

The Other Side of God

The Goodness We Celebrate and the Holiness We Must Not Forget

Primary Text: *Hebrews 12:28–29*

Supporting Texts: *Exodus 34:6–7; Deuteronomy 4:23–24; Nahum 1:2–7; Romans 11:22; Hebrews 10:26–31; John 3:16–18, 36; 2 Peter 3:9–14*

Central Truth: The God who welcomes the repentant with mercy also confronts persistent rebellion with holy judgement. His goodness and severity are not contradictions; they are harmonious expressions of His one perfect nature.

Sermon Objective: To bring sinners to saving faith in Jesus Christ, awaken careless believers to repentance, restore reverence to worship, and call the Church to grateful, obedient and holy living.

Opening: The Throne We Cannot Redesign

Imagine that a king invites condemned rebels into his palace. At enormous personal cost, he provides a lawful pardon. He opens his doors, offers reconciliation and promises to receive everyone who will lay down his weapons and return in loyalty. But instead of accepting the pardon, some rebels begin to boast that the king's kindness proves rebellion does not matter. They keep the invitation but reject the king's authority. They sing about his generosity while continuing to fight his government.

Would such a king be good if he never confronted evil? Would he be loving if he allowed violence, deception and oppression to continue forever? Mercy without moral government would not be mercy; it would become abandonment of the innocent. Love that never opposes what destroys its beloved is not complete love.

Our generation enjoys hearing that God is love — and truly, God is love. We celebrate that He is gracious, patient, forgiving and compassionate — and every word is true. But truth becomes distorted when we use one part of God's revelation to silence another. The Bible does not merely say, "God is love." It also says, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5), and, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

We cannot redesign the throne so that it will accommodate our rebellion. We cannot reduce the Almighty to the parts of His character that make us comfortable. A God created from selected verses is an idol created with religious language.

Today we must behold what Romans 11:22 calls "the goodness and severity of God." We must see the embrace of the Father without forgetting the holiness of His throne. We must see the Lamb who was slain and the Lion who reigns. We must see the Saviour who receives the repentant and the Judge before whom every life will finally stand.

Introduction and Context

Hebrews was written to believers under pressure — people tempted to draw back from their confession of Christ. The writer presents Jesus as greater: greater than angels, greater than Moses, the perfect High Priest and the mediator of a better covenant. Hebrews 12 contrasts Mount Sinai, where God's holiness caused the people to tremble, with Mount Zion and the privileges of the new covenant. Yet grace does not make God less holy. Greater privilege brings greater responsibility.

The passage therefore warns, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (Hebrews 12:25). It then declares:

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.” —
Hebrews 12:28–29

Notice the union: kingdom, grace, service, reverence, godly fear and consuming fire. Grace does not cancel reverence; grace enables acceptable service. The God of the new covenant remains the holy God.

The title *The Other Side of God* is a sermonic expression. It does not mean that God has two personalities, one kind and another cruel. There is no darkness, instability or contradiction in Him. It refers to dimensions of God’s revealed character that an indulgent age often neglects: His holiness, justice, jealousy, discipline and judgement. His mercy and justice flow from one perfect nature. His love is holy love. His anger is righteous anger. His patience is purposeful patience. His judgement is morally pure judgement.

God is not divided. Our vision of Him is often deficient.

1. The God Many People Want

Many people do not reject the idea of God; they revise it. They want a Father who never corrects, a giver who never commands, a Saviour who need not be Lord, and a merciful God who never judges. They want divine help without divine government, promises without precepts, heaven without holiness, forgiveness without repentance, and Christianity without a cross.

This convenient god exists mainly to affirm human desire. He comforts but never confronts. He blesses every ambition but questions no appetite. He is summoned in crisis and dismissed in convenience. His name is used to sanctify choices already made.

But a god who always agrees with us is probably a projection of us. The living God is not made in our image. We were made in His.

The danger is subtle because every selected statement may contain some truth. God is a Father; but He is a Father who chastens the children He loves (Hebrews 12:6). God forgives; but He commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). Christ is Saviour; but Scripture also names Him Lord. God is patient; but His patience has a redemptive purpose.

A partially revealed God can become a falsely represented God. If we preach tenderness without truth, we offer sentimentality. If we preach authority without compassion, we misrepresent His heart. The Church must declare the whole counsel of God.

Practical application: Examine the God you believe in. Is He the God revealed in Scripture, or merely the God your preferences permit? When the Bible contradicts your lifestyle, which one do you edit?

Congregational emphasis: God does not cease to be holy in order to be loving, and He does not cease to be loving when He acts in holiness.

2. The God the Bible Reveals

Exodus 34:6–7 contains one of Scripture’s great self-revelations. The Lord proclaims Himself “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,” forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. But the same declaration adds that He “will by no means clear the guilty.”

These are not two gods. This is the one God. He forgives the repentant, but He does not declare evil to be good. Mercy removes guilt through God’s appointed provision; it does not rename guilt innocence while rebellion continues.

Nahum presents the same harmony. “The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked” (Nahum 1:3). Later, “The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth

them that trust in him” (verse 7). He is a refuge to those who trust Him and righteous against unrepentant wickedness.

If God were loving but unjust, evil would ultimately triumph. If He were just but without mercy, none of us could stand. But He is perfectly just and astonishingly merciful. He is near to the brokenhearted, yet terrible against proud rebellion. He is the Lamb who was slain and the Lion who judges. The Lion and the Lamb are not two different Christ.

Divine judgement is not a loss of temper. Human anger can be ignorant, excessive and selfish. God’s judgement is informed by perfect knowledge, governed by perfect righteousness and administered without corruption. The Judge of all the earth will do right.

Practical application: Do not interpret God’s love through contemporary sentiment. Learn love from the cross, holiness from His Word and justice from His character. Let the whole Bible correct your picture of God.

Reflective question: Do I love the God who actually is, or only the benefits I hope to receive from Him?

3. Behold the Goodness and Severity of God

Romans 11 addresses Israel, the Gentiles and the danger of spiritual pride. Some natural branches were broken off through unbelief, and Gentile believers stood by faith. Paul therefore warned them not to boast, but to fear. Then he said:

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness.” — Romans 11:22

“Behold” means do not glance casually. Look carefully. Consider both.

The goodness of God invites the undeserving, saves the guilty, forgives the repentant, adopts the abandoned, restores the fallen and sustains the weak. We did not initiate salvation. God loved first. Christ died for us while we were sinners. The Spirit awakens, convicts, regenerates and empowers. Every breath, opportunity and answered prayer testifies that God is good.

But His severity is His decisive opposition to unbelief, pride and rebellion. Paul is not teaching believers to earn grace by anxious performance. He is destroying presumption. We stand by faith, not by superiority. The proper response to mercy is humble dependence, not boastful entitlement.

Some want goodness without severity because goodness consoles them and severity examines them. But the physician who comforts while concealing a fatal disease is not kind. God’s warnings are forms of mercy. He tells us the truth before consequences become irreversible.

Goodness says, “Come.” Severity says, “Do not refuse Him who speaks.” Goodness opens the door. Severity warns against trampling upon grace. Goodness receives the broken. Severity resists the proud. We need both to know God truthfully.

Practical application: Reject spiritual pride. Your denomination, title, gift, years of service or past experience cannot replace present faith in and obedience to Christ. Continue in God’s goodness through trusting dependence on Him.

Congregational emphasis: The goodness of God is not permission to become careless; it is power and invitation to become faithful.

4. When Mercy Is Mistaken for Approval

Romans 2:4 asks, “Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” God’s patience has a destination: repentance.

Yet people reason, “Nothing happened, so God is not concerned.” Ecclesiastes 8:11 explains the danger: because judgement is not executed speedily, the human heart becomes fully set on evil. Delay is mistaken for indifference.

The absence of immediate consequences is not the presence of divine approval. Heaven’s silence is not heaven’s endorsement. A farmer does not dig up seed every morning to prove that it was planted. In time, seed produces harvest. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

Others say, “God understands my weakness.” Yes, He understands it more deeply than we do. Christ is a compassionate High Priest. But compassion calls us to the throne for grace to help; it does not bless our refusal to repent. Weakness confessed is met with help. Rebellion defended is met with warning.

Some say, “Once saved, conduct no longer matters.” We are not saved by works, but saving grace produces a new direction of life. Titus 2:11–12 teaches that the grace bringing salvation also teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Grace is not God lowering His standard; grace is God saving and empowering His people to walk in His will.

Others trust gifting and anointing. But a gift is not an exemption from character. Public usefulness cannot cancel private accountability. God may use a vessel while confronting what is wrong in the vessel. Applause is not acquittal.

Pastoral warning: Do not turn assurance into presumption. True assurance rests in Christ and bears the fruit of persevering faith. Presumption claims Christ while making peace with what crucified Him.

Practical application: Where has delay made you bold in disobedience? Confess it specifically. Bring it into the light. Seek help where necessary. Do not ask merely whether judgement has come; ask whether your life pleases the Lord.

Congregational emphasis: Mercy postpones judgement to make room for repentance; it does not abolish accountability.

5. Encounters with the Consuming Fire

Nadab and Abihu: Holy Things Must Not Be Handled Carelessly

Leviticus 10 records that Aaron’s sons offered “strange fire,” which God had not commanded. Fire went out from the Lord, and they died. Moses explained, “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me” (verse 3).

Their priestly position increased rather than removed responsibility. The lesson is not that sincere worshippers should expect arbitrary destruction. It is that worship is governed by God’s holiness, not human invention. Zeal cannot sanctify disobedience. Spiritual office does not make sacred boundaries optional.

For us, this demands reverence, truth and integrity in ministry. We must not manipulate people, manufacture manifestations, commercialise spiritual things or substitute performance for God’s presence.

Moses at Meribah: Intimacy Does Not Remove Accountability

In Numbers 20, God told Moses to speak to the rock. In anger, Moses struck it and spoke as though the miracle proceeded from himself and Aaron: “Must we fetch you water out of this rock?” God still supplied water to the people, but He disciplined Moses because he failed to sanctify God before them.

Long service does not put anyone beyond correction. An extraordinary history with God does not excuse a present act of unbelief. Leaders influence how people perceive God; therefore leadership carries weightier accountability.

The miracle occurred, but the method was wrong. Results alone do not validate methods.

Uzzah and the Ark: Sincerity Cannot Replace Divine Order

In 2 Samuel 6, Uzzah reached out when the ark shook. His intention may appear protective, but Israel was transporting the ark contrary to God's revealed order. The holy ark was not common furniture. Later David acknowledged, "We sought him not after the due order" (1 Chronicles 15:13).

Good intentions do not convert disobedience into obedience. We cannot improve God's order by human convenience. Familiarity with sacred things can quietly destroy reverence.

Saul: Partial Obedience Is Disobedience

In 1 Samuel 15, Saul preserved what God had commanded him to destroy and then wrapped disobedience in religious language: the animals were for sacrifice. Samuel answered, "To obey is better than sacrifice" (verse 22).

Saul obeyed where obedience suited him. But selective obedience leaves self on the throne. Worship offered to compensate for rebellion is not acceptable worship. God does not need a song from the mouth that refuses His command.

Ananias and Sapphira: God Sees Beyond Religious Appearance

Acts 5 records a couple who wanted the reputation of total surrender without its reality. Their sin was not refusing to give all their property; Peter made clear that it remained under their control. Their sin was calculated deception — lying to the Holy Ghost while presenting themselves as more devoted than they were.

The judgement produced great fear in the Church. God was protecting the integrity of a newly formed community from hypocrisy. This passage warns us that image management before people cannot deceive God.

Herod: Stolen Glory Is Dangerous

In Acts 12, Herod accepted the crowd's cry, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." The angel of the Lord struck him "because he gave not God the glory." Pride receives what belongs to God and imagines position makes it untouchable.

Every minister must remember: we are witnesses, not wonders; servants, not celebrities; stewards, not owners of God's glory.

The Churches in Revelation: Christ Confronts Those He Loves

In Revelation 2–3, the risen Christ walks among His churches. He commends faithfulness, exposes compromise, warns the unrepentant and promises reward to those who overcome. To Laodicea He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

His rebuke is not the absence of love but an expression of it. A Christ who never confronts His Church is not the Christ of Revelation. He loves His bride too much to leave her deceived, lukewarm or defiled.

Practical application: Ministers must submit gifting to character, method to Scripture and ambition to God's glory. Believers must reject hypocrisy and overfamiliarity. Churches must welcome biblical correction as part of Christ's loving government.

Reflective questions: Am I substituting sincerity for obedience? Am I defending partial obedience? Is my public spirituality concealing private compromise? Have I taken credit for what belongs to God?

6. Why God Is a Consuming Fire

Biblical fire carries several related meanings.

- **First, fire speaks of God's absolute holiness.** At Sinai there was fire because the Holy One had descended. His purity exposes everything false.
- **Second, fire speaks of His presence and glory.** God appeared to Moses in the burning bush. His presence is not lifeless theory; it is living majesty.
- **Third, fire speaks of judgement.** Evil will not coexist forever with God's righteous kingdom. What refuses grace and clings to rebellion will finally face His justice.
- **Fourth, fire speaks of purification.** Malachi compares the Lord to a refiner's fire. The refiner does not hate the gold; he hates the impurity that corrupts it. God's discipline of His children is fatherly love at work, producing "the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:11).
- **Fifth, fire speaks of divine jealousy.** Deuteronomy 4:24 says, "The LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." Divine jealousy is not insecure envy. It is God's holy claim upon the worship and covenant loyalty that rightly belong to Him. Idols deform those who serve them, so God's jealousy protects the relationship for which we were created.

There is a fire that destroys rebellion and a fire that purifies surrendered lives. The difference is not in the holiness of the flame but in our relationship to God. Wax melts before the same sun that hardens clay. Surrender allows holiness to refine; resistance turns every warning into further hardness.

When God exposes pride, do not run from the fire; yield to the Refiner. When He convicts you of impurity, do not rename the impurity; place it before Him. When discipline comes, do not conclude that you have been abandoned. Ask what fruit the Father intends to produce.

Practical application: Cooperate with God's sanctifying work through confession, Scripture, prayer, obedience, accountable fellowship and the Spirit's power. We do not purify ourselves to earn adoption; because we belong to Him, we submit to the Father's transforming love.

Congregational emphasis: The fire of God is not sent to destroy the surrendered heart, but to consume what prevents that heart from fully belonging to Him.

7. The Cross: Where Mercy and Justice Meet

If this sermon ended with judgement, it would not yet have reached the centre of the gospel. The centre is Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

At Calvary, God did not pretend sin was unimportant. He dealt with it. Christ, the sinless Son, willingly bore our sins in His body on the tree. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). God remains just while justifying the one who believes in Jesus (Romans 3:26).

The cross reveals the seriousness of sin: redemption required the self-giving sacrifice of the Son of God. It also reveals the immeasurable depth of divine love: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

The hands that will hold the sceptre of judgement were stretched out for sinners. The Judge entered history and bore judgement for all who take refuge in Him. Justice was not discarded; Christ satisfied its demand. Mercy was not cheaply distributed; it came at infinite cost.

We must speak carefully. Christ was not an unwilling victim of a cruel Father. Father, Son and Holy Spirit act in the unity of divine love and saving purpose. The Son willingly laid down His life. At the cross, God Himself provided what His holiness required.

Forgiveness is freely offered, but it is received through repentance and faith. Repentance is not payment for salvation; it is the turning of a heart that stops defending rebellion and comes to Christ. Faith is not mere agreement that Jesus existed; it is personal trust in His person and finished work.

To reject Christ is to reject God's appointed refuge. John 3:18 says that the unbeliever is condemned already, and verse 36 declares that the wrath of God abides on the one who refuses the Son. The question is not whether we are respectable compared with others. The question is whether we have come to the Son.

And when grace saves, grace begins to transform. We do not obey in order to purchase the cross. We obey because the cross has purchased us. Gratitude becomes surrender. Love becomes loyalty. Faith bears fruit.

Christ-centred appeal: You need not run away from the consuming fire; run to Christ. He is not reluctant to save. No sinner who truly comes to Him will be cast out. There is pardon for the guilty, cleansing for the defiled, restoration for the fallen and a new heart for the captive.

Congregational emphasis: The cross does not prove that sin is unimportant; it proves that sin is so serious that only Christ could provide our redemption — and that God loved us enough to provide Him.

8. When the Saviour Is Revealed as Judge

The same Jesus now offered as Saviour is appointed by God as Judge. This is not a change in His character. The One rejected in humiliation will be revealed in authority.

Death is certain unless Christ returns first. Accountability is universal. Revelation 20 describes the great white throne and the judgement of the dead. Scripture speaks with gravity about the lake of fire and the second death. We must not embellish what God has revealed, but neither may we erase it.

Religious profession is not conversion. Church attendance, baptism, a Christian name, family heritage, ministerial title and public activity cannot substitute for knowing Christ. Jesus warned that some will say, "Lord, Lord," and appeal to religious works, yet hear, "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:21–23).

To be known by Christ is not to be sinlessly perfect. It is to belong to Him through genuine faith — a faith that receives His grace and yields to His lordship. Believers may stumble, but they do not build a permanent home in rebellion. They confess, return, learn and continue with Christ.

Second Peter 3 teaches that apparent delay does not mean the promise has failed. The Lord is longsuffering, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But the day of the Lord will come. Peter's application is not date-setting or panic. It is holy conduct, godliness, watchfulness and diligence.

Do not use the hope of tomorrow to disobey the God of today. The call to repentance is urgent because life is fragile, sin hardens the heart and Christ deserves an immediate answer.

Practical application: Settle your relationship with Christ. Do not hide behind the faith of your parents, the reputation of your church or the usefulness of your ministry. Examine yourself honestly — not to manufacture despair, but to make your calling and election sure through living faith in Christ.

Pastoral assurance: Those who have truly come to Christ need not live under condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). The warning is not meant to drive the trusting believer from Christ; it is meant to drive every hearer away from presumption and into Christ.

9. Living in the Fear of God

The fear of God is not the terror of a slave expecting arbitrary violence. It is reverential awe before infinite holiness — an awe that produces obedience, humility and departure from evil.

First Peter 1:15–17 joins grace, holiness and reverent fear. Because the One who called us is holy, we are to be holy in all manner of life. Because we call Him Father, we pass the time of our sojourning here in fear. Fatherhood does not eliminate reverence; it gives reverence the warmth of relationship.

The fear of God changes ordinary life:

- **In worship**, we come with joy but refuse casual irreverence.
- **In private**, we remember that the God unseen by others sees us completely.
- **In leadership**, we handle people as souls belonging to God, not tools for our ambition.
- **In stewardship**, we treat money, time, influence and gifts as trusts.
- **In relationships**, we pursue purity, truthfulness, faithfulness and honour.
- **In ministry**, we welcome accountability and reject the illusion that anointing places us above correction.
- **Towards sinners**, we show compassion, remembering the mercy we received.
- **Towards sin**, we refuse compromise, because love for people does not require agreement with what destroys them.

There is a difference between intimacy and overfamiliarity. Intimacy draws near with love and reverence. Overfamiliarity treats holy things as common. Intimacy says, “Abba, Father,” while bowing before His will. Overfamiliarity calls Him Father while ignoring His commands.

Confidence in God is beautiful; careless familiarity is dangerous. Gratitude for mercy is essential; presumption upon mercy is deadly.

Practical application: Restore reverence to your daily devotion, speech, decisions and service. Ask not only, “Is this permitted?” but, “Does this honour the One who redeemed me?” Practise quick repentance. Keep short accounts with God. Invite trusted believers to speak truth into your life.

Congregational emphasis: We must not become so familiar with the Father’s embrace that we forget the holiness of His throne.

10. The Question That Must Become Personal

It is possible to admire this message and escape its demand. We can discuss theology while resisting God. But the Word now asks each of us:

- Have I mistaken God’s patience for His approval?
- Am I using grace as an excuse for disobedience?
- Is there a hidden sin I have protected rather than confessed?
- Have I reduced Christianity to outward religious activity?
- Do I honour God publicly while dishonouring Him privately?
- Is my obedience selective?
- Have I become casual with holy things?
- Have I genuinely repented and placed my faith in Jesus Christ?
- If I stood before God today, would Christ truly know me as His own?
- What must change immediately — not someday — in my life?

Do not answer with another person’s name. This is not a sermon for your spouse, colleague, pastor, member or neighbour. Say, “Search me, O God.”

Perhaps you are an unbeliever with no saving relationship with Christ. Come to Him now.

Perhaps you are religious but unconverted — surrounded by Christian activity without inward surrender. Come out of pretence and come to Christ.

Perhaps you are a believer who has fallen. Do not allow shame to keep you away. Confess and forsake the sin. Your Advocate is Jesus Christ the righteous. Restoration may require honest accountability and consequences may need to be faced, but mercy is available.

Perhaps you are a worker or minister whose gift has continued while your inner life has deteriorated. Do not confuse continuing activity with divine approval. Step into the light before private compromise becomes public ruin.

Perhaps God has been chastening you. Do not despise it or faint beneath it. Let the Father train you. His discipline is not evidence that He has thrown you away; it is evidence that He refuses to abandon you to what will destroy you.

[The preacher may insert a relevant personal testimony here.]

Conclusion: Come to the Fire Through the Cross

The God of the Bible is better than the god of human imagination. A sentimental god cannot save, because he cannot deal truthfully with sin. A cruel god would not provide a cross. But the living God is holy enough to judge sin and loving enough to bear its cost for us in Christ.

His goodness is not softness. His severity is not cruelty. His patience is not indifference. His discipline is not abandonment. His warnings are not hatred. His grace is not permission. His fire is not corruption. Everything in Him is perfect.

At Calvary, holiness did not retreat and mercy did not fail. Justice was honoured, love was displayed, the price was paid, and a door of refuge was opened. That door is still open today.

But an open door must be entered.

The Spirit says, “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 3:15). Do not wait for a more convenient season. Do not rehearse excuses. Do not compare yourself with worse people. Behold the goodness and severity of God, and run into the goodness offered in His Son.

There is hope for you. The prodigal can come home. The hypocrite can become honest. The backslider can be restored. The captive can be delivered. The defiled can be cleansed. The proud can bow. The sinner can be justified. The lukewarm church can become zealous and repent.

The final word to the repentant is not fire but refuge; not rejection but reconciliation; not despair but grace. The God who confronts you is the God who calls you. The God who exposes your wound is the God who offers healing. The God whose holiness makes sin unbearable is the God whose love made salvation possible.

Come — not because judgement is unreal, but because mercy is available. Come — not trusting your works, but trusting Christ’s finished work. Come with repentance. Come with faith. Come with surrender. Come now.

Call to Salvation, Repentance and Consecration

If you have never truly surrendered to Christ, acknowledge before God that you are a sinner and cannot save yourself. Believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again. Turn from self-rule and place your trust in Him. Call upon His name.

If you are a believer tolerating known sin, do not merely feel emotional. Name the sin before God. Renounce it. Where another person has been harmed, seek wisdom to make matters right. Where bondage has become entrenched, seek mature pastoral help and accountable support.

If you are serving God without reverence, lay your title, gift and reputation before Him again. Ask Him to restore a clean heart, a steadfast spirit and the joy of obedient service.

If you are walking faithfully but have become afraid because of this message, look to Christ. The purpose is not to make sincere believers doubt God’s mercy. Rest in His promise, continue in faith and let reverence deepen your love.

Guided Altar Call

- Ask the congregation to become quiet before God and avoid observing other people's responses.
- Invite those seeking salvation to acknowledge their need openly and come forward where appropriate to the setting.
- Invite believers who have tolerated known disobedience, hypocrisy or spiritual carelessness to respond in repentance.
- Invite ministers and workers who need renewed consecration and accountability to surrender afresh.
- Do not rush the moment or manipulate emotions. Allow Scripture, conviction and clear gospel instruction to guide the response.
- Lead respondents in prayer, making clear that repeated words do not save; Christ saves those who repent and believe.
- Arrange personal follow-up, biblical counsel, discipleship and connection to a faithful local church.

Prayer of Response

"Lord God, I come before You without excuse. You are loving, holy, merciful and just. I confess that I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe that Jesus Christ died for sinners and rose again. I turn from self-rule and place my trust in Christ alone. Forgive me, cleanse me and make me Yours. Give me a new heart and teach me to walk in obedience."

"Father, where I have mistaken Your patience for approval, bring me to true repentance. Where I have become careless with holy things, restore reverence. Where I have hidden sin, give me grace to walk in the light. Where I have fallen, restore me through Jesus Christ. I surrender my life, gifts, relationships, possessions and future to You. Let Your holy fire consume what is evil and purify what belongs to You. Keep me by Your grace, and let my life glorify You. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Closing Prayer

Holy and merciful Father, we bow before the fullness of who You are. Forgive us for reducing You to an image that comforts our preferences while leaving our rebellion untouched. Deliver us from presumption, hypocrisy, selective obedience and careless familiarity.

Thank You for the cross, where Your justice and mercy met. Thank You that Jesus bore the judgement of all who trust in Him and that no repentant sinner is beyond the reach of grace. Draw the unsaved to Christ. Restore the backslidden. Purify Your Church. Give ministers clean hands, pure hearts and trembling obedience to Your Word.

Teach us to serve You acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Let Your goodness lead us to repentance and Your holiness shape our conduct. May we hate sin without hating sinners, preach judgement without losing compassion, and proclaim grace without weakening truth.

Keep us faithful until the day we stand before Christ. May we be found in Him, clothed in His righteousness and bearing the fruit of His transforming grace. In the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Ten Focused Prayer Points

1. Father, give me a complete and balanced revelation of Your character through Your Word.
2. Lord, forgive me wherever I have mistaken Your patience for approval.
3. Holy Spirit, expose every hidden sin, false refuge and self-deception in my life.
4. Through the blood of Jesus, cleanse me and restore the joy of obedient fellowship with You.
5. Father, deliver me from selective obedience and give me grace for wholehearted surrender.

6. Restore reverence, truth and purity to my worship and service.
7. Let Your refining fire consume pride, hypocrisy, bitterness, lust, greed and every idol within me.
8. Give ministers and church workers integrity, humility and courage to submit gifts and methods to Scripture.
9. Draw unbelievers and backsliders to genuine repentance and saving faith in Jesus Christ.
10. Keep me faithful in Christ, watchful and ready for His appearing.

Five Memorable Sermon Quotations

“A God assembled from our favourite verses is not the God of Scripture, but an idol dressed in biblical language.”

“God’s silence is not always God’s approval; sometimes it is mercy giving repentance one more opportunity.”

“The miracle may occur while the method remains wrong; visible results do not exempt a servant from obedience.”

“We do not obey to purchase the cross; we obey because the cross has purchased us.”

“The fire that judges stubborn rebellion is the fire that refines a surrendered life.”

Preacher’s Pulpit Summary

Text: Hebrews 12:28–29; Romans 11:22

Big idea: God’s goodness and severity are harmonious expressions of His holy love. Mercy calls us to repentance; it never licenses rebellion.

Movement:

1. People often redesign God around comfort.
2. Scripture reveals one God who is both merciful and just.
3. Romans 11 commands us to behold both goodness and severity.
4. Delayed judgement is opportunity for repentance, not approval.
5. Nadab, Moses, Uzzah, Saul, Ananias, Herod and the churches warn against irreverence, partial obedience, hypocrisy and pride.
6. Divine fire signifies holiness, presence, judgement, purification and jealous love.
7. At the cross, sin was judged and mercy was offered through Christ.
8. The Saviour is also the appointed Judge; religious profession cannot replace conversion.
9. The fear of God produces reverence, integrity, humility and obedient living.
10. Call every hearer to salvation, repentance, consecration or renewed assurance in Christ.

Closing appeal: Come to the holy God through the crucified and risen Christ. The door of mercy is open; enter through repentance and faith.