

CHRISTIANITY IN TROUBLED TIMES

“God’s Breaking Point”

Scripture Reading: LUKE 13:1-9

-) **SLIDE 7-8.** Scripture reading.
-) **SLIDE 9.** Today’s message is titled, “*God’s Patience.*”
-) When you were growing up as a child, how much patience did your mother or father have with you when you misbehaved? What was their breaking point? When did they say, “*enough is enough*” and then take some kind of disciplinary action?
-) It was obvious that my father was the disciplinarian in our family. I could get away with a lot with my mother. My father had some patience, but you didn’t want to push that envelope too far. If you did, there would be a price to pay.
-) One day, when I was a senior in high school, I pushed that envelope too far. My dad took my drivers license away from me for a month. That was tough. I learned a valuable lesson from that experience. Don’t ever get caught again.
-) Does God ever get to His breaking point when He says, “*enough is enough*” and, if so, how and when does that happen? How far can an individual or the church or a nation push that envelope before God enforces His discipline?
-) Let’s look at some instances in God’s Word when God’s breaking point was reached. Let’s look at what evil was done, and the discipline God enforced.
-) **SLIDE 10.** GENESIS 6:5-7. Read. 1,656 years after Adam was created, God came to His breaking point with mankind. Why? “*That every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” That’s a long time. Longsuffering. And the discipline was that God destroyed every human being except 8.

-) The nation of Israel began when God called Abram out of the land of Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram was the father of God's own nation of Israel. That was around the year 2000 BC.
-) Later on, after the exodus out of Egypt, God gave Moses the TC around 1440 BC. Between that time and around 739 BC (700 years), the nation Israel settled in the promised land. They had judges and they had kings. Some good, some bad.
-) At least 63x in these 700 years, the Word of God tells us that "*They did evil in the sight of the Lord*" or "*He did evil in the sight of the Lord.*" So, did God reach another breaking point with His own people? Yes.
-) Last Sunday I delivered a message from ISAIAH 5 about how God had spoken through the prophet Isaiah and pronounced four woes on the nation Israel. God's own people, the nation Israel, were being warned that their continued evil behavior would result in divine consequences.
-) HEB 10:30-31: "*For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.'* And again, '*The Lord will judge His people.*' *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*"
-) Let's look at some instances in God's Word when God's breaking point was reached. Let's look at what evil was done and the discipline God enforced.
-) The woe I focused on was found in ISAIAH 5:20: "*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*"
-) Substitution. We see the same today in America. America has become a substitute society. We have substituted (or replaced) good for evil and now we call that which is evil good.
-) Today I want to talk about the wrath of God. It's a topic you rarely hear addressed in most churches and you'll never hear addressed in some churches. And that's why the church is

impotent today. I'm convinced that churches need to preach a whole lot more of hell, fire, and brimstone. We need to have the fear of the Lord inside us and guiding us.

-) God makes it perfectly clear in ROMANS 1:18 that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.
-) **SLIDE 10.** The definition of the word "*substitute*" is this: a person or thing that takes the place or function of another.
-) The word "*substitute*" can be a noun, a verb, or an adjective. As a noun: "*The young woman entered the classroom as a substitute for the ill teacher.*" As a verb: "*The young woman will substitute for the ill teacher.*" As an adjective: "*Today the young woman will be a substitute teacher in the classroom.*"
-) Today I want to use the word "*substitute*" as an adjective. An adjective is a word that modifies a noun. And the word we are going to modify is the word "*society.*" Something has taken the place of something else in a society. A substitute society.
-) Today's Scripture text is from the prophet Isaiah. God is speaking through Isaiah and He is pronouncing judgment on God's chosen people—the nation Israel. At least 63 times in the OT starting with the Book of JUDGES all the way through the minor prophets we can read the lines "*They did evil in the sight of the Lord*" or "*He did evil in the sight of the Lord*" or something similar to that.
-) **SLIDE 11.** PSALM 103:8: "*The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.*" But there comes a time when His compassion and His grace has reached its limit. And His anger can rest no longer. So, in these six verses from ISAIAH, God delivers four woes.
-) We are winding down this sermon series titled "The American Christian." This is week #10. What's wrong with America?

Sin. Sin is running its course. And the evil one, Satan, is behind it all.

-) 2COR 4:4 tells us this: “*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*” Many unbelievers are no longer interested in the saving gospel message we carry in these clay pots. Satan has their eyes covered and blinded.
-) And 2COR 11:5 tells us this: “*And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.*” And I am convinced that his representatives are standing in pulpits across America right now as we speak. I assure you, my friends, Satan does not want to fight the church. He wants to join it.
-) It is said that the USA was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. And I believe there was a time when the USA was doing a fairly good job of following those Judeo-Christian principles. I also believe that while we were following those principles, God was blessing America.
-) “*It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor.*” – GW
-) But that was back when churches were upholding the truth, and governing authorities had integrity, and parents and teachers were concerned more for their children than for themselves, and people followed their conscience.
-) And I would say that the USA did a fairly good job of that up until around 1950—post WWII. To me, that’s when America started sliding into the mess that we are in today.
-) Around 1950 Americans gradually quit following their conscience. Around 1950 American parents gradually took the focus off the family and placed it on self. Around 1950 American governing authorities gradually started being self-

serving instead of serving the people. Around 1950 American churches gradually became more like the culture and the world than coming out and being separate from the world.

-) So what does God think of the America of 2016 and what is He doing about it? Does anyone really know? I believe the Bible gives us a very good look at where America has gone and is going, and what God is doing in response.
-) But first, what does God see in America today? Here's what we see and I guarantee He sees much more than this.
-) Our moral standards are in the toilet. Abortions are at a rate of about 1 million per year. There is serious corruption in our government in the form of lying, cheating, and stealing. People are lazy and don't want to work. Men are changing into women and women are changing into men. It's no longer about the gender in which we were born, but about how we need to identify ourselves. Mass shootings and bombings of innocent people in public places are commonplace. Creation is out and evolution is in. We no longer believe that our evil actions have consequences.
-) I believe a nation (USA) that once rested on Judeo-Christian principles, no longer rests on Judeo-Christian principles. Did you know that anywhere between 70-85% of America says they are Christian? That's a joke. We would be lucky if 5-10% of Americans are Christians.
-) The America of 2016 wants God out of our homes, out of our schools, out of our government, out of our businesses, removed from our pledge of allegiance, and removed from our money and currency. And God, in return, is honoring our requests.
-) In ACTS 14:16 the apostle Paul tells the people that "*in the generations gone by, He has permitted all nations to go their own ways.*" America is no different. We are going and we will

continue to go our own way—to follow our own selfish desires and God will permit it. Let's look at the progression.

-) ROMANS 1:18-23 set the tone for what is happening in America. In verses 19 and 20 we see that God has made Himself known to us. Read. Explain.
-) Since America has suppressed that truth (v18) they did v21. Read. Explain.
-) How has America done this? Read v22,23. So I ask. What is America's god today? It's not the Creator God. Our gods are our jobs and our possessions and our houses and our cars and our drugs and our internet and ... our self. Those are our images of corruptible man, birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures that Paul is referring to.
-) So what is God's response to America? Verse 18. The wrath of God. The wrath of God. What kind of wrath are you referring to Mike? I believe there are five types of wrath that God can impose on mankind.
-) **FITB 1.** There is **ETERNAL WRATH.** Eternal wrath is the punishment that God brings upon unbelieving sinners forever in hell. In MATT 25:46 Jesus is telling His disciples about end times and eternity; about the sheep and the goats. In verse 46 Jesus says this: "*Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.*"
-) **FITB 2.** There is **ESCHATOLOGICAL WRATH.** Eschatological wrath is the wrath that God releases at the end of the world. You can read about this in MATT 24:4-28 and in the Book of REVELATION chapters 6 through 18. This is when there will be wars, earthquakes, famines, etc.
-) **FITB 3.** There is **CATAclysmic WRATH.** Cataclysmic wrath would be things like tsunamis, a volcano eruption, a hurricane, an earthquake, etc. I am not saying that each and every natural event like this is a form of God's wrath. But it is

possible. In GENESIS 6-9 God sent an example of His cataclysmic wrath in the form of a flood that wiped out every human being except for Noah and his family.

-) **FITB 4**. There is **CONSEQUENTIAL WRATH**. Consequential wrath is the result of what we sow and reap. If you live a certain lifestyle, you may be setting yourself up to certain forces that will produce judgment. One's laziness and gluttony could lead them into serious health problems. One's greed could lead them into financial woes and a gambling addiction.
-) One's envy could lead them into a deadly confrontation with a jealous spouse. One's lust and sexually promiscuity could lead them into contracting a venereal disease or aids. Actions do have consequences. GALATIANS 6:7,8 tells us this: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. *Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*"
-) So those are four ways God can inflict His wrath on us. But there is a fifth type of wrath. And this fifth type of wrath is the wrath we are under right now here in America. What type of wrath is that? The wrath of abandonment. God is letting us go. He is removing His restraining grace that has kept America in being the Christian nation we once were.
-) God is allowing us to become the evil nation we have the potential to be. ACTS 14:16. Just let them go.
-) In MATT 15:14 Jesus tells His disciples about the Pharisees to let them alone. They are blind guides.
-) In other words, let them reap what they have sown. And likewise, He is allowing America to wallow in the harvest of the ungodliness and unrighteousness that it has sown.
-) So how is God removing His restraining grace from America? We'll stop right here and pick up here next Sunday. Is God

abandoning America? I'll let you decide. I've made up my mind.

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