

MORE THAN A GOD OF GRACE

**A WARNING TO THOSE WHO HAVE REJECTED
THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST**

MARTIN PURYEAR

MORE THAN A GOD OF GRACE

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Steward of Truth Publications

PO Box 4763

Greensboro, NC 27404-4763

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HE WHO BELIEVES IN THE SON HAS ETERNAL LIFE; BUT HE WHO DOES NOT OBEY THE SON WILL NOT SEE LIFE, BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDES ON HIM.

—JOHN 3:36

MORE THAN A GOD OF GRACE

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THE PREFACE

God has commissioned the New Testament Church to declare His Good News of salvation to a world in desperate need of that rescue. This message offers the priceless gift of heaven, freely given to the one who accepts the work of Christ on his behalf. Through faith, the hearer can receive eternal life from the hand of God. Truly, He *is* a God of grace.

But what happens if someone does *not* accept the work of Christ on his behalf? What can *he* expect to receive from the hand of God?

From the writings of the apostles, we learn that *a warning of judgment* was included within their proclamation of the Gospel. As they declared the Good News of *God's pardon*, they left no doubt about the reality of *God's punishment*, reserved for those who reject that pardon.

HE WHO BELIEVES IN THE SON HAS ETERNAL LIFE; BUT HE WHO DOES NOT OBEY THE SON WILL NOT SEE LIFE, BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDES ON HIM. (JOHN 3:36)

This, too, should be our practice. If we do *not* alert unbelievers to the danger they face if they ignore or reject the Gospel, we will have failed to present the entire counsel of God. We will have hidden from them the deadly consequence of their unbelief, a truth they *need to know* to make a wise decision. Too often, however, this truth is downplayed or (even worse) left out altogether in our evangelistic efforts. As a result, we are told that their blood is on our hands.

THEREFORE, I (THE APOSTLE PAUL) TESTIFY TO YOU THIS DAY THAT I AM INNOCENT OF THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN. FOR I DID NOT SHRINK FROM DECLARING TO YOU THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF GOD. (ACTS 20:26-27, PARENTHESIS ADDED)

"More than a God of Grace," is a unique presentation. It is *not* for those who are *ignorant* of the Gospel. (For those who have never heard a clear presentation of the Gospel, please consider our work, *"Rescued by Grace."*) Instead, it addresses those who have *already heard – but repeatedly rejected* – this Good News. Focusing on the *justice* of God, the tone of this presentation is one of *warning*, stressing the horrific destiny of those who are indifferent or hostile toward the Savior.

This course is divided into three parts:

- 1) *"Why We Are Taking This Approach"* (pages 6-9) is for you, the *evangelist*. This section explains why a course such as this is needed.
- 2) *"The Warning: The Terror of God's Justice"* (pages 10-14) and *"The Deliverance: The Relief of God's Pardon"* (pages 15-16) are also for you, the *evangelist*. Paragraphs marked with outside borders contain the material to be given to the unbeliever. Each of these "blocks" is followed by an explanation of why it was included.
- 3) The actual presentation to be given to the *unbeliever* (pages 17-23) combines all the material marked with outside borders.

WHY WE ARE TAKING THIS APPROACH

A FOREIGN THOUGHT TO OUR GENERATION

If there is one thing the Church has convinced the world to believe about God, it is that *God loves them*. But if there is one thing the Church has *failed* to convince the world to believe about God, it is that *God hates their sins*. To many, the words “hate” and “God” do not even belong in the same sentence. The very notion that a loving God would hate *anything* is a foreign concept to a generation whose value system demands tolerance. Is it any wonder that one of the most common objections to the Gospel is

HOW COULD A GOD OF LOVE SEND SOMEONE TO HELL?

Why has the Church downplayed such a dominate theme of Scripture, that God *hates sin*?

- 1) Perhaps to draw larger crowds to our church campuses.
- 2) Or to make the cost of discipleship less demanding.
- 3) Or to avoid appearing judgmental.

Whatever the reason, the Church has largely removed God’s *hatred* of sin from Her evangelistic efforts. In doing so (whether we realize it or not), we have removed the Father’s purpose for His Son’s Execution: to carry out capital punishment upon the One Who took upon Himself our capital crimes. Believers now find themselves presenting God’s pardon to a generation that is unaware that they are under God’s death sentence.

Because of our lopsided portrayal of the God of the Bible, the Church has lulled society into a sleep of deception. Most have no idea that bowing before an angry Judge is in their future. Consequently, there is no fear of God ... which explains why the world is rapidly spiraling downward into a global Sodom and Gomorrah. Rather than causing a sense of shame and guilt, immorality and rebellion are now shrugged off as outdated by a world of “enlightened” rebels, proud of their anti-Biblical value system:

“THERE ARE NO MORAL ABSOLUTES.

WHAT’S RIGHT FOR ME IS RIGHT.

AND WHAT’S RIGHT FOR YOU ... IS RIGHT, TOO.”

So, why are we taking this approach? Why is so much of this presentation focused on what an unbeliever can expect from the One Who will judge his sins? It is because this world needs to know that God is more than a God of grace. Those who reject that grace (that is, the Sacrifice of the Son of God) need to know that a day is approaching when they will face a God of justice

... that He has *already* condemned them to an eternal Lake of Fire ... and that He has every intention of executing that sentence if they do not repent. It is time for the true and living Church to straighten out the world's twisted perception of the true and living God.

TRUMPET OF THE WATCHMAN

Beloved Church, you and I have the great privilege of telling our generation what they can expect if they repent of their sins and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. They can expect eternal life. But we also have the sobering responsibility of *warning* them of what they can expect if they don't. They can expect eternal death. Our message is not complete until we warn unbelievers of the eternal consequence of their rejection of God's grace. They can expect God's justice. That *bad* news is an *essential preliminary* to the *Good News*. It causes the Cross of Christ to make sense to a world that has the distorted view that God's one and only perfection is love.

AND THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO ME, SAYING, "SON OF MAN, SPEAK TO THE SONS OF YOUR PEOPLE AND SAY TO THEM, 'IF I BRING A SWORD UPON A LAND, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND TAKE ONE MAN FROM AMONG THEM AND MAKE HIM THEIR WATCHMAN, AND HE SEES THE SWORD COMING UPON THE LAND AND BLOWS ON THE TRUMPET AND WARNS THE PEOPLE, THEN HE WHO HEARS THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET AND DOES NOT TAKE WARNING, AND A SWORD COMES AND TAKES HIM AWAY, HIS BLOOD WILL BE ON HIS OWN HEAD. HE HEARD THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET BUT DID NOT TAKE WARNING; HIS BLOOD WILL BE ON HIMSELF. BUT HAD HE TAKEN WARNING, HE WOULD HAVE DELIVERED HIS LIFE.

*BUT IF THE WATCHMAN SEES THE SWORD COMING AND DOES NOT BLOW THE TRUMPET AND **THE PEOPLE ARE NOT WARNED**, AND A SWORD COMES AND TAKES A PERSON FROM THEM, HE IS TAKEN AWAY IN HIS INIQUITY; BUT **HIS BLOOD I WILL REQUIRE FROM THE WATCHMAN'S HAND.**'*

NOW AS FOR YOU, SON OF MAN, I HAVE APPOINTED YOU A WATCHMAN FOR THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL; SO, YOU WILL HEAR A MESSAGE FROM MY MOUTH AND GIVE THEM WARNING FROM ME.

*WHEN I SAY TO THE WICKED, 'O WICKED MAN, YOU WILL SURELY DIE,' AND **YOU DO NOT SPEAK TO WARN THE WICKED FROM HIS WAY**, THAT WICKED MAN SHALL DIE IN HIS INIQUITY, BUT **HIS BLOOD I WILL REQUIRE FROM YOUR HAND.***

BUT IF YOU, ON YOUR PART, WARN A WICKED MAN TO TURN FROM HIS WAY AND HE DOES NOT TURN FROM HIS WAY, HE WILL DIE IN HIS INIQUITY, BUT YOU HAVE DELIVERED YOUR LIFE.

NOW AS FOR YOU, SON OF MAN, SAY TO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, 'THUS YOU HAVE SPOKEN, SAYING, "SURELY OUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND OUR SINS ARE UPON US, AND WE ARE ROTTING AWAY IN THEM; HOW THEN CAN WE SURVIVE?"'

SAY TO THEM, 'AS I LIVE!' DECLARES THE LORD GOD, 'I TAKE NO PLEASURE IN THE DEATH OF THE WICKED, BUT RATHER THAT THE WICKED TURN FROM HIS WAY AND LIVE. TURN BACK, TURN BACK FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS! WHY THEN WILL YOU DIE, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?' " (EZEKIEL 33:1-11)

Those of us who are born of the Spirit of God need to come to grips with a certain fact. The blood of our generation is not on the hands of the anti-Biblical entertainment industry ... or the media ... or our politicians ... or anyone else whose spiritual eyes are blinded by the demonic god of this world (2nd Corinthians 4:3-4). They are not the stewards of God's Truth because they are not in possession of God's Truth. But we are. The blood of the unwarned is squarely on the hands of the Church. *We* are the salt of the earth. *We* are the light of the world. *We* have the Answer. *We* know the Truth. And as stewards of that Truth, *we are responsible for warning the unbelieving community of the danger they are in.* Indeed, to be silent in a time of danger is to shout the language of hatred.

THE TENSION OF THE EVANGELIST

BUT SOME DAYS LATER FELIX ARRIVED WITH DRUSILLA, HIS WIFE WHO WAS A JEWESS, AND SENT FOR PAUL AND HEARD HIM SPEAK ABOUT FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. BUT AS HE WAS DISCUSSING RIGHTEOUSNESS, SELF-CONTROL, AND THE JUDGMENT TO COME, FELIX BECAME FRIGHTENED AND SAID, "GO AWAY FOR THE PRESENT, AND WHEN I FIND TIME, I WILL SUMMON YOU." (PAUL BEFORE FELIX) (ACTS 24:24-25)

Every evangelist faces a certain tension. To tell a person that a loving God wants to give him eternal life is one thing. But to tell a sinner that a just God has condemned him to eternal death and plans to carry out that sentence unless he turns in faith to the Savior ... that is something else. It is difficult to tell someone that, in the sight of a holy God, he has committed capital crimes and now faces capital punishment. Nevertheless, *both* truths – God's justice and God's mercy – *must* be fully and clearly presented ... and they must be presented *in that order.*

THE GRACE OF GOD WILL MEAN NOTHING TO A PERSON
WHO IS NOT *FIRST* CONVINCED OF THE JUSTICE OF GOD.

(THAT WOULD BE LIKE HANDING A PARACHUTE TO SOMEONE STANDING ON THE GROUND.)

Evangelism must first reveal the problem before introducing the solution. Otherwise, the *Death* of Christ on behalf of the one in trouble makes no sense. Admittedly, it is not an easy message.

WEIGHTED ON THE SIDE OF JUDGMENT

*"SO, KING AGRIPPA, I DID NOT PROVE DISOBEDIENT TO THE HEAVENLY VISION, BUT KEPT DECLARING BOTH TO THOSE OF DAMASCUS FIRST, AND ALSO AT JERUSALEM AND THEN THROUGHOUT ALL THE REGION OF JUDEA, AND EVEN TO THE GENTILES, THAT **THEY SHOULD REPENT AND TURN TO GOD, PERFORMING DEEDS APPROPRIATE TO REPENTANCE.** FOR THIS REASON, SOME JEWS SEIZED ME IN THE TEMPLE AND TRIED TO PUT ME TO DEATH."* (ACTS 26:19-21)

Dear friends, that is not what the Church has been saying to the lost, that "they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance." What we *have* done is direct

their attention to God's "wonderful plan for their lives," a rather vague promise that could easily be taken the wrong way. The theme of our message, however, should address their need to be *delivered from sin's tyranny: its penalty ... its authority ... its power ... and (eventually) its presence*. This deliverance is what makes the Good News so good, regardless of whether God's "plan for their lives" involves political freedom or enslavement, employment or unemployment, prosperity or poverty, health or illness, liberty or prison, continued life or martyrdom.

Therefore, because of the Church's tendency to present a less-than-balanced view of the one, true God, we have weighted this course on the side of His justice. Will this message offend some people? Yes, it will. (The *message* will. Our *manner* of presentation should not.) Yet, at the same time, *all* of them will have in their possession what the Spirit of God can use to convince them that *their sins have offended God* ... that He is angry ... and that He has the right, the authority, and the power to cast them forever from His Presence into a Christless eternity.

Did not Jesus Himself encourage His audience to have this same concern?

"I WILL WARN YOU WHOM TO FEAR: FEAR THE ONE WHO, AFTER HE HAS KILLED, HAS AUTHORITY TO CAST INTO HELL; YES, I TELL YOU, FEAR HIM!" (LUKE 12:5)

There is nothing wrong with this kind of fear about which Jesus spoke. It is a healthy fear ... a Holy Spirit-generated fear. *It is, in fact, the first step toward salvation.* **Now** the unbeliever is ready to hear the rest of the Truth: that God is a God of mercy. When the message of God's pardon is presented to the one who knows his soul is in danger, no one will have to twist his arm to accept it. He will grab for that Good News ... that Marvelous News ... that over-the-top Fantastic News ... as one who grabs for a life vest on a sinking ship.

And he will cling to it.

And he will not let it go.

"Years I spent in vanity and pride, caring not my Lord was crucified, knowing not it was for me He died on Calvary."

"By God's Word – at last – my sin I learned; then I trembled at the Law I'd spurned, till my guilty soul imploring turned to Calvary."

"O, the love that drew salvation's plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary."

*"Mercy, there, was great and grace was free.
Pardon, there, was multiplied to me.
There my burdened soul found liberty, at Calvary."*

(At Calvary, lyrics by William R. Newell)

THE WARNING: THE TERROR OF GOD'S JUSTICE

A SHARK IN THE WATER

During the summer of 1972, a friend of mine was a cast member with the outdoor drama, "THE LOST COLONY." Because his performances were in the evening, his days were free to enjoy one of his favorite sports – surfing. The area around Nags Head, North Carolina was known for its good surfing and had become a popular spot. The rest of this story is recorded in his own words:

"One day, while I was out in the surf with another cast member, something caught my attention just under the water's surface. Looking over my left shoulder, I noticed – not two feet from me – the dark form of a huge hammerhead shark.

I could clearly see the features of this grotesque shark ... its hideous, protruding eyes staring right at me. An indescribable feeling of panic and fear gripped me. I realized that I was totally at the mercy of this aggressive type of shark and could be dead in seconds.

As my friend and I frantically paddled toward shore, I wondered with each stroke if the next one would be my last. When I reached the beach, I was physically shaking all over. I remember looking down and seeing my kneecaps quivering.

After settling down a bit, I noticed two other surfers about a hundred yards down the beach, sitting with their boards by their sides. Walking toward them, I wanted to warn them of what I had just seen.

'Hey! There's a huge hammerhead shark out there!'

I was absolutely shocked at their response:

'You mean he's still out there?'

They knew the shark had been out there! They had watched me paddle out into the surf; and yet, they had not bothered to warn me of the danger!

I could have been killed!"

YET, THEY HAD NOT BOTHERED TO WARN ME OF THE DANGER!

Tell me. What kind of person would do that ... someone who knows you are in danger of losing your life but does not care enough to warn you? What would you think of an individual who does not care if you live or die?

Beloved reader, there is something you need to know right up front. This presentation is not about the grace of God. You already know about that. You have already heard about – but rejected – the “Good News” of Jesus Christ. No, this paper is about the justice of God. Its purpose is to warn you of the danger you are facing. And as you read it, you should be prepared because I intend to be lovingly blunt.

The Reason for “A Shark in the Water”

The purpose of this true story is to convince the reader that our warning of God’s justice is not self-righteous “hate language” but is, instead,

AN EXPRESSION OF LOVING CONCERN
TOWARD THOSE WHOSE SOULS ARE IN DANGER OF ETERNAL LOSS

We want him to know that we are saying these things, not from a holier-than-thou spirit of contempt but because we care enough to alert him to the danger that he is in.

A SURE AND PRESENT DANGER

IT IS A TERRIFYING THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD. (HEBREWS 10:31)

Dear reader, you have a problem. Of all the problems you have faced or ever will face, this one is the most serious.

You have broken the moral laws of a holy God.

FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD. (ROMANS 3:23)

Do not be deceived. What is “right” and what is “wrong” is not determined by the ever-changing values of society. Moral law is, instead, based on the character of the divine Lawgiver, One Who is not constantly readjusting His nature to *fit* the shifting values of your culture. Moral law does not change because God does not change.

FOR I, THE LORD, DO NOT CHANGE (MALACHI 3:6)

And because you have violated His moral laws,

God is angry.

... HE WHO DOES NOT OBEY THE SON WILL NOT SEE LIFE, BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDES ON HIM. (JOHN 3:36)

Yes, it is true: God *is* a God of love. But He is also a God of justice. As a loving God, He wants what is best for you. But as a just God, He hates the immoral acts you have committed ... and He plans to deal with every one of them.

What’s more, the sins you have committed are not minor offenses. In the sight of a holy God, they are *capital crimes*; and capital crimes call for capital punishment. Whether you know it or not, you are on death row, awaiting execution. This is the horrific plight you are facing.

A day is coming when you will stand in judgment before the God you have offended, and not one of your sins will escape His notice. At that time, He will compare your life with His Own righteous perfections ... you will be found guilty of capital crimes that carry the death penalty ... and you will be condemned to die.

... THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH. (ROMANS 6:23)

Have you ever heard someone say, “Jesus loves you”? That is true; He does. And to prove it, this is what *He* says to you:

"I WILL WARN YOU WHOM TO FEAR: FEAR THE ONE WHO, AFTER HE HAS KILLED, HAS AUTHORITY TO CAST INTO HELL; YES, I TELL YOU, FEAR HIM!" (LUKE 12:5)

This is not "hate language." Jesus is not trying to destroy you. He is warning you because He cares for you. Because of your moral failures, you are under a death sentence facing the anger of a just God.

BECAUSE OF YOUR STUBBORNNESS AND UNREPENTANT HEART, YOU ARE STORING UP WRATH FOR YOURSELF IN THE DAY OF WRATH AND REVELATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD, WHO WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. (ROMANS 2:5-6)

A day is coming when your soul will be thrown into an eternal prison. In the Bible this prison is known as hell. And there, you will suffer a never-ending punishment for your sins.

HELL: THE FULL MEASURE OF GOD'S WRATH ... FOREVER

Your situation could not be worse. According to the Bible, hell is (something like) a "lake" that burns with (something similar to) "fire and brimstone (burning sulfur)."

BUT FOR THE COWARDLY AND UNBELIEVING AND ABOMINABLE AND MURDERERS AND IMMORAL PERSONS AND SORCERERS AND IDOLATERS AND ALL LIARS, THEIR PART WILL BE IN THE LAKE THAT BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH. (REVELATION 21:8)

Whether this description of hell has used literal or figurative language, either way, it refers to a real place. And there, you will remain conscious ... your torment will never cease ... you will never know rest ... and there is no hope of escape.

AND THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT GOES UP FOREVER AND EVER; THEY HAVE NO REST DAY AND NIGHT. (REVELATION 14:11)

This is not an idle threat. It is a promise coming from One Who cannot lie. Because you have broken His moral laws, you are going to suffer

*THE PENALTY OF ETERNAL DESTRUCTION, AWAY FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD
AND FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER. (2ND THESSALONIANS 1:9)*

There is only one thing that can satisfy the anger of this God of justice; and that one thing is *not* an apology, followed by your promise to "try harder to do better." The only thing that can satisfy the just wrath of a holy God is *death*. And He has every intention of executing that sentence. His justice demands it.

... THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH. (ROMANS 6:23)

God has in His possession a “certificate of debt” from you ... an IOU so to speak, written by *your sinful life*. And recorded on this IOU are the words, “GOD, I OWE YOU MY DEATH.”

**The Reason for
“A Sure and Present Danger”
“Hell: The Full Measure of God’s Wrath ... Forever”**

Why Do People Reject the Gospel?

God has entrusted His Church with an extraordinary message, one that can turn a condemned criminal into a son or daughter of glory. The Gospel is, in fact, “Glorious News” because it provides man with deliverance from eternal death.

Thank God for His matchless grace! Given our situation, this message could not be any better than it is! Everything about it is over-the-top fantastic! So, why would *anyone* reject this “Good News”?

COULD IT BE BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THE BAD NEWS?
(THAT IS, THEY ARE IGNORANT OF THE SCRIPTURES)

OR PERHAPS IT IS BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT BOTHERED ABOUT IT?
(THAT IS, THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THE SCRIPTURES)

The purpose of these two sections is to convince the reader that the justice of God is something he *needs to know* about ... and something he *should be bothered* about. This, in turn, is meant to make him more receptive to the Good News of God’s grace through Christ Jesus.

THE DELIVERANCE: THE RELIEF OF GOD'S PARDON

YOUR ONLY HOPE

But amazingly, in response to your deadly plight and flowing from His heart of mercy, God sent His Son to die *for* you, the condemned. The Father had His Own Son nailed to a cross to pay for all the wicked deeds you have committed against Him ... to be executed in your place ... as your Substitute ... so that you would not have to die. This is the magnitude of God's love for you.

BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US IN THAT, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US. (ROMANS 5:8)

When Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross, He took upon Himself your IOU. And when He did, He paid off your debt of death! In full! Forever!

... (GOD) CANCELED OUT THE CERTIFICATE OF DEBT CONSISTING OF DECREES AGAINST US, WHICH WAS HOSTILE TO US; AND HE HAS TAKEN IT OUT OF THE WAY, HAVING NAILED IT TO THE CROSS. (COLOSSIANS 2:14)

But you already know this. Someone has already told you that Christ died to pay for your sins. Yet, you have rejected this *Good News*. As a result, you are not only still in your sins, but you are also without excuse.

That is why this type of presentation was placed in your hands. Its purpose is to warn you of what you can expect if you continue to reject Christ's Payment for your sins. You can expect an eternity of grief, hopelessness, and pain. Your situation could not be any more serious.

JESUS CHRIST IS YOUR ONLY HOPE.

AND THERE IS SALVATION IN NO ONE ELSE; FOR THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN AMONG MEN BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED. (ACTS 4:12)

You can depend upon the Death of Christ to be the punishment for your sins ... or you can pay for those sins yourself. But one of you will pay – in full – your debt of death.

It does not have to be you. His pardon is right in front of you. It is not yet too late to receive – by faith – God's forgiveness. But there is coming a day when it will be.

BELOVED READER, THERE'S A SHARK IN THE WATER.

The Reason for “Your Only Hope”

The tone of this conclusion is that of urgency, mixing the despair of judgment with the hope of deliverance. Set against the negative backdrop of the sinner’s condemnation is the Father’s wonderful provision of a Substitute’s death.

... AND HE HIMSELF BORE OUR SINS IN HIS BODY ON THE CROSS. (1ST PETER 2:24)

It then ends with an appeal for him to decide. Will he choose to pay for his own sins, or will he trust in Christ’s death to serve as Payment for those sins?

No sample prayer is provided to help the reader cry out for God’s mercy.

If his soul is truly under the conviction of the Spirit of God, he will need no coaching to help him structure such a plea. The raw, fervent appeal of one who truly fears the judgment of God will be heard by the One Who is listening more to his heart than his words, whether those words are refined or rough.

Furthermore, we did not want to put our words into someone else’s mouth as if the prayer was some sort of magic formula.

How can *anything* generate more relief, more gratitude, more joy, and more worship in the hearts of those who – once condemned – are now set free from sin’s guilt and curse!

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PO Box 4763

Greensboro, NC 27404-4763

Certificate of Registration Number, Copyright Office: TXu 2-386-061

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... HE WHO DOES NOT OBEY THE SON WILL NOT SEE LIFE, BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDES ON HIM. (JOHN 3:36)

Yes, it is true: God *is* a God of love. But He is also a God of justice. As a loving God, He wants what is best for you. But as a just God, He hates the immoral acts you have committed ... and He plans to deal with every one of them.

What’s more, the sins you have committed are not minor offenses. In the sight of a holy God, they are *capital crimes*; and capital crimes call for capital punishment. Whether you know it or not, you are on death row, awaiting execution. This is the horrific plight you are facing.

A day is coming when you will stand in judgment before the God you have offended, and not one of your sins will escape His notice. At that time, He will compare your life with His Own righteous perfections ... you will be found guilty of capital crimes that carry the death penalty ... and you will be condemned to die.

... THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH. (ROMANS 6:23)

Have you ever heard someone say, “Jesus loves you”? That is true; He does. And to prove it, this is what *He* says to you:

“I WILL WARN YOU WHOM TO FEAR: FEAR THE ONE WHO, AFTER HE HAS KILLED, HAS AUTHORITY TO CAST INTO HELL; YES, I TELL YOU, FEAR HIM!” (LUKE 12:5)

This is not “hate language.” Jesus is not trying to destroy you. He is warning you because He cares for you. Because of your moral failures, you are under a death sentence facing the anger of a just God.

BECAUSE OF YOUR STUBBORNNNESS AND UNREPENTANT HEART, YOU ARE STORING UP WRATH FOR YOURSELF IN THE DAY OF WRATH AND REVELATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD, WHO WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. (ROMANS 2:5-6)

A day is coming when your soul will be thrown into an eternal prison. In the Bible this prison is known as hell. And there, you will suffer a never-ending punishment for your sins.

HELL: THE FULL MEASURE OF GOD’S WRATH ... FOREVER

Your situation could not be worse. According to the Bible, hell is (something like) a “lake” that burns with (something similar to) “fire and brimstone (burning sulfur).”

BUT FOR THE COWARDLY AND UNBELIEVING AND ABOMINABLE AND MURDERERS AND IMMORAL PERSONS AND SORCERERS AND IDOLATERS AND ALL LIARS, THEIR PART WILL BE IN THE LAKE THAT BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH. (REVELATION 21:8)

Whether this description of hell has used literal or figurative language, either way, it refers to a real place. And there, you will remain conscious ... your torment will never cease ... you will never know rest ... and there is no hope of escape.

AND THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT GOES UP FOREVER AND EVER; THEY HAVE NO REST DAY AND NIGHT. (REVELATION 14:11)

This is not an idle threat. It is a promise coming from One Who cannot lie. Because you have broken His moral laws, you are going to suffer

*THE PENALTY OF ETERNAL DESTRUCTION, AWAY FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD
AND FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER. (2ND THESSALONIANS 1:9)*

There is only one thing that can satisfy the anger of this God of justice; and that one thing is not an apology, followed by your promise to “try harder to do better.” The only thing that can satisfy the just wrath of a holy God is *death*. And He has every intention of executing that sentence. His justice demands it.

... *THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH. (ROMANS 6:23)*

God has in His possession a “certificate of debt” from you ... an IOU so to speak, written by *your sinful life*. And recorded on this IOU are the words, “GOD, I OWE YOU MY DEATH.”

YOUR ONLY HOPE

But amazingly, in response to your deadly plight and flowing from His heart of mercy, God sent His Son to die *for* you, the condemned. The Father had His Own Son nailed to a cross to pay for all the wicked deeds you have committed against Him ... to be executed in your place ... as your Substitute ... so that you would not have to die. This is the magnitude of God’s love for you.

BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US IN THAT, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US. (ROMANS 5:8)

When Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross, He took upon Himself your IOU. And when He did, He paid off your debt of death! In full! Forever!

... *(GOD) CANCELED OUT THE CERTIFICATE OF DEBT CONSISTING OF DECREES AGAINST US, WHICH WAS HOSTILE TO US; AND HE HAS TAKEN IT OUT OF THE WAY, HAVING NAILED IT TO THE CROSS. (COLOSSIANS 2:14)*

But you already know this. Someone has already told you that Christ died to pay for your sins. Yet, you have rejected this *Good News*. As a result, you are not only still in your sins, but you are also without excuse.

That is why this type of presentation was placed in your hands. Its purpose is to warn you of what you can expect if you continue to reject Christ’s Payment for your sins. You can expect an eternity of grief, hopelessness, and pain. Your situation could not be any more serious.

JESUS CHRIST IS YOUR ONLY HOPE.

AND THERE IS SALVATION IN NO ONE ELSE; FOR THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN AMONG MEN BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED. (ACTS 4:12)

You can depend upon the Death of Christ to be the punishment for your sins ... or you can pay for those sins yourself. But one of you will pay – in full – your debt of death.

It does not have to be you. His pardon is right in front of you. It is not yet too late to receive – by faith – God’s forgiveness. But there is coming a day when it will be.

BELOVED READER, THERE’S A SHARK IN THE WATER.

CONTACT INFORMATION

My first name: _____

My church's name: _____

My church's telephone number: _____

PERHAPS YOU HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS

If you have further questions, visit

www.gotquestions.org

If you would like to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, visit

www.chataboutjesus.com

If you would like to download a free Bible for your phone, visit

www.mardel.com/bible

If you would like to download free discipleship materials, visit

www.stewardoftruth.com