

SALVATION ON A SILVER PLATTER

According to stories from the National Park System, a camper at Long Pine Key in Everglades National Park decided to take a dip in the lake with her dog despite signs saying "No Swimming -- Danger -- Alligators." She swam to an island about 75 yards from the shore, then saw some alligators and refused to swim back. The ranger who rescued her in a canoe asked, "Didn't you see the signs?" She said, "Sure, but I didn't think they applied to me."

Signs of warning should be evident as to what dangers are ahead if the signs are not heeded. In Matthew 11 Jesus mentions some warning signs stating that God would punish the Jewish people if they did not repent of their sins. The same signs are applicable to you and me as well. We need to know today that when Jesus said these things to those people, He was not trying to be mean. He was loving these people. His words were not meant to destroy them but to save them. I personally believe that most church attendees want to hear the truth as it is without any watering down, but not all people do. Let me ask you these questions. Is God all about love? Is God about judgment? Is God about mercy? Is God about wrath? He is about all four isn't He? Just like a good parent, a parent is about love, judgment, mercy and even wrath, or in other words, discipline.

We don't need to get caught up in some game about whether God only wants us to be happy, or if God wants us to realize we are low and unworthy of His grace. There is a heaven. God wants us to end up there. There is a hell. God does not want us to end up there. And if God needs to get that message across to you and me with some personal signs of warning, then so be it. God does not owe you or me His grace and mercy, and there is not a one of us who will ever be able to say on the day of judgment, "God, You never gave me a warning. You never gave me a chance." Along with the warning signs, Jesus gave us promises, but that's another sermon.

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