songbook is very, very, very significantly seasoned with militaristic language, with language about God both saving his chosen ones and executing vengeance on the wicked.

[9 : 40] The given songbook to the church is a songbook full of the very same things we see celebrated in Exodus 15. Now, the truth is, is that the modern church has a very significant song crisis on its hands.

And that song crisis is that essentially 99% of the songs being produced for the church have almost nothing to do with battle, have almost nothing to do with God's wrath, have almost nothing to do with God taking vengeance on his enemies and delivering his people and so on and so forth.

This is a problem. There certainly are some songs in the Bible that are simply pure redemption, no discussion of God's judgment and wrath. There are certainly some songs like that. But if you think about it from this perspective, does the current songbook of the evangelical church match and theme what you see in the scriptures songs?

And the answer is no, it doesn't. And so, you know, our guys that have taken so much effort to continually serve the Lord as they lead us in worship, this is one of the many problems they're trying to solve.

This is one of the many problems they're trying to be mindful of. And to find and put before you more songs that are representative of these major themes that we find in scripture.

[11 : 04] So all that to say, thank you guys for doing that. And you have your work cut out for you. But you need to know that that's a thing we're struggling with as not just this church, but the church.

We want our songs to match the Psalms and the themes as well. And so many of the themes in the Psalms have to do with foes and enemies and so forth. Okay, so that's just one thing I wanted to make mention of.

Second thing is this. Moses's reaction and Miriam's reaction to the wrath of God being displayed on his enemies is the right reaction.

It's the normative reaction. It's the appropriate reaction. Again, in verse 1, that Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise him. My father's God, and I will exalt him.

[12 : 04] The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. Moses isn't hesitant to celebrate this working of God's judgment on his enemies.

This isn't a problem for Moses. He actually simply says, the Lord is my salvation because of his execution of judgment.

And later on, and I think this is key, I think it's an important point to make, I guess, is that in verses 21 through 22, not only is Moses singing this song, but Miriam rises up, and she says in verse 21, it says, Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing.

And Miriam sang to them, Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The first thing I want you to know is that Exodus 15 is just a normal Bible song.

Most all the Bible songs include some conversation about God's executing judgment. And the second thing I want you to see is that Moses' reaction and Miriam's reaction are the right reactions.

[13 : 16] We should worship God for this activity. We shouldn't wince back and think of it as, Oh my goodness, God, you're embarrassing me. Like a dad who picks his kids up at school or something. You know, oh my goodness, don't be so like you, please.

You know, that's what teenagers are secretly thinking. You're like, I wouldn't be embarrassed by you if you just changed everything about you. It's like, well, one day you're going to love all of my weird dadness.

And we have to come to terms with who God is and celebrate who he is, all of who he is. Now, I want to talk about Miriam just for a moment.

I sometimes hear that the church's neglect of the militaristic side of Christianity is owing to the church being feminized. Have you heard that?

Like that we're caught in a sentimental perspective on the cross, on God, because the church has been feminized? As if worshiping God as a warrior is a thing kind of more that men would do and a thing that women wouldn't do.

[14:23] So this idea, why are all of our songs off? You know, why are we so frequently not rejoicing in this attribute of God? And some would say it's because we've feminized the church.

And I would just say that doesn't work. That explanation doesn't work. And the reason that that explanation doesn't work is because throughout the Bible, women love God's judgment.

Women love that God executes violence on their behalf. Women celebrate God's vengeance. So I don't think this is a masculine-feminine thing. If anything, it's a modern-ancient thing.

I don't think this is a man-woman thing. Hannah's song. Let me just go through a few of the instances where you find godly women celebrating the God who destroys his enemies. Hannah went through incredible sort of, gosh, just verbal abuse and feeling outcast and ostracized because she couldn't have a kiddo.

And when she finally does have a kiddo, this is the kind of stuff she says in her praise of God. This is from 1 Samuel 2.1. My heart exalts in the Lord. My horn is exalted in the Lord.

[15:34] My mouth derides my enemies because I rejoice in your salvation. Verses 6-7. The Lord kills and brings to life. He brings down to shoal and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich.

He brings low and he exalts. Verse 10. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces. This is sweet Hannah, sweet Baron Hannah saying these things. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces.

Against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed. You know, in the book of Proverbs, you've got wisdom personified as a woman.

And you've got lady wisdom and she makes various appearances in the book. In chapter 1, lady wisdom says this to those who would not listen to her. I will turn.

If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you. I will make my words known to you because I have called and you've refused. Because I've called and you've refused to listen. Have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded.

[16:35] Because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when terror strikes you. When terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind.

When distress and anguish have come upon you. So here is a Bible lady being pretty hard. Of course, we looked last week at the mother of Mary. Who says in Luke chapter 1, For he who is mighty has done great things for me.

And holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud and the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate. So I would just say this. If modern women find this view of God to be objectionable, I don't think it's because they're women.

I think it's because they're modern. The truth is, is that when we look at this issue throughout the scriptures, we don't see a huge difference in reaction to these attributes of God based on gender.

[17:38] The people who know, know. People who don't know, don't know. That seems to be more of the appropriate take. You know, this isn't just true of women in scripture. Women in church history were this way too.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. He has loosed the faithful lightning of his terrible swift sword.

His truth is marching on. A woman wrote that. This is war in earnest, not a childish play. Swords and martial music on a festal day.

Oh, thou Christian soldier, to the cause be true. In the day of battle, there is work to do. Again, a woman wrote that. So what we need to do, among other things, is we need to make sure that we're

raising our young girls to love justice, to love the justice and judgment of God.

And that starts with us not being embarrassed by it. Why is it so important to raise our young girls to love the justice and judgment of God? Well, otherwise, they're going to seek out men who are meek in all the wrong ways.

[18 : 50] And this is also true of older women. We need church mothers who expect their men to fight and win.

That needs to be the standard. And women often, often set the standard in ways they have no idea about. And so I just wanted to take a brief, you know, excursus and say, you know, women haven't traditionally been as concerned about this stuff.

They've mostly been on board and happy about the fact that God executes judgment on the oppressors. And that's because, why?

Who were the most oppressed? So what would we say then about women who now suddenly have great problems with God's execution of judgment on oppression? Maybe they're not as oppressed. Maybe that's one of the things. Who knows? Okay, so that's normal song, normal take. Number three, this is the big one, the big point. And that is, is that the work we see in Exodus 15, the image of the vision of God we see in Exodus 15, what we see in Exodus 15 is just God being normal.

[20 : 02] This is just God being God. This is just God doing God's stuff. We see this same pattern of behavior throughout the entire scripture. You need to remember that the very first gospel promise, does anybody just kind of remember where the very first gospel promise is?

It's in Genesis 3.15. It's a violent promise. What's the very first gospel promise? Genesis 3.15. I will put enmity between you and the woman, speaking to the serpent, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. I think it's also important to understand that this is not simply an Old Testament thing. That would be another mistake we'd make that sort of sets Exodus 15 in a sort of a, you know, a contagion chamber so it can't make us feel gross.

It's like, well, the problem is, is that like, Exodus 15 is just the way God is. And it's not just the way God is in the Old Testament. What's the most quoted New Testament passage?

What's the most quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament? I've said this before. It's Psalm 110.1. Psalm 110.1. It's directly quoted about 27 times.

[21 : 15] It's alluded to far more. Psalm 110.1 is the most quoted Old Testament passage, Old Testament verse in the New Testament. The apostles love this text. What's the text say?

Well, Jared actually read one instance of it from 1 Corinthians 15. The text of Psalm 110.1 is, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

That's the prevailing theme of the New Testament. I would argue that that's the prevailing theme of the book of Revelation. This is the central Old Testament concept that moves all the way through into the New Testament.

And so, and we see this, you know, we see this idea over and over again. We just don't necessarily pay attention to it. For instance, in Colossians 2.13, You see God both saving and destroying.

Colossians 2.13, And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

[22 : 21] This is the great salvation of God. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. And, in the same action, He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

The same kind of idea shows up in Hebrews. In Hebrews 2, we see the saving and destroying work of God as two sides of the same coin.

In Hebrews 2.14, Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, He himself partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

So, this is just God being God. Exodus 15 isn't weird in any way. This is just the pattern of God's work in redemptive history. He saves. He destroys. These are the two things God does.

I would just say, like, this is evident all the way down to God's eternal actions, where there are two locations, one that receives His eternal wrath, and one that receives His eternal joy.

[23 : 29] This is just who God is. And, again, not only am I asking you to be okay with that, I'm asking you to join along with the saints and the triune God and celebrate this.

And if you're not there, I completely get it. I'd love to help you with a conversation to move you in that direction. I certainly won't make fun of you for not being there. But the goal, of course, as it says at the beginning, is, I'm not going to have any problem passages.

I'm not going to have any problem ideas. Because if there's a problem anywhere, it's with me, not with the Word of God, and certainly not with the God revealed in the Word. So, one of the things that we might want to dip into a little bit deeper that's reflected in the story of Pharaoh being destroyed is this idea that when God chooses to destroy His enemies, He often causes them to perish by their own pride.

He often causes them to perish by their own pride. And I'm just going to give you one kind of segment of that data, and it's revealed in a phrase that shows up over and over again in the Psalms, and that is, They fell into the pit they had dug.

They fell into the pit they had dug. That's a very common phrase in the Psalms. And the idea is that God's enemies and their pride seek to devour someone that God loves and has chosen to share His love with.

[24 : 58] And so, in a work of God's providential and sovereign design, He is able to cause the man to fall into the pit that He Himself has dug. Here's a couple of representative verses of this idea.

Psalms 7, 12. If a man does not repent, God will wet his sword. He has bent and readied his bow. He has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts.

Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole he has made. His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends.

Psalms 9, 15. The nations have sunk into the pit they have made. In the net that they hid. That's another one of the phrases that shows up a lot. In the net that they hid. Their own foot has been caught.

The Lord has made Himself known. He has executed judgment. The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. Psalm 57, 6. They set a net for my steps.

[26 : 01] My soul has bowed down. They dug a pit in my way, but they have fallen into it. So one of the things we could say is not only is like Exodus 15 representative of all the songs in the Bible to a great degree, and also representative of sort of the appropriate reaction that we're supposed to have to this work, and also that this is representative of God's general work.

We could say some specific things about God's general work, and one of them is that when He sets out to destroy His enemies, He lets them destroy themselves with their own pride. And we certainly see that is true of the Pharaoh story.

Now here's the spiciest take of the day. All right. One of the ways God does this is He uses His people as bait.

Pretty spicy? I feel like that's pretty spicy. One of the ways God destroys His enemies is that He uses His people as bait. This is certainly, certainly what He does with Job.

He says to the devil whom He means to embarrass, Have you considered my servant Job? He certainly does this with Joseph.

[27 : 10] His whole idea about Egypt and about Israel and the whole purposes of God happened 400 years prior in the life of Joseph. God gives Joseph these two dreams that sort of pronounce, like, you will lead your whole family.

Joseph lets that information slip, as one would, and his brothers turn against him. And all of that was according to God's perfect plan. But most importantly, I think when we evaluate the fairness of God, we have to remember two things.

One, what is my understanding of fairness and where did I get it from? Because very often, it's not from God. So then you stand as the moral judge over God.

There's whole conversations about this thing, and if that's something that you're struggling with, I'd be happy to have a personal conversation with you about that. But the other test of God's actions, I think, are always, how did He treat His own son?

Like, because if He's got skin in the game, then. How did God treat His own son? That's a good way of evaluating God's actions. And I say, well, God uses people as bait sometimes.

[28 : 17] You're like, oh. It's like, well, He certainly did that with Christ. Jesus went to Jerusalem to raise such a row at a particular moment in order to cause those who did not know He was the Lord of glory to crucify Him.

Augustine said it this way, The Redeemer came, and the deceiver was overcome. What did our Redeemer do to our captor? In payment for us, He set the trap, His blood.

I'm sorry. In payment for us, He set the trap, His cross, His blood for bait. The idea is that God actually put Jesus into a particular situation to lure all the principalities and powers to lash out against Him, and in doing so, they would fall into the own pit, the pit that they themselves had dug. And I think the big idea of this sermon, one of the big ideas has to be, God is able to walk and chew gum at the same time. He has two things to do.

Redeem those He has chosen to redeem, and execute judgment on those who are not saved, and He is able to accomplish both things simultaneously. Listen to this passage from 1 Corinthians 1.26.

[29 : 34] Hear how God's redeeming and judging work work together. 1 Corinthians 1.26. 1 Corinthians 1.26.

See that?

God is doing two things, just like Mary talks about, just like Hannah talks about, just like Moses talks about in Exodus 15. He's doing two things. He's redeeming the lowly, the sick, those who recognize their need, those who are dependent on God.

He's redeeming them. He's raising them up, and with the same action of raising them up, He is pushing down those who are full of pride. So in the same action, God is resisting the proud and giving grace to the humble.

So God's able to walk and chew gum at the same time. Now, that's what I wanted you to see about what is normal about Exodus 15. What is normal is, this is a normal Bible song.

[31 : 00] These people are having normal, godly people reactions. This is the normal work of God. But you know, there are some surprises that, I don't know if you've ever thought about this, there are some surprises that come with the new covenant.

It doesn't all just unfold exactly the same, otherwise it wouldn't be a new covenant. And the main surprise, I think that we ought to really pay attention to, is simply this, that through the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has made it possible to simultaneously save and destroy the same person. He has made it possible to destroy his enemies in a saving way. That's pretty amazing. That's pretty amazing.

In other words, what's happening when we identify with Jesus Christ at the cross is we're identifying with his death and then becoming part of his resurrection. And when we identify with his death, we die to self, we die with Jesus spiritually and we're raised to walk in newness of life.

And so the surprising thing about the new covenant in this particular conversation we're having is that it used to be either or. It used to be either I save you or I destroy you.

[32 : 20] And in the gospel, in the cross of Jesus Christ, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he has made a second way possible for his enemies to both be destroyed and saved at the same time.

And that's what was read to you this morning in Romans 5. And that's the surprising thing we see. And we wouldn't have that surprising thing unless God had done what he had done with his son. It all centers around this amazing moment when God took on flesh and offered himself up as a payment for our sins, receiving the wrath of God upon himself, dying under that wrath, and then raising again to walk in newness of life.

And so this is really another way of seeing the Christian life. One way to see the Christian life is I am a man who was defeated. I am a man who was defeated.

I am a woman who was defeated. And that sinner's prayer, however you would talk about that, is the white flag of unconditional surrender. You have nothing, nothing left to negotiate.

[33 : 20] God, you have made me your footstool. I bow my knee before the name of Jesus Christ. I'm a dead man. And the life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me.

That kind of language is all over the New Testament. In 2 Corinthians 5, 14, Paul says, for the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

And he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised. And then the glorious truth in verse 17, therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Now this is key. We hear that part a lot. Let's really think about the next few words. The old has passed away. The old has passed away. What's happened is an execution.

What's happened in conversion is an execution of the old man and a resurrection of a new man who walks with Jesus and is identified with Jesus.

[34 : 29] This is what we all as Christians, if we're really Christians, have to say, we have to join Paul in Galatians 2, 20, where he says, I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

And the life I now live, I live in the flesh. I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me. And I think the other thing I would want to add to this whole conversation, I don't think I'm adding some sugary mix to this conversation, but it is good news.

It is sweet. That is simply to understand that point blank, the Bible teaches the following. The cross is God's preferred way of destroying his enemy.

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Ezekiel 18, 32. But all of heaven rejoices when one sinner repents.

Luke 15, 7. So the cross is God's preferred way of destroying his enemies. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He would much rather destroy every single person with the gospel in many respects than not.

[35 : 44] So we can, what do we do with all this? Well, one thing we can do with this is we can go into the world and say to the world, here's the deal. God's judgment has come and this only ends with you dead.

Choose your death. That seems to be what Jesus was doing a lot actually in his preaching. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul? If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must take up his cross daily and walk after me.

Jesus seems to be making this offer consistently. You're going to die as a consequence of your sin. Which death will you choose?

That death which is eternal and which God pours out his wrath upon you forever or that death which was eternally poured out in a moment on Christ. You choose how you will die.

But you will die. You will either die to yourself in faith in Jesus or you will face the maker, your maker and you will be dealt with in that respect.

[36 : 50] Choose your means of destruction. That's actually the gospel message. Choose your means of destruction.

None of us, none of us are going to make it out of this unscathed. We simply get to choose thanks only to the cross of Jesus Christ made possible because God so loved the world he sent his only son.

Through the cross you have a choice on how you will be destroyed. And friends, friends, friends, friends, it would be so much better for you to face God's wrath at Calvary than to face it in eternity. It would be so much better for you to face God's wrath at Calvary than it would be to face God's wrath in eternity.

This is a reminder to us that we really can't be faithful gospel witnesses if we're ashamed of God's wrath because God's wrath is an integral part of the gospel.

[37 : 56] The gospel is both a display of God's wrath and a way of making even God's wrath work together for the good of those that love him and are called according to his purposes. One day, each one of us will have to stand before the judgment seat of God and God will spend all of eternity doing these two things he's always been doing.

Pouring love out on some and wrath out on others. And the gospel message is really we strip it all apart and we don't try to over-theologize this and get into you know reform theology to which I subscribe.

What you've got to deal with right now is simply this. Choose the way you will be destroyed. That's simple, it's true, and it's straight out of the Bible.

You can identify yourself with Jesus Christ, be crucified with him and raised with him to newness of life, or you can insist that you will deal with God on your own terms when the time comes.

The great joy that we even have an opportunity to be saved from our sins should not be lost on any of us. Let me pray. Lord God, we praise you for your holiness.

[39 : 15] You are good, period. whatever I think of you is actually irrelevant to your goodness, and it's not like I can just go to the God store and buy a new one. You are who you are.

I have to learn to see that my objections to something that you are is more owing to my own sin, my own smallness, my own limitations as a person than anything to you.

How would I stand as judge of the great God of the universe? And so we look at your word today, we see a simple truth. You save, you destroy. You redeem, you judge.

And Lord, we press further into the story, further into the story of redemption, into the New Testament, we see that you have done something amazing. You've made it possible.

You've made it possible for a person to be destroyed in their salvation to align themselves with Christ and the cross and be spared the wrath to come, which is what the apostles told people to do.

[40 : 23] Be spared the wrath to come. Put your faith in Jesus. Thank you, Lord, that you've made this way. And Lord, we're going to celebrate your table right now. We're going to celebrate what Jesus has done when he said that this is the new covenant in my blood offered to you for the remission of your sins.

and oh, Lord, what a glorious thing it is for us saints to come forward and say, I identify with this death. I give my life to Jesus.

I'm not my own. I was bought with a price. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. So, Lord, as we participate in this table, would you fill our hearts full of joy for the way you've made through Jesus Christ.

And it's in his name we pray. Amen. Come and partake of the table. Amen.