

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BELONGING TO GOD AND REJECTING HIM

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10/19/26

Scripture: Revelation 21:8; John 3:16–18; 1 John 1:9

“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” — Revelation 21:8

There is a truth in God's Word that we cannot afford to soften, ignore, or explain away: there is a difference between belonging to God and continuing to live in rejection of Him. Eternity is real. Sin is real. Judgment is real. And so is the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Reading Revelation 21:8 yesterday at church, as Ivan was teaching us and finishing up our Sermon Series on Revelation I was reminded in a more serious but joyful manner by the Holy Spirit that God is holy, His Word is true, and my life must be measured against His truth, not the changing standards of this world.

These words from John, shared by Ivan are sobering. They should cause every one of us to stop and examine our own hearts.

I cannot read this passage simply thinking about the sins of other people. I have to ask myself, Where do I stand before a holy God? Have I surrendered my heart to Jesus Christ? Am I allowing His Word to expose my sin, correct my direction, and change the way I live?

It is easy to look around us and identify the sins of others while overlooking the condition of our own hearts. But God has not called me to be the judge of another person's soul. He has called me to examine myself, walk in obedience, speak His truth, and share the hope of the Gospel.

The distinction is not between people who have never sinned and people who have. It is between those who turn to Christ for salvation and those who persist in rejecting Him, this is what Ivan passionately was admonishing us in his preaching. What really struck me personally was when our Pastor stated, " it's not that going to Hell isn't bad enough, but to be separated from God for eternity, now that's the real Hell".

The Bible makes this clear: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” — Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

Every one of us stands in need of God's mercy. No amount of good deeds, religious activity, church attendance, or personal effort can erase our sin. Salvation is God's gift, purchased through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And that is where hope enters this sobering passage.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” — 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

Think about the power of that promise. God does not tell us to pretend we are righteous. He calls us to come to Him in repentance and faith. He offers forgiveness to the guilty, mercy to the broken, and new life to those who trust in His Son.

Grace does not mean sin no longer matters. Grace means Jesus has made a way for sinners to be forgiven and reconciled to God. Genuine faith does not make us perfect overnight, but it changes our relationship with sin. Instead of defending our rebellion, we begin confessing it. Instead of making excuses, we seek His strength to turn away from it. Instead of trusting ourselves, we learn to depend on Christ.

That is personal for me. I do not want merely to know what the Bible says. I want God's Word to search me, challenge me, and shape the man I am becoming. I want my faith to be more than words spoken in public. I want it to be evident in my private thoughts, my conversations, my decisions, my relationships, and the way I treat people when no one else is watching. And I want others to know what I have come to understand: Jesus Christ is not merely a way to improve our lives. He is our Savior, our only hope of reconciliation with a holy God, and the source of eternal life.

Jesus said: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." — John 3:16 (NKJV)

Notice the heart of God. He warns us about judgment because judgment is real, but He offers salvation because His love is real. He does not delight in our destruction. He calls us to turn to Him and live. This is differential view I learned from all the men that lead us through the Revelations series; Yes this book is hard to read, and understand, a dark and scary book at times, a book of wonders, visions, battles between good and evil, mysterious in its core, YET:

Revelation is a book of hope, a connection from Genesis throughout the scriptures, to the love and grace of God the Father, who loves us so much He sent His only Son, for our sakes and our salvation. In the end, as God created Adam and Eve in the beginning, so Revelation tells us at the end of times, God's church will be recreated into new bodies, living on a new earth, all for His Glory, and for an eternity with Jesus!

So I must ask myself, and I would encourage you to ask yourself the same question: Am I truly following Jesus, or have I simply become comfortable with the idea of Him? Have I surrendered my life to His authority, or am I asking Him to bless a life I still insist on controlling? These are not questions to answer carelessly. They are questions worth bringing honestly before God.

My desire is not to point a condemning finger at the world. My desire is to hold firmly to God's truth while extending the same Gospel grace that I desperately need myself. I want to speak plainly about sin without forgetting the mercy of the Savior. I want to warn people about eternity without withholding the invitation to come to Christ. Because the door of grace is open to those who will turn to Him.

Today is an opportunity to repent, believe, and walk with Jesus. Do not mistake God's patience for His approval of sin, and do not mistake your past failures for a reason to believe His grace cannot reach

you. Come to Christ. Trust His finished work on the cross. Let His Word direct your steps. And when you stumble, confess your sin and return to Him.

I want to finish my days on this earth knowing that my hope rests not in my goodness, my accomplishments, or my ability to measure up, but in the finished work of Jesus Christ. I want to keep sharing His Word because people need more than opinions, encouragement, or promises this world cannot keep. They need the truth that leads to eternal life. And I want that for you, too.

My prayer is that we will not simply hear the truth of God's Word, but respond to it with repentant hearts, genuine faith, and lives surrendered to Jesus Christ. Eternity matters. The Gospel matters. And every soul matters to God. Thank you Pastor Ivan for opening up this final book of God's Word, and showing us the love and hope that is Jesus, and if we faithfully surrender, set our foundation upon and seek the redemptive nature of God as our Lighthouse, there is mansion awaiting all of us who are born again in Jesus.

A final Scripture to consider: "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."— 1 John 5:12 (NKJV)

Prayer: Father, search my heart and reveal anything in me that is not pleasing to You. Keep me from becoming comfortable with sin or careless with Your truth. Thank You for the mercy You have shown me through Jesus Christ. Give me the courage to live faithfully, the humility to repent when I fail, and the compassion to share Your Gospel without pride or condemnation. Help me point others to Jesus, the only One who can save us and give us eternal life. In His name, Amen.