
Discussion Questions

Read the passage and quietly meditate on it. Share what jumps out at you. Then begin with prayer.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.... Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.”

John 3:16-18, 36

1. Share how your understanding of God’s love and “wrath” (or fury”) has evolved over the years.
2. What forces have shaped your view of God’s character? What forces are shaping the modern church’s preaching and teaching on God’s character? Do you think today’s churches are accommodating to the culture or simply being sensitive to it?
3. Agree or disagree with this statement: “You know what we need today? More “fire and brimstone” type of preaching. That’ll straighten people out. People need more “fear of God” in them!
4. What struggles do you have in having a balanced approach to love and fury? Do you tend to be the type of person who gives in to the wishes of others in order to please them or do you tend to be strict and a bit harsh, often saying “No” more than “Yes?” Are you a Yes-person or a No-person?
5. What was your home life like? Did your parents spoil you or abuse you? How has that shaped your view of God? How has that shaped your life?
6. What is punishment? What is the goal of punishment? And what do you think of how God punishes us? Have you been able to respond to the sins

of others appropriately so the punishment fit the crime or do you tip in one way or the other: too soft or too harsh?

7. What has helped you develop a more balanced view of God? What has helped you grasp the love of God and the wrath of God?
8. Do you tend to struggle with self-condemnation?

What would your life be like if you really accepted what God did for you on the cross and you internalized Romans 8:1: *“There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

9. What questions do you still have about God’s love and fury?

II. God’s wrath is also an expression of his love for his people.

“Think of how you feel when you see a loved one being ravaged by wrong actions or relationships. How do you feel? Do you have a benign tolerance toward the situation? How do you feel toward a friend who is making horrible decisions and are sinking deeply into the pit of addiction? When I’m in their presence I feel angry. I want to shake them and tell them: ‘Can’t you see what you are doing to yourself? I can’t stand to see you this way! Every time I see you you’ve become less and less the good person you were. I can barely recognize you and it pains me deeply because I love you!’...“Real love stands against the sins that destroy. Love and fury are inseparably bound by human

"Fire and Fury"

John 3: 16-18, 36

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experience. Now, if I, a morally flawed narcissist can feel rage towards someone I love, how much more does a selfless, loving, morally perfect God feel angry at his creation when they do things that harm themselves and other!" by Becky Piper in "Hope Has a Reason."

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate." Matthew 23: 37-39

*"but whoever does not believe stands condemned already"(vs. 18)
"for God's wrath remains on them." (vs. 36)*

Biblical Punishment

*"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth..."
Romans 1:18*

III. God’s love and fury are satisfied and meet together on the cross.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”
(vss. 16-17)

Romans 8:1 says, *“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* Romans 8:1

“Whoever believes in him is not condemned.” (vs. 36)

If You Truly Internalize “No Condemnation”

1. The more you see your sin the more it drives you toward God instead of away from him.
2. You will live without any fear of death, hell, the future or judgement. When you think of meeting God face to face, instead of being afraid, you’ll look forward to it.
3. You’ll deal with your conscience differently.

“Fire and Fury”
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“He is my righteousness, holiness and redemption.” I Corinthians 1:30