

**THE REAL JESUS**  
**A Series on the Book of Mark**  
**“The Wrath and Love of God”**  
**Mark 14:32-51**  
**May 24, 2009**  
**New City Church of LA**  
**Speaker: Kevin Haah**

**I. Introduction**

Honor the veterans on the Memorial Day.

Welcome to New City!

Our vision is to welcome people from all backgrounds. We are an inclusive gospel-centered community of lovers of Jesus Christ. We are inclusive in the sense that we welcome everyone. We are not a church that’s designed for a particular class of people. We are not just a loft-dweller’s church. We are not just a skid row church. We are not a church where only really mature Christians come to worship. We are not a church where only the seekers come to worship. Our vision is to bring everyone into a journey of becoming transformed by the gospel and becoming a lover of Jesus Christ. Rich, poor, mature Christians, and skeptics.

We are in the middle of a series called THE REAL JESUS. We are looking at the Book of Mark and seeing what Jesus was really like. The Book of Mark is really just an account of Jesus written by a guy named Mark. It was written most likely within 20 years of Jesus based on eye witness accounts. A lot of people want to construct their own Jesus. But a Jesus you create in your mind can’t change you. He can’t contradict you because it is you. You and I have to confront the real Jesus. And that’s what we’ve been doing. We are the last week of Jesus life. In fact today, we are at the night of his arrest.

The passage today teaches us about the wrath and the love of God. Most people love to talk about the love of God, and for a very good reason. God’s love for us is amazing. But, a lot of people have problems with the wrath of God.

I know some of you are saying: what’s a wrath? Is it like the Wrath of Khan? Wrath means anger at sin or divine justice or retribution. God is a judging God. God is a just God. God is a God of wrath. And I am not just talking about now, but eternally. You will be judged. Death is not going to be an escape from judgment.

I used to be pretty scared of the idea of a wrathful God. Even the word is pretty scary and the picture I had of God is this huge supernatural Grandpa who looks at everything I do and is just waiting to slam me and punish me for my sins. Even if he doesn't punish me right away, I knew he would be pretty ticked off at me. I didn't like the idea of me, a Sinner in the Hand of Angry God.

Some of you are thinking, man, can I come back when you preach about God's love? Yes, I am preaching about God's love. If you don't understand the wrath of God, you will never understand the love of God.

If you are here for the first time and maybe you don't even know you believe in a loving God, you are starting to squirm. Man it's a sermon on Sinners at the Hand of Angry God. Fire and brimstone. I wonder if I can walk out without too many people noticing.

Here we are, please! I am not going to insult your intelligence. The passage we are going to read is incredibly powerful. It shows us how much God loves us.

Read Mark 14:32-51 (the second book of the NT)

This passage shows us (1) the wrath of God; and (2) the love of God.

## **II. First, the wrath of God.**

- When Jesus started to pray in the garden of Gethsemane, the Bible says he “began to be deeply distressed and troubled. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.”

Mark uses this word that is translated as “deeply distressed” which can also be translated as “horror-stuck.” The Book of Luke (another guy who wrote an account of Jesus) tells us that he was so distressed that his sweat was like drops of blood.

- Why? Why was he so distressed? So, horror-stuck? He knew he was going to die. He said to his disciples multiple times that he was going to be arrested, crucified, and resurrected. He knew. But, why is he now crumbling?

He prays:

“Abba, Father. Everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Why does he ask to back out of this? Isn't that an amazing prayer?

- What was Jesus so horror struck at? It was the cup. The cup. What is this cup? Is Jesus afraid of the torture, physical suffering of the cross, of death? Was he afraid of the emotional pain of abandonment from his friends? Was he afraid of the humiliation that he will face on the cross? I think it is ludicrous to think that Jesus is afraid of pain, insult and death.
- Plato said Socrates took his cup of hemlock (poison) in prison cell in Athens “without trembling or changing colour or expression. He raised the cup to his lips, and very cheerfully and quietly drained it.” When his friends burst into tear, he rebuked them for their “absurd behavior” and urged them to “keep quiet and be brave.” He died without fear, sorrow or protest. So, was Socrates braver than Jesus? Or were their cups filled with different poison?
- Jesus even taught his followers that when they are insulted, persecuted and slandered, they were to “rejoice and be glad.” Was Jesus not practicing what he preached?
- Many Christian martyrs died amazing heroic deaths throughout the history of the church. For example, Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, who was a disciple of John, in the middle of the second century, refused to deny Christ and was burned at the stakes. Just before the fire was lit, he prayed: “O Father, I bless thee that thou has counted me worthy to receive my portion among the number of martyrs.”
- All throughout the history of the church, people have died bravely and with supernatural joy and peace.
- But, here's Jesus crumbling in private. Now, if you were making this stuff up, by-the-way, you would want to skip this scene. I think it is one of the reasons that what Mark wrote is true.
- Why was he so horror-struck and distressed? Why did he ask his father to remove the cup? What is the cup?
- The cup did not symbolize physical pain of being flogged and crucified or the mental or emotional pain of being rejected and despised, but rather the

spiritual agony of bearing the sins of the world. In other words, of enduring the wrath and judgment of God that our sins deserved.

- You see if you look at the OT, the Lord's cup was a symbol of wrath.
  - Job 21:20: a wicked person was said to “drink the wrath of the Almighty.”
  - Isaiah 51: it talks about the cup of the wrath of God which makes men stagger.
  - Psalm 75 talks about cup that the Lord will pour out that the wicked will drink.
  - Jeremiah 25 also talks about the cup filled with the wine of his wrath.
  - The same imagery is carried several times in the Book of Revelation, where the wicked “will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath.”
- It is God's wrath, God's judgment that he is experiencing. He knew it was coming, but now, he started to experience it. That's what made him horror-struck. Bill Lane, a commentator on the Book of Mark, put it this way: “Jesus came to be with the Father for an interlude before his betrayal, but found hell rather than heaven opened before him, and he staggered.” He literally saw hell open before him, because Jesus wasn't just going to suffer physically for our sins, but was going to experience the wrath of God for our sins. He now experienced that wrath for the first time, and he was horror-struck!
- In a city like LA, when we talk about hell or the wrath of God, a lot of people don't like it. They like to hear about the God of grace, love and mercy, but when we start to talk about the wrath of God, the justice of God, people think it is intolerant. But, it is very important for us to understand that our God is both a God of justice and God of love. But, I think the questions are legitimate. So, let me address some of them:
- (1) “How can God of love be filled with so much wrath and anger? If he is loving and perfect, he should forgive and accept everyone. He shouldn't get angry.”

- All loving people are sometimes filled with wrath, not just despite of their love, but because of their love. Sometimes, loving someone means you get mad. I love my family. I have a loving wife and three children. If I see someone trying to hurt them or ruin them or kidnap them, I am going to be really angry! I am not going to just tolerate their injustice against my family. Think about how we feel when we see someone we love ravaged by an abusive relationships. I don't think we respond in benign tolerance as we might toward strangers. No. I think we respond in anger. Anger is not the opposite of love, hate is. And I think the ultimate form of hate is indifference. Someone said: "God's wrath is not a cranky explosion, but his settled opposition to the cancer . . . which is eating out the insides of the human race he loves with his whole being." The Bible says that God's wrath flows from his love and delight in his creation. He is angry at evil and injustice because it is destroying what he has created.
- God created us to delight in and with him in an intimate relationship. He loved us and wanted to continue to delight in us. Not only his delight, but we are designed to delight in a relationship with him. That's what we were created for. Yet, sin got in the way. Our rebellion got in the way. Things got messed up. The saddest thing is that we got separated from God in this intimate relationship we were designed to have. If our children were kidnapped by someone, we are going to be very angry. We are not going to just stand there in dispassionate kind of way.
- Also, the wrath of God means God is a God of justice. He is angry at injustice.
  - He is angry at the injustice that pervades our cities.
  - He is angry at the greed and corruption of our society.
  - He is angry at the hurts and pain that was caused by your abuser.
  - He is angry at the hurts and pain that was caused by someone who hurt you.
  - He is angry that your father left you and didn't care for you.
  - He is angry that at the person who got your father addicted.

- He is angry at all of the evil in this world, including once you and I are creating everyday.
- If you don't believe in a God of justice, and therefore, God of wrath, you don't believe in ultimate justice. If you don't believe in ultimate justice, you are more likely to take revenge. If someone strikes you, and you believe that God will judge that person for the evil, you can walk away. But, if you don't believe that, you are likely to end up in a cycle of retaliation and revenge, ending up in wars and hate.
- Czeslaw Milosz, a Nobel Prize-winning Polish Poet wrote this as he remembered what Karl Marx, the founder of communism, called religions opiate of the people because the promise of afterlife made the working class tolerate unjust social conditions. But, Milosz wrote:

A true opium of the people is a belief in nothingness after death—the huge solace of thinking that our betrayals, greed, cowardice, murder are not going to be judged . . . but all religions recognize that our deeds are imperishable.

We are more likely to end up in a cycle of revenge and retaliation if we don't believe in ultimate justice.

- [Maybe talk about the holiness of God and our sinfulness]
- (2) The idea of a judging God is just offensive.
- But, I want to ask you something: what causes you to be offended by it? Why aren't you offended by a forgiving God? You might be puzzled by this. You are offended by it because of your cultural location. Because you live in Western culture. If you come from a traditional society, the idea that we should forgive and turn the other cheek is absolutely offensive. It goes against their fundamental belief in what is right and wrong. But in Western society, people are not offended by those teachings on forgiveness. They are attracted by it. Why should Western sensibilities be the ultimate court of what is right and wrong? Do you think that Western culture is superior to other cultures? If Christianity is the truth in all cultures, then, it would offend the sensibilities in all of the cultures some times.

- (3) Some of you think that believing in the idea of an eternal judgment makes you a narrow minded person.
- Well, both a secular person and a Christian believe that there are harmful consequences to self-centeredness and cruelty, right? It causes all kinds of pain and suffering in this world including exploitation and oppression in society. To a Christian person, because we believe that souls live forever, our self-centeredness has eternal consequences. But, to a secular person who does not believe in eternal soul, he does not believe that. But, why does not make us more narrow minded. If you believed that cookie was poisonous, and that if I eat it I will end up in a hospital, but Joe didn't think that it was poisonous and that nothing would happen to him, why is the person who believes that it is poisonous and that you would end up in the hospital more narrow minded?
- Now, let's go back to Jesus drinking the cup of wrath of God. Jesus was deeply distressed because he started to experience the wrath of God.
- Why? Why did he do that?

### **III. Second, because he loves us.**

How do we know God loves us?

Jesus, the Son of God, wasn't taking up the sin of the world by force, he took it up voluntarily. The Scripture says that he "began to be deeply distressed." What was going on was that God was giving him a taste of what was to come. He showed him a taste of hell. He knew it intellectually, but now, he was experiencing it. Why couldn't God just let him experience it on the cross? Why did he reveal hell to him now? So that Jesus would take up the cross voluntarily with full knowledge of what is to come. Jesus could still walk away if he wanted to.

He did so even when we don't deserve it. Look at the disciples; they all abandoned Jesus. Look at Judas, he betrayed Jesus. Even an unknown young man in verse 51, who many people speculate is Mark himself, fled naked. The point is that everyone abandoned Jesus. In one way or another, all of us have run away from God and abandoned God. Yet, Jesus was willing to bear the penalty for their sins; he was willing to bear the wrath of God for all sins.

Here is the son of God willing to take the sin of the world upon himself. This shows that we have a God who loves us. It's not some mushy God where there is no cost to love us because there is no penalty for sin. It costs him his own life. It cost him the wrath of God. It cost him hell. Why? Why would he do this?

So that we can have an intimate relationship with God.

Look at the relationship that Jesus has with God. It is an example of intimacy with him. He calls him abba. This is like calling God, daddy. It is a term of intimacy. There is no parallel to this anywhere. And, Apostle Paul said we can now call him abba as well because we have been adopted as his son. God wants to have that intimacy with you. There is honesty in that relationship. You can go to God and say what you really feel. You can be completely authentic. You don't have to come to God all ready to obey. You don't have to come to God all holy. You can come-as-you-are! If you have complaints, you can raise it up to God. There is beauty in that relationship with God. You don't have to worry about God judging you or giving you what you deserve.

That means in your relationship with God, you don't have to worry about whether you are good enough, whether you are going to make it. You don't have to worry about the wrath of God. You are adopted into the family of God because Jesus decided to bear the wrath that you and I deserved to take.

You are called into this relationship so that you will delight in God; so that you will rejoice in his love and mercy; so that you will rejoice in his glory; so that you will fall in love with him. When you are shaken by life circumstance, he becomes your loving anchor. When you are sad, he becomes your joy. When you are lost, he becomes your guide. When you are in darkness, he becomes your light. When you are in sin, he becomes your savior. Then, he fills you up with the Holy Spirit. Gives you power!

You see, Jesus took our wrath for us. So, we are no longer under wrath. We are no longer under the righteous anger of God for our sins.

That means there is nothing you can do to make God love you more and there is nothing you can do that would make God love you less. There is nothing in your life that is a punishment from God. It may be a consequence of your action, but it is not a punishment from God. Jesus took your punishment. He wants you to come back into a relationship with him.

Because Jesus bore your wrath does not mean that you have no choice in the matter. You could decide to enter into the delight of heaven, a relationship with God, or walk away. It's still up to you.