

JUSTICE FOR ALL

By

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The sweet-sounding seraphs in today's pulpits have so obscured the fact of God's justice that modern man has been lulled to sleep thinking that he is safe from wrath merely because God is one of the good guys, and modern society's good guys will tolerate anything. Man, having ruled justice out of his own courts, thinks that God must follow his lead and dispense with Divine Justice. The God of this world has blinded their eyes.

That men have abandoned justice is abundantly evident. Writing in *Readers Digest* of October, 1967, Richard Nixon said: "One of the principal deterrent to crime is the presence of justice that is both swift and sure. Neither can be said of justice in the United States today."

The Physician's Panorama of November, 1967, carried an article, "Establishing a Community Mental health Center", by James R. Harris, M.D., in which the prominent doctor assumes the elimination of the lines of justice and un-justice. He writes: "now for the purpose of discussion, let us assume that a good many problems in society today can be labeled mental-health or mental-illness problems, and thereby handled on a practical basis better than if they were labeled, for instance, criminality or immorality." He says that "many judges, courts, agencies and even philosophers are now proclaiming that many of society's evils are in reality society's ills, and the deviant people in society should be treated as if they were sick."

Thus he would eliminate the question of moral good and evil, and eliminate the necessity of answering to a Court of Justice. Note, also, that any "deviant" is to be considered "sick". This would mean a good person who refused to go along with accepted immoral social standards. The Biblical teaching of justice is hereby set aside, and the door is opened to a Pandora's box of evils.

By setting aside the idea of justice, man also sets aside the idea of sin and punishment. If the criminal has sinned, then he must pay the penalty. But if he is only sick, then a penalty is out of the question; he only needs tender loving care.

Men who are themselves void of any conscience regarding sin cannot see fit to punish other men for their crimes. This is the underlying factor in the current move to rid our society of the sense of justice, and the necessity of judgment and retribution.

The scheme is doomed to failure, however, because justice is intrinsic to God's nature and His laws which hold the creation together. God is just; therefore, all His acts are just. God would have to cease being God in order to cease being just.

"The judgment of God is according to truth" (Rom. 2:2). "For Jehovah is a God of justice" (Isa. 30:18). Even if men should abandon all the laws that have ever been conceived, it will not change the justice of God. "For I Jehovah, change not" (Mal. 3:6). What God has decreed remains.

Man may defy God's rules, but the rules remain. The fact that God gives man the privilege of choosing not to live by them does not mean that God has forgotten them, nor abandoned them. And in the end, man must finally give an account of himself to God in the day of Judgment, and that judgment will be "according to truth", the truth that has

been revealed by God Himself. Jesus said that the basis of judgment would be the word, the truth that He had spoken (John 12:48). In fact, the judgment will be done through Jesus for God has “appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained; whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

And what is His Judgment? That the penalty for sin is death! How strange that intelligent men fail to see that since sin is against God, only God can set the penalty. He has declared it in no uncertain terms to be death. Hence only death can satisfy His absolute justice.

It is at this juncture that many try to leap from the stark grimness of Justice, to the loving tenderness of mercy, in hope that God’s mercy will override His justice, and grant escape from sin’s penalty. Someone will say, “I don’t want Justice, I want mercy” as if he had a choice of two opposing attributes of God! It is true that God is merciful, as well as Just, but these are not opposing factors in the makeup of God! God will remain Just, absolutely Just and unchanging, and no amount of mercy will alter this fact. To overrule His justice with mercy would be to make Him capricious, subjective and undependable.

It is in the Justice of God that we find both the greatest dread for sin, and the greatest hope of reward. Paul, after admitting his own failure to measure up to the fullness of the stature of Christ, still claimed God’s just-ness as His great hope when he spoke of eternal life, “which the Lord the righteous judge shall give unto me...” It is because of God’s absolute justice and righteousness that we can depend on our salvation.

This marvelous fact is expressed in Romans 3 where we are told that “a righteousness of God has been manifested,” a “righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:21, 23). This sets forth the fact that ALL are sinners; therefore, under God’s just penalty for sin which must be paid for everyone. But God’s justice is then explained:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to show his righteousness...that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24–26).

Here God is held to be absolutely just, even in judgment where believers are concerned. God does not overlook a single sin. He does not turn soft, and change His mind about punishment. He does not release man from the rule of justice. He is eternally Just and remains so forever. But His justice is exacted through the death penalty sustained at the cross, through Jesus and His human death — “in His blood”, so that God remains Just, and also the “justifier”.

This passage also says that God’s righteousness “has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Rom. 3:21). The law set the penalty for sin as **death**. The law established a substitutionary sin offering in all the animals which were slain, thus “witnessing” to the eventual death of Jesus, the lamb of God. The prophets preached God’s justice and how it would be implemented through Jesus. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” “By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the

living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due” (Isa. 53:6–8). Plainly, the death of Jesus was God’s act of justice in executing the sin-bearer, Jesus, “who bare our sins in his own body upon the tree.”

This might strike some as an injustice, to execute an innocent man for the sins of others. But we remember that it was a voluntary offering, for Jesus voluntarily took upon himself human form... “Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God”... “A body did you prepare for me” and willingly laid down His life (Heb. 10:2, 5). “I lay down my life for the sheep...no one takes it away from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again...” (John 10:15, 18).

The execution of Jesus is an example of God’s absolute and inexorable Justice, justice which, like a two-edged sword, cuts both ways.

1) It is justice that says that “the wages of sin is death.” Absolutely no one can have immortality — deathlessness — in eternity who is under the penalty of Sin. When Jesus became our sin-bearer, when He assumed the guilt of our sin, the only possible end was his death. The Father turned from Him, and He died utterly abandoned and alone, as all sinners will die in the day of judgment. Christ’s death is a warning to all who will meet Judgment without having been justified from sin.

2) It is also justice that says that “the gift of God is eternal life.” Paul, who certainly knew the Divine Justice of God, wrote, “henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them that have loved his appearing” (II Tim. 4:8). It is because God is the “righteous judge” that Paul was sure of eternal life. When God says that our sins are imputed to Christ and nailed to the cross, then we can forever bank on it. If a person says to us, “I forgive you, forget it”, it is often impossible to forget, because we cannot be absolutely sure that we are completely forgiven. Sometimes the “forgiver” continues to hold a grudge, But when God says that Jesus took our sins and the He himself has justified us, then we can be positively certain that we will not have to face our sin in Judgment. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).

God’s mercy is in the fact that He offers a way of justice being met, without our suffering the ultimate punishment of death. Thus “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psa 85:10).

Which do you prefer, Justice or Mercy? Choose both! That sin justly deserves death, and that mercy is extended through Christ the sin-bearer who died. The ultimate question is not how much justice there is in the courts of men, but whether or not one stands justified before God.

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