The welcome verse for this week is John 1:16, "For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."



Upright or Uptight?

Exodus 24:6-7; Romans 2:4 Hebrews 12:1-17

Bottom Line: God responds to sin and to sinners in a way that is consistent with His character.

Introduction:

On July 8th, 1741, Jonathan Edwards preached the most well-known sermon in American history: "*Sinners in the Hands of and Angry God.*"

Edward's sermon is not without its faults, however; in an effort to avoid hellfire and brimstone sermons, we have saturated ourselves with hope-filled messages which portray a version of God without a moral standard.

The true God resides somewhere between Jonathan Edwards and Joel Osteen.

Tension:

Neither extreme provides the abundant life that the true God longs to give us.

Our proposed resolution to the two extremes that have been presented to us typically goes as follows: "God loves the sinner but hates the sin."

Unfortunately, though the statement is not inaccurate, it is incomplete. Biblically speaking, there is a core truth missing from this statement, namely – **God hates** sinners (Psalm 5:4-5, 11:5; Proverbs 6:16-19).

Truth:

The greatest influence on God's conduct is God's character, meaning, the way God acts is mostly (if not, entirely) due to who God is in His very nature.

Here's what we know about God: God is Spirit, God is Light, and God is Love.

God responds to sin and to sinners in a way that is consistent with His character (rf. Exodus 34:6-7; Hebrews 12:1-17).

Application & Conclusion:

God's standard of holy obedience is much less about what He wants from us and more about everything He wants for us. God despises sin for how it ruins us, and He calls us away from sin for how it will save us.

Although, the longer we live with this flesh in this world, the more we know our own depravity. All of us can understand, at least, in part, why a pure and holy God would want to put His judgment against us.

Here's the good news: He doesn't want to. Although God judges sin, and although God hates perpetual sinners, God also loves us and is patient toward us. He showed by sending Jesus to the place where His judgement on sin and His love for sinful humanity would meet once and for all – the cross of Christ.

In the cross, God not only showed us His love, but He gave us good reason through His love to then come to repentance (Romans 2:4), so that we might find mercy and blessing through faith.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does this teach me about God?

2. What does this teach me about me?

3. How do I apply this to my life?