

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

February 25, 2018

## The Kindness and Severity of God

by Frank Himmel

Paul urged, "Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise, you will be cut off" (Romans 11:22).

In kindness, God created a world in which everything was good (Genesis 1:31), a perfect home for mankind. He provided all we needed, including divine instructions. However, when the first couple disobeyed those instructions, God drove them from their paradise home, and exposed them and all succeeding generations to pain and death (Genesis 3).

In kindness, God sent two angels to warn Lot and his family to leave immoral Sodom, lest they be caught in its divine punishment. The angels even accommodated Lot when he complained about the escape route! But when Lot's wife disobeyed God's conditions, God turned her into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19).

In kindness, God sent Moses to deliver the nation of Israel from bondage in Egypt. The book of Exodus records how Moses led them out by means of a series of divine plagues, and how God miraculously provided for them as they crossed a barren wilderness en route to their promised land. Yet when the nation rebelled against God, He ordered that the entire adult gene-

ration would die in the wilderness (Numbers 13-14). Even Moses, because of his sin, was not allowed to enter Canaan (Numbers 20:8-13).

In kindness, God sent His own Son into the world as an atonement for our sins. No one else was qualified to be that. He has graciously offered to forgive every wrong of those who put their trust in Jesus and His sacrifice, expressing that trust by becoming His disciples (Romans 3:23-26; Matthew 28:18-20). On the other hand, God warns of eternal punishment for those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9) and for Christians who do not remain faithful (Romans 11:22, our text).

Modern preaching tends to focus mostly on God's grace and kindness, with far less mention of His severity. Peter (Acts 2:37-40), Paul (Acts 13:16-41), and other New Testament preachers presented a more balanced view.

Let's rejoice in and take advantage of God's kindness, while at the same time maintaining a healthy fear of His severity. ■



# Don't Assume

by Frank Himmel

When Jesus was twelve years old He went to Jerusalem with His parents to attend the Passover. On the way home, Joseph and Mary just assumed that He was in the caravan. They had gone a day's journey before they discovered He was not (Luke 2:41-51). If you have ever left a child at church, take comfort!

On Sunday morning after Jesus' resurrection, Mary and some other women went to Jesus' tomb, assuming His body would be in it. They planned to finish anointing the body.

Instead, they found the tomb empty. Mary then supposed someone had taken the body, and when she saw a man standing nearby she assumed it was the gardener and asked him about it. Mary was wrong on both counts. It was Jesus (John 20:11-18).

On the day of Pentecost the apostles spoke in tongues [foreign languages]. Some present supposed that this phenomenon was produced by wine. That supposition made little sense: those who are intoxicated often struggle to speak their native language, much less one they have not studied! Luke says these were mockers, so an illogical allegation should be no surprise. The truth was, the tongues were the result of the Spirit, not overdoing "spirits" (Acts 2:1-14).

Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi. About midnight an earthquake shook the prison in such a way that the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. The jailer assumed that his prisoners would take advantage and escape. Knowing his penalty, he was about to take his own life. Paul stopped him, and before the night was over he and his household became Christians. This assumption was almost fatal in more ways than one! (Acts 16:25-40).

Some of Paul's enemies saw him in the temple at Jerusalem. Earlier they had seen him in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus. "Putting two and two together," they assumed that Paul had defiled the temple by bringing a Gentile into it. They therefore rushed against him with inflammatory charges and stirred up a mob with the intent of taking his life (Acts 21:27-31).

These examples illustrate how easy it is to make assumptions. Some are reasonable, others are not. Some are cases of people seeing what they want to see.

The Bible cautions us to act on evidence, not assumptions. That is true in our dealings with each other and especially in relation to God. We dare not assume His will, what He does or does not approve. "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). ■



## Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Adam Gibson	Josh Baucom
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	Ian Brown
OPENING PRAYER	Mike Zachry	
LORD'S SUPPER		
BREAD	Carlos Garcia	
CUP	Albert Lee Harrison	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Daven Daniel	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Mark Clifton
CLOSING PRAYER	John Baucom	Daven Daniel