

Dear Lillian Methodist Church family,

"In Christ Alone", is the modern classic hymn we sang last Sunday. It seems to be one of the few songs written this century that is thoroughly grounded in scripture and the central truths of the Christian faith. Of particular note, is the song's recognition of the biblical concept of "propitiation for sin". That is the way Jesus atoned for our sins on the cross, by satisfying the righteous demands of God's holiness. The repulsiveness of Christ's death should impress on us the repulsiveness of our sin to God's holiness. Wrath is God's holy and righteous response to sin and rebellion.

Lest we forget, the wrath of God is just as much a part of the gospel as the love of God. In our sinful state, God's holiness makes him unapproachable for us. Due solely to the cross and Christ's propitiation for our sins, it is possible to be forgiven, pardoned, redeemed, and reconciled to holy God. This is the heart of the gospel.

What a shame to hear Christian recording artists sing this incredible hymn and leave out the part about the satisfaction of God's wrath. To do so is to remove the very reason for the death of Christ. To do so is to nullify the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." If there was any other way to accomplish our salvation, then Jesus would have no need to suffer and die as He did.

What a shame to lessen the sacrifice of Jesus, for fear of offending those who purposely distort God's nature and attributes by exalting God's love and excluding the holy wrath of God. "All love" and "no holy wrath" turn the Bible's portrayal of God into a caricature of the truth. The cross is the very demonstration of God's love for us.

I hope we continue to sing this hymn as often as we can. Our hymns, as much as our creeds, remind us of and reinforce in us what we believe and why we believe it.

See ya'll Sunday,

Perry Cunningham  
Lay Leader LMC