

# *Condemning the Just*

Sunday, March 28, 2021  
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Proverbs 17:15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

Genesis 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Deuteronomy 25:1 If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

- I. There is nothing that offends the conscience of all people more than the condemning of an innocent person.
  - A. Since DNA has become a reliable tool of investigating crimes there have been many people released from prison after being there for most of their life for a crime they did not commit.
  - B. It is a basic part of how all men are constituted by their Maker – it is that sense of justice that evil people must be punished for their crimes and that is the most terrible wrong that can be done to a person to be punished for something that he did not do.
  - C. No matter how abominable it is to all of us, it is inevitably going to happen when sinful human beings are the administrators of justice.
  - D. Sometimes the guilty will go free and sometimes the innocent will suffer and be punished.
  - E. But the Scripture makes it clear that the people who are responsible for this are an abomination to the Lord.
  
- II. This issue is not a spectator sport – we are all involved in this every day, and are guilty of the same thing that corrupt or ignorant judges and rulers do in this matter.
  - A. There is more to this than just what we see played out in the courts of law of this world – it applies in the thoughts of our minds and hearts as well.
  - B. We hold court in our hearts and minds about others continually with the opinions we form of others.
  - C. We ourselves are the judge and the jury and executioner.
  - D. We judge, condemn, and pass sentence on every person we meet by putting them in our mental folders of “worthless,” “wicked,” “devil,” “thief,” “immoral,” “liar,” “arrogant,” etc.
  - E. We take pride in our ability to “spot ‘em,” but do we really think that God is pleased with our keenness in this matter?

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

- F. Most people think it a virtue for themselves to be able to recognize wickedness in almost everything.

1. But the true virtue is in recognizing the evil but withholding judgement for the present.
2. Seeing the evil but waiting to condemn, reject, and pass final judgement.
3. True virtue is realizing how easy it would be for us to be wrong with our limited information, the wickedness of the hearts of other people and their willingness to lie, and the ease with which people are deceived by their eyes and their ears.
4. Also, true virtue is a desire to be like God in the matter of condemning sinners:

“Every ransomed man owes his salvation to the fact that during the days of his sinning God kept the door of mercy open by refusing to accept any of his evil acts as final.” – A. W. Tozer

- G. What are the consequences if we falsely accuse someone, even in our minds?
  1. What if we impute to them some wickedness that is really not there except in our own imagination?
  2. That makes us the evil one and not them.
  3. And it is exceedingly easy to misunderstand and misinterpret our perceptions, or what someone else tells us about someone else.
  4. The evidence may be very condemning, and yet they may be innocent.

III. Law and order is a very important thing in a world full of wicked people.

- A. There must be laws against wicked behavior.
  1. Some people repeat the foolish notion that “you cannot legislate morality.”
  2. But ALL laws do exactly that.
  3. Moral law and civil law should be the same.
  4. But there is a cycle of sinfulness that breaks down law and order and turns civil law against moral law.
- B. The mainspring that drives this breaking down of law and order is the fact that innocent people are sometimes punished.
  1. Our system of civil law has always held to what is called “Blackstone’s Ratio.”

“It is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer.”

“it is better 100 guilty Persons should escape than that one innocent Person should suffer”. – Benjamin Franklin

It is of more importance to the community that innocence should be protected, than it is, that guilt should be punished; for guilt and crimes are so frequent in this world, that all of them cannot be punished....when innocence itself, is brought to the bar and condemned, especially to die, the subject will exclaim, 'it is immaterial to me whether I behave well or ill, for virtue itself is no security.' And if such a sentiment as this were to take hold in the mind of the subject that would be the end of all security whatsoever. – John Adams

2. That is the most devastating thing to confidence in the law of the land.
3. It is the undoing of law and order when the innocent are punished.
- C. The law exists to ensure justice and the highest example of injustice is for the innocent to be condemned – not that the guilty go free.
- D. Therefore, when a person who is held in reputation as a Christian is quick to condemn and harsh in his judgement of others, respect for the moral law of God is diminished or destroyed.
- E. To condemn the just is such a serious offense that we should be very careful about condemning anyone.

- F. To see the wickedness, the foolishness, the faults in others is no special virtue, but to be patient with them, and to exercise faith towards them is Christian virtue and godliness.
- G. It is too easy to err in this matter so we should all be very careful before we close the door of our heart on another person for good.
- H. The devil is very good at convincing people to condemn the just.
- I. It is the way that God provided a Savior who could save us from our sins.
- J. That also provided a refuge for all the innocent who are condemned by sinful men through all the ages.
  - 1. Knowing that innocent Son of God was condemned unjustly and He did it willingly in order that we might be saved is the only comfort that exists for those who find themselves condemned unjustly.