

Day 2 - Morning Study

Read: Luke 12:1-7

The founding of our country may have begun with the Pilgrims' arrival on the Mayflower in 1620 and the Puritans' arrival in 1630, led by John Winthrop and his "City on a Hill" vision for his followers. Still, it took another movement about 100 years later to prepare the people for their next great adventure. That movement was the First Great Awakening.

The First Great Awakening was a religious revival that swept through the American colonies in the 1730s and 1740s. During this time, many people had become comfortable in their religion, attending church out of habit rather than true faith. Churches were often focused more on moral behavior and outward religion than on genuine conversion and a personal relationship with God. Into this environment came a series of powerful preachers who called people back to a serious, heartfelt faith in Christ.

That movement is characterized by the teachings of two preachers, Jonathon Edwards in Northampton, Massachusetts, and George Whitfield, a traveling preacher from England. Edwards preached that salvation was not earned by good works or moral behavior, but came only through faith in Jesus Christ. In his sermon on justification, he emphasized that a person is saved "by faith alone... without any reliance on our own goodness or works," teaching that God justifies sinners not because of their goodness, but because of Christ.

Today, we will base our study on themes taken from "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathon Edwards (July 8, 1841).

We continue our study looking at Jonathan Edwards most famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The goal today is to get the campers thinking about their relationship with God.

Group Study

In his sermon, Edwards explains that people often believe they are safe, but in reality, they stand in danger because of sin. Sin is not just mistakes—it is rebellion against God. Left alone, sin always leads toward destruction.

Are we better people today than people were in the past?

How do we judge our founders and their actions in the past versus our actions today?

Here is another way to ask this question: Would God say you are a good person? Why? The point we want to get to is: are we judging the past by today's moral standards? If we really examine ourselves using God's standards, we are no better than our founding fathers or others from the past. Like us, they did both good and bad things. You may need to point out some of our own problems today: abortion, bullying, etc.

Read: Luke 12:1-3

What can we hide from God?

Nothing. More importantly, everything we have done will be revealed. Our secret sins are not secret.

Read: Luke 12:4-5

Who are we to fear? Why?

We are to fear God, because He is the one who will pass the final judgment. He is the only honest judge and the only one with the authority to do that. You may have some campers say that God isn't fair. No, but He is good and just. We are all wicked and deserve punishment. But Jesus brings us mercy.

Read: Luke 12:6-7

What is our value to God?

Our value is so great that He knows the number of hairs on our heads.

God values us, but we turn away from Him.

Read: Romans 3:23

Who has fallen short?

All of us. This is a good point to make sure they understand you have fallen short as well. Paul does mean all of us.

Sin is not just breaking rules—it is choosing to live life **our way instead of God's way**.

Read: Isaiah 59:1-2

What creates a separation between God and us?

Our iniquities (sin) have separated us from God.

Read: Proverbs 14:11-12

What does the statement “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death” mean?

Sometimes what seems like the right thing to do is the wrong thing to do. Examples: revenge and sex outside of marriage. There are other examples you can share.

Read: James 1:14-15

How does sin start, and where does it end?

Sin comes from our hearts and our minds. The Ten Commandments are not just things we shouldn't do; they are things we need to protect our hearts and minds from.

Jonathan Edwards used a powerful image in his sermon. He said sinners are like someone standing on a slippery ledge, with nothing holding them up except the mercy of God.

How do you see yourself in this image?

Do they feel like God is there helping them? Do they understand and feel the mercy of God?

Read: Hebrews 9:27

Is God justified in His judgment of us?

After we die, we will face judgment. Do the campers believe this is just?

Read: Matthew 10:28

Who are we to fear? Why?

I want to emphasize that we need to fear God. Here is a second author who captured this quote from Jesus. This is an important point of Edwards' sermon. We don't fear God enough. We deserve hell.

Read: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

What will God bring into judgment?

Good will bring everything into judgment, and everything will be revealed.

Read: John 3:35-36

What happens to those who believe and to those who don't believe?

Those who believe have eternal life. Those who don't believe shall not see life. We either have God's mercy through Jesus Christ, or we choose to stay under God's judgment.

The most important truth of this entire study is this: God does not want people to perish. That is why He sent Jesus. Jesus stepped into our place and took the punishment for sin.

Read: John 3:16-18

What do we have to do to get eternal life?

We must believe in Jesus Christ. We have to believe we are sinners and that Jesus truly died on a cross for our sins and that he rose again. Jesus took our punishment. The righteous for the sinner. The innocent for the guilty.

What does that mean?

We must believe and repent.

Read: John 3:19-21

What do we love more than light?

We love darkness more than we love the light. We are selfish and do what is right in our own eyes.

Read: Romans 5:6-8

What was our condition when Christ died?

We were sinners, and Jesus still died for us.

Jonathan Edwards ended his sermon with urgency.

Every person must decide what they will do with the truth about God.

Following Christ requires:

- repentance
- faith
- surrender

For us, this means deciding: Will I live for myself? Or will I follow Christ?

No one drifts into becoming a strong man of faith. It requires a decision.
What are you going to do?