

the goodness and the severity of God

"therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. otherwise you also will be cut off." rom 11:22

i fear His church has laid aside the severity of God, embracing only the goodness of God. flesh always gravitates toward the easier path. the older i get and the closer i approach to God, the deeper the reality of His holiness and our sinfulness is revealed. i can now more fully understand what the prophet isaiah felt when he said, "woe is me, for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." isa 6:5

have we all become too "familiar" with God almighty; become too "pal-like" instead of standing in awe of His being. even the best of our best falls short next to God. it's one thing to lie to oneself, but quite another to lie to this awesome God. ananias and saphira learned this in acts 5. "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." heb 10:31 there is a famous quote: "familiarity breeds contempt." is our familiarity driving us further away instead of closer to our desire? it's one thing to lovingly crawl into His embrace but another to rush in and out of His presence with the attitude of, "excuse me, pal, i'm running late. do you know what i'm trying to say here?

beware the deceptive wiles of familiarity – that sweet

but double-edged virtue that makes you feel at home even reading the holy word of God. He cannot be separated from His word. they are ONE! familiarity with God derives from incorrect theology, allowing people to enter His presence causally. familiarity is the opposite of treating God holy – separate, different, and pure. God is our Maker, not our nextdoor neighbor. familiarity is a mindset that when in full swing, it robs another saint from even ministering to your needs. the result is the power of God is hindered from flowing through them to you. it literally stops the anointing.

have we forgotten how far we are fallen from our created state, being ignorant of the fact that all are now created in a fallen state. the innocence of a child may be the closest we ever get, but still no cigar (meaning we still fall short). we will never know the innocence that adam and eve did in the beginning; not until we're fully redeemed. "but we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away." isa 64:6 that wind blows on even an innocent child as they grab an object and insist "mine." and how that insistence grows as they do.

we are fallen so far from His holiness, His very presence would instantly burn this flesh of ours back to the ashes it came from. yet we ignorantly ignore Him, or nonchalantly march into His presence without any prerequisite humbleness, thankfulness, worship and awe. grace is not something to be trampled on.

we live our lives as though sin were not abhorrent to God, or worse, that it should be excused because we simply can't help it. i would firmly assert, "you have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin." heb 12:4 i will never forget the visual God gave me as i transferred from my wheelchair. i pushed down with one hand and lifted up with the other. we are to push down on sin while pulling up by grace. sin is abhorrent to God, and thus it should be to the believer as well.

the willingly ignorant are like those who would say, "we continue in sin that grace may abound?" rom 6:1 do we forget to be grateful for all the previous sins He has forgiven by continuing to wallow in them? without any effort of restraint, conviction being rejected and enjoyment embraced. "truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent. " act 17:30

i realize this is a message many will not choose to believe or will even accept, but i would not coddle someone when an uncertain judgment may well lay ahead. goodness and severity lie before each of us, seeking to embrace us in a grip we cannot escape from. which will you choose?