

Many of you are probably familiar with this symbol. It comes from a Chinese religion called Taoism. The Yin/Yang represents balance. There are two forces neither of which are pure as noted by the dot of the opposite color in each side.

I chose this because many people, even Christians, believe that God is balanced. Then again, many others believe that God is out of balance, choosing to focus their attention on only those attributes or characteristics which make us feel good about him.

But God is neither in balance nor out of balance. He is simple and he is unified. God's attributes are unified within him. He does not have a well of love and a well of wrath that hold equal or unequal amounts of love and wrath. Using the idea of wells, he is one big well in which all of his attributes exist. (Read Tozer, 78)<sup>[1]</sup>

Therefore it should not shock us that God is both merciful and wrathful. He is both gracious and stern. He is both kind and severe. While these things seem to be incompatible with one another, they are actually complementary of one another.

So, as we prepare to move forward in our study of God with focused attention on God's wrath, his love, his jealousy, his grace, and his position as judge, let's begin by heeding Paul's instruction to "consider God's kindness and severity."

Scripture: Romans 11:22 (Ex. 34:6-7)

## I. Kindness & Severity

### A. Kindness of God

#### 1. Details of

a. Common (Ps. 145:9; Acts 14:17)

i. Needs & General Blessings

b. Special

i. Salvation

ii. "God is good to all in some ways and to some in all ways"<sup>[2]</sup>

c. Abounding/Generosity (Ex. 34:7a)

#### 2. Desired Outcome

a. Leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4)

#### 3. Divine Example

a. Jesus (Heb. 1:9)

### B. Severity of God

#### 1. Details of

a. Justness & Judge (Ex. 34:7b)

b. Wrath & Vengeance (Rom. 12:19)

- c. Being “cut off” (Rom. 11)
- 2. Deservingly Experienced When
  - a. We abuse or reject his goodness (Deut. 9:7-8)
- 3. Desired Outcome
  - a. Appreciation of God’s Kindness
    - i. “Nobody ever got anything from God on the grounds that they deserved it.” <sup>[3]</sup>
    - ii. Read from Tozer (51-52) <sup>[4]</sup>
  - b. Appreciation of God’s Patience
  - c. Appreciation of God’s Discipline

We don’t often praise God for his severity. It is a subject that we avoid, either consciously or subconsciously. We don’t sing of his wrath and jealousy. There aren’t any songs either contemporary or in hymnody that call us to reflect upon and celebrate the severity of God.

Yet, Paul wrote that we should consider not only the Lord’s kindness but also his severity. Maybe, if we did what Paul urged us to do, we would become more appreciative of God’s kindness, his patience, and his discipline. We would think more about the ramifications of our decisions and actions. If we fail to do so, we risk “overemphasizing certain true things so as to obscure other things equally true.” <sup>[5]</sup> And we court God’s severity when we “seek to edit out of God’s self-revelation such features that [we] in [our] ignorance deem objectionable.” <sup>[6]</sup>

The fact that you are here this morning testifies to the goodness and kindness of God. He has given you another day and another opportunity. For some that opportunity is to confess your sins, turn from your sinful ways, and receive forgiveness and everlasting life through Jesus Christ. For others, it is an opportunity to worship him for who he is in his entirety. To praise him, as you consider both his kindness that lead you to repentance and his severity which helps motivate your obedience and fuels your appreciation for his generosity.

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[i]Tozer, A.W. The Knowledge of the Holy, Ch.15, p.78

[ii]Packer, J.I., Knowing God, Ch.16, p.162

[iii]Tozer, A.W. The Attributes of God (Vol. 1), Ch. 3, p.47

[iv]Ibid., p.51-52

[v]Tozer, A.W. The Knowledge of the Holy, Ch.15, p.79

[vi]Ibid., p.80