

Preface

This sermon was preached on 07/08/1741 and is one of the most famous of all sermons. Halfway through the sermon many of the listeners fell down in tears and repentance, asking God for mercy and forgiveness.

This sermon has what most of our modern day Christianity lacks--an awe and respect for God's righteous judgment! When we learn to preach these types of sermons, then we can expect the Holy Spirit to move in our midst. The language has been updated for our current usage.

Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

“In due time their foot will slip.”

Deut 32:35

In this verse the vengeance of God is threatened upon the wicked unbelieving Israelites, who were God's chosen people and who lived under the means of grace; but who, despite all of God's wonderful works towards them, remained without sense, having no discernment in them (Deut 32:28). After all the cultivations of heaven, they brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit, as shown in verses 32 and 33. The verse that I have chosen for my text, “In due time their foot will slide,” seems to imply the following things, relating to the punishment and destruction to which these wicked Israelites were exposed:

1. **That they were always exposed to ruin, as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to falling.** This is implied in the manner of the destruction coming upon them being represented by their foot sliding. The same is expressed in Psalm 73:18: “Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.”
2. **It implies they were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction.** As he that walks in slippery places is liable to fall at every moment, he cannot foresee from moment to moment whether he shall stand or fall; and when he does fall, he falls suddenly without warning, which is also expressed in Psalm 73:18-19: “Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!”
3. **Another thing that is implied is that they are liable to fall by themselves** without being thrown down by the hand of another, as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.
4. **That the reason why they have not already fallen and don't fall now is only that God's appointed time has not yet come.** For it is said that when that appointed time comes, “their foot will slip.” Then they shall be left to fall as they are inclined to do because of their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer but will let them go. And then at that very instant, they will fall into ruin as he that stands in such slippery descending ground on the edge of a pit. He cannot stand alone. When he is let go of then he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this: **There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God.** By the “mere pleasure of God,” I mean His sovereign pleasure, His arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation on His part, not hindered by any difficulty. God's will is not hindered in the least degree in respect to the preservation of wicked men. The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations:

1. **There is no lack of “power” in God to throw wicked men into hell at any moment.** Men's hands cannot be strong when God rises up. The strongest have no power to resist Him, nor can anyone save them from His hands. He is not only able to throw wicked men into hell, but He can do it most easily. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty trying to subdue a rebel who has found ways to fortify himself and has made himself strong by the mere numbers of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defense from the power of God. Though hand join in hand and vast multitudes of

God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken into pieces. They are like great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind or large quantities of dry hay before devouring flames. We find it easy to step on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth. Likewise it is easy for us to cut a slender thread that anything hangs by. Therefore it is easy for God when He pleases to throw His enemies down into hell. What are we that we should think that we can stand before Him at whose rebuke the earth trembles and before whom the mountains collapse?

2. **They deserve to be thrown into hell**, and divine justice never stands in the way. It makes no objection against God using His power at any moment to destroy them. Yes, on the contrary, justice calls out loud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?" (Luke 13:7). Every moment the sword of divine justice is waved over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy and God's mere will that holds it back.
3. **They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell.** They not only justly deserve to be thrown down there, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and unchangeable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between Him and mankind, is gone out against them and stands against them so that they are already bound over to hell. John 3:18: "Whoever does not believe stands condemned already." So that every unconverted man rightly belongs to hell. That is his place; from there he has his origin. John 8:23: "You are from below," and he is headed for there. It is the place that justice and God's word and the sentence of His unchangeable law assigns to him.
4. **They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God that is expressed in the torments of hell.** And the reason why they don't go down to hell at each moment is not because God, in whose power they are under, is not exceedingly angry with them, as He is with the many miserable human beings now tormented in hell and who there feel and bear the fierceness of His wrath. Yes, God is a great deal more angry with the great numbers that are now on earth, yes, doubtless with the many that are now sitting in this congregation who feel completely at ease, than He is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell. It is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness and does not resent it that He does not let loose His hand and cut them off. God is not like them though they imagine that He is. The wrath of God burns against them. Their damnation does not slumber. The pit is prepared. The fire is made ready. The furnace is now hot, ready to receive them. The flames now rage and glow. The glittering sword is sharpened and held over them, and the pit has opened its mouth under them.
5. **The devil stands ready to overthrow them and seize them as his own at whatever moment God shall allow him.** They belong to him. He has their souls in his possession and under his dominion. The Scripture represents them as his goods (Lk 11:21). The devils watch them. They are next to them at their right hand. They stand waiting for them like greedy hungry lions that see their prey and expect to have it but are for the present kept back. If God should withdraw His hand by which they are restrained, they would in one moment rush upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them. Hell opens its mouth wide to receive them, and if God should permit it, they would be rapidly swallowed up and lost.
6. **There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning that would presently ignite and burst into flames of hell-fire if it were not for God's restraints.** There is laid in the very nature of all unsaved men a foundation for the torments of hell. There are those corrupt principles in reigning power in them and in full possession of them that are seeds of hell-fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceedingly violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would burst into flame after the same manner as the same depravity, the same hatred, does in the hearts of damned souls and would generate the same torments as they do in them. The souls of the wicked in Scripture are compared to the tossing sea (Is 57:20).

For the present, God restrains their wickedness by His mighty power as He does the raging waves of the tossing sea, saying, "This far you may come and no farther." But if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon sweep away everything in its path. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul. It is destructive in its nature, and if God should leave it without restraint, the soul would become perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is unrestrained and boundless in its fury, and while wicked

men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature. And as the heart is now a basin of sin, so, if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

- 7. Wicked men cannot find even a moment's security in the fact that death does not appear to be at hand.** The unbelieving man has no security in the fact that he is healthy and that he cannot perceive of any accident taking him out of the world and that there is no visible danger in any of his circumstances. The diverse and continual experience of the world in all ages shows this is no evidence that a man is not on the very brink of eternity and that the next step will not be into another world.

The unseen, unthought of ways and means of persons suddenly being taken out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday. The sharpest eyesight cannot discern them. God has so many different unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell that there is nothing that indicates that God needs to use a miracle or go out of the ordinary course of His providence to destroy any wicked man at any moment. All the options of taking sinners out of the world are in God's hands and so universally and absolutely subject to His power and determination that it depends merely upon the will of God whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell.

- 8. Unbelievers' prudence and care taken to preserve their own lives or the caring concern of others to preserve them does not give them a moment's security.** To this divine providence and universal experience also bears testimony. There is clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death. Otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and prudent men of the world and others with regard to their vulnerability to an early and unexpected death. But how is it in fact? Ecc 2:16: "Like the fool, the wise man too must die!"

- 9. All wicked men's pains and instruments which they use to escape hell while they continue to reject Christ and so remain wicked men does not secure them from hell for one moment.** Almost every natural man that hears of hell flatters himself that he shall escape it. He depends upon himself for his own security. He flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do. Every one determines in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation and flatters himself that his strategies will not fail. They surely hear that only a few are saved and that the greater part of men that have died have gone into hell. But each one imagines that he has a better plan for his own escape than others have come up with. He does not intend to come to that place of torment. He says within himself that he intends to take sufficient care and to arrange the concerns of his life so that he will not fail.

But the foolish children of men miserably delude themselves in their own schemes and in the confidence of their own strength and wisdom. They trust in nothing but a shadow. The greater part of those who have lived under the same patient grace of God and are now dead and have undoubtedly gone into hell. And it was not because they were not as wise as those who are now alive. It was not because they did not determine for themselves how to secure their own escape. If we could speak with them and inquire of them one by one whether they expected when alive when they used to hear about hell, ever to be the subjects of that misery, we doubtless should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here. I had determined otherwise in my mind. I thought I had a good plan for myself. I thought my strategy was good. I intended to take sufficient care, but it came upon me unexpectedly. I didn't expect it at that time and in that way. It came as a thief. Death outwitted me. God's wrath was too quick for me. O my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do after the life on earth, and when I was saying, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction came upon me."

- 10. God has put Himself under no obligation, has made no promise, to keep any unbelieving man out of hell for one second.** God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death but only what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yes and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace who are not the children of the covenant, who do not believe in any of the promises, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

Therefore natural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of hell. They have deserved the fiery pit and are already sentenced to it, and God is dreadfully provoked. His anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of His wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger. Neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment. The devil is waiting for them. Hell is gaping for them. The flames gather and flash about them and are eager to grab hold of them and swallow them up. The fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out, and they have no interest in any Mediator. There are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of. All that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will and uncovenanted, unobliged patience of an incensed God.

Application

The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This you have heard is the case of every one of you that are without Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning fire, is stretched out wide under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God. There is hell's wide gaping mouth open. And you have nothing to stand upon nor anything to take hold of. There is nothing between you and hell but the air. It is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not cognizant of this. You find that you are kept out of hell but do not see the hand of God in it but look at other things, like your good health, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing. If God should withdraw His hand, they would no more keep you from falling than thin air would hold a person up that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as heavy as lead and adds a downwards tendency with great weight and pressure towards hell. And if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf. And your good health and your own care and prudence and best plans for salvation and all your righteousness would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you for one moment, for you are a burden to it. The creation groans with you. The animal is made subject to the bondage of your corruption not willingly. The sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan. The earth does not willingly yield her fruits to satisfy your lusts nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon. The air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies.

God's animals are good and were made for men to serve God with and do not willingly serve any other purpose and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spit you out were it not for the sovereign hand of Him who has subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads full of the dreadful storm and big with thunder. And were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God for the present halts His destroying wind. Otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present. They increase more and more and rise higher and higher till an outlet is given. And the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course when it is once let loose. It is true that judgment against your evil works has not been executed before. The floods of God's vengeance have been withheld, but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing, and you are every day storing up more wrath. The waters are constantly rising and growing more and more mighty, and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the waters back that are unwilling to be stopped and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw His hand from the floodgate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury and would come upon you with omnipotent

power. And if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yes, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would never be able to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string. And justice points the arrow at your heart and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God and that of an angry God without any promise or obligation at all that keeps the arrow one second from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all of you that never had the great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls, all of you that were never born again and made new creatures and raised from being dead in sin to a new state and never experienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God.

However you may have reformed your life in many things and may have had religious feelings and may keep up a form of religion in your families and secret prayer closets and in your churches, it is nothing but His mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However you may now be unconvinced of the truth that you now hear, in time you will be fully convinced of it. Those that were in similar circumstances as you are are now gone, and destruction came suddenly upon most of them when they expected nothing to happen, and while they were saying, "Peace and safety." Now they see that those things on which they depended for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell much as one holds a spider or some detestable insect over the fire detests you and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath towards you burns like fire. He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be thrown into the fire. His eyes are too pure than to bear to have you in His sight. You are ten thousand times more abominable in His eyes than the most hateful venomous snake is in ours. You have offended Him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince, and yet, it is nothing but His hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell last night, that you were allowed to awake up again in this world after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose this morning but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell since you have sat here in this church provoking His pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending His solemn worship. Yes, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in. It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it and ready every moment to singe it and burn it apart. And you have no interest in any Mediator and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. And consider here more particularly:

- 1. Whose wrath it is: It is the wrath of the infinite God.** If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most powerful prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute dictators, who have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power to be disposed of at their mere will. Pr 20:2: "A king's wrath is like the roar of a lion; he who angers him forfeits his life." The person that greatly enrages a volatile prince is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly kings in their greatest majesty and strength and when clothed in their greatest terrors are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth. They can do little when most enraged and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth, before God, are like grasshoppers. They are nothing and less than nothing. Both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings is much more terrible than theirs as His majesty is greater. Lk 12:4-5: "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him."
- 2. It is the fury of His wrath that you are exposed to.** We often read of the fury of God as in Is 59:18: "According to what they have done, so will He repay wrath to His enemies and retribution to His foes." So Is 66:15: "See, the LORD is coming with fire, and His chariots are like a whirlwind; He will bring down His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire." And in many other places. So in Rev 19:15 we

read of “the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.” The words are exceedingly terrible. If it had only been said, “the wrath of God,” the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful; but it is “the fury of the wrath of God.” The fury of God! The fierceness of Jehovah! O how dreadful that must be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them?

But it is also “the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.” As though there would be a very great manifestation of His almighty power in what the fury of His wrath should inflict as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged and exerted as men exert their strength in the fury of their wrath. O then what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor man or woman that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? And whose heart can endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fury of His anger implies that He will inflict wrath without any pity. When God looks upon the inexpressible circumstances of your case and sees your torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your strength and sees how your poor soul is crushed and sinks down as it were into an infinite gloom, He will have no compassion upon you. He will not withhold the executions of His wrath or in the least lighten His hand. There shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God stop His destroying wind. He will have no regard to your welfare nor be at all careful for fear that you should suffer too much in any other sense than only that you shall “not suffer beyond what strict justice requires.”

Nothing shall be withheld because it is too intense for you to bear. Ezek 8:18: “Therefore I will deal with them in anger; I will not look on them with pity or spare them. Although they shout in my ears, I will not listen to them.” Now God stands ready to pity you. This is a day of mercy. You may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy. But when the day of mercy is past, your most pitiful and sorrowful cries and shrieks will be in vain. You will be totally lost and thrown away by God, and He will have no regard for your welfare. God will have no other use for you but for you to suffer misery. You shall have no other purpose, for your body will be a body of wrath designed for destruction, and there will be no other use of your body but to be filled full of wrath. God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to Him that it is said He will only “laugh and mock” (Pr 1:25-31):

“Since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you--when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. Then they will call to me, but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.”

How awful are those words, Is 63:3, which are the words of the great God: “I have trodden the winepress alone; I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing.” It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things: Contempt and hatred and fury of wrath. If you cry to God to pity you, He will be so far from pitying you in your dismal case or showing you the least regard or favor that instead of that, He will only tread you under foot. And though He will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet He will not regard that, but He will crush you under His feet without mercy. He will crush out your blood and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on His garments so as to stain all His clothes. He will not only hate you, but He will have you in the utmost contempt. No place shall be thought fit for you but under His feet to be trodden down as the filth of the back alleys.

- 3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that He might show what the wrath of Jehovah is.** God has had it on His heart to show to angels and men both how excellent His love is and also how terrible His wrath is. Sometimes earthly rulers have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that would provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and arrogant king of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, and accordingly gave the order that the burning fiery furnace should be

heated seven times hotter than it was before. Doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fury that human art could raise it.

But the great God is also willing to show His wrath and magnify His awful majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of His enemies. Rom 9:22: "What if God, choosing to show His wrath and make His power known, bore with great patience the objects of His wrath--prepared for destruction?" And seeing this is His design and what He has determined, even to show how terrible the unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness, of Jehovah is, He will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be a dreadful witness. When the great and angry God has risen up and executed His awful vengeance on the poor sinner and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of His indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Is 33:12-13: "The peoples will be burned as if to lime; like cut thornbushes they will be set ablaze. You who are far away, hear what I have done; you who are near, acknowledge my power!"

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state. If you continue in it, the infinite might and majesty and terribleness of the omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you in the inexpressible strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb, and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go out and look on the awful spectacle that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is. And when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Is 66:23-24: "'All mankind will come and bow down before me,' says the LORD. 'And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.'"

- 4. It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one second, but you must suffer it for all of eternity.** There will be no end to this extreme horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts and amaze your soul. And you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance. And then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. O who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it. It is inexpressible and inconceivable, for "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. O that you would consider it whether you be young or old! There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation now hearing this sermon that will actually be the subjects of this very misery for all eternity. We do not know who they are or in what seats they sit or what thoughts they may now have. It may be they are now at ease and hear all these things without much conviction and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person and but one in the whole congregation that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a mournful and bitter cry over him! But, alas! Instead of one, how many will remember this sermon in hell! And it would be a wonder if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time even before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons that now sit here in some seats of this church in health, quiet and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning.

Those of you that continue in your unsaved condition who shall keep out of hell the longest will eventually be there in a little while! Your damnation does not slumber. It will come swiftly and in all probability very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. It is doubtless the case of some whom you have seen and known that never deserved hell more than you and that before appeared as likely to have been alive now as you. Their case is past all hope. They are crying in extreme misery and complete despair, but here you are in the land of the living and in the Church and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would those poor damned, hopeless souls give for one day's opportunity such as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day where Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open and stands calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners, a day where many are flocking to Him and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north, and south. Many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in are now in a happy state with their hearts filled with love to Him who has loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful it is to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting while you are suffering grief and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart and cry because of the apprehension of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Aren't your souls as precious as the souls of the people in the nearby town where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here who have lived a long time in the world and still are not born again? And so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel who have done nothing ever since they have lived but stored up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh, sirs, your case, in a special way, is extremely dangerous. Your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Don't you see how persons of your years are passed over and left in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You have need to consider yourselves and awake thoroughly out of sleep. You cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite God.

Young men and young women, will you neglect this precious season which you now enjoy when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity, but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as with those persons who spent all the precious days of youth in sin and are now come to such a dreadful gorge in blindness and hardness. And you children who are unconverted, do not you know that you are going down to hell to bear the dreadful wrath of that God who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil when so many other children in the land are converted and have become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let every one that is yet without Christ and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women or middle aged or young people or little children, now listen to the loud calls of God's word and providence.

This acceptable year of the Lord, a day of such great favor to some, will doubtless be a day of remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden, and their guilt increases quickly on such a day as this if they neglect their souls. And never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in His elect in all parts of the land, and probably the greater part of adult persons that ever shall be saved will be brought in now in a little time; and that it will be as it was on the great outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the apostles' days. The election will obtain, and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day and will curse the day that ever you were born to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is as it was in the days of John the Baptist; the axe is laid at the roots of the trees that every tree which does not bring forth good fruit may be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Therefore, let every one that is without Christ now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Hurry and escape with your lives. Don't look behind you. Escape to the mountain, unless you be consumed."