

For Such a Time as This

A Daily Devotional

Wednesday, March 12, 2025



From Romans 1:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those who by their injustice suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. Ever since the creation of the world God's eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been seen and understood through the things God has made.

I continue to be in mid-stream regarding sermon preparation for this evening's Mid-Week Lenten service (at 7:00 in the chapel of the church). The passage above is the same as yesterday and still deserves further attention.

Karl Barth, writer of the ultimate commentary on the epistle in question, was convinced that Paul's intent in this portion of the letter was to convince his readers that their natural or typical views of God had been distorted or confused by both the culture in which they lived and their human condition itself. In other words, we are confused about the nature of God unless we hear aright and anew the revelation of God's character to us in Jesus Christ.

Here's what Barth wrote about it: **The confusion avenges itself and becomes its own punishment. The forgetting of the true God is already itself the breaking loose of His wrath against those who forget Him.**

The wrath of God is upon us when we fail to see God for who he truly is. When we rely upon what the theologians call 'natural theology' rather than the revealed witness of the Word in Jesus Christ, we subject ourselves to a torment that can only be perceived as wrath. We worry and become anxious because we theorize, all based upon our understanding of how the world works, that God would be super-vengeful – being a larger or greater form of ourselves. We reason that since we become angered and can seek revenge, God must do the same to us. However, the gospel of Jesus Christ should dispel this misunderstanding and brighten our hearts and minds with the sure conviction that God, in his action in Jesus Christ, has proven his love for us and for all the world.

Such conviction, once it has burrowed deep within our souls, will produce not fear or terror of God, but rather a responsive love for the One who has loved us to the extent of giving his own Son on our behalf. Therefore, we do best to hear with expectant hearts, the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ and turn in thankful response to God's love and then live, really live into that love. This seems to me to be exactly what Paul and Barth were saying.

Prayer for the Day: (From *Fifty Prayers* by Karl Barth)

Father in heaven, you did not leave the world alone, nor did you leave us alone – not as a whole, and not a single one of us. You sought us out and found us, since we had fallen away from you and were lost, by bringing about reconciliation, opening a path to us, and giving us a promise, in your dear Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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