

The God of Love and of Judgment

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Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. **Matt. 23:23**

- I. God's redemption of sinners is the most wonderful thing that God has ever done.
 - A. None of us fully realize how far from God we are when we are lost and how long the road is back to God.
 - B. Once you understand what God has done, you will stand in much more awe of it than you will in the creation of the vast universe, and even life itself.
 - C. God's dealings with sinful man are much more marvelous thing to ponder than the depths of space and the intricate things of the creation.
 - D. The Psalmist said God's knowledge of him and his dealings with him were just too wonderful for him to understand completely.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. **Psa. 139:6**

- E. This is why the Gospel message is so easily confused and why it is the salvation of some and the stumbling block of others.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. **1 Pet. 2:6-8**

- II. There is the law.
 - A. We all understand that there are laws that govern all things.
 - 1. God created a universe that is very organized and orderly.
 - 2. In order to keep that order and keep things from turning to chaos and violence God has laws that govern his creation, including man.
 - 3. Man also makes his own laws in an attempt to control those who will not regard God's law.
 - B. We also understand that there are those who disregard the laws of man and the laws of God.
 - 1. It is obvious that violating the laws of man, of nature, and of God carry grievous consequences.
 - 2. Law is not law unless it carries a penalty for being broken.
 - 3. Besides the penalty, the breaking of the law breaks down order and brings confusion; it instigates violence and injustice, and brings grief, hurt, and damage to everything and everyone concerned.
 - C. Sin is the transgression of the law.
 - 1. This is the Bible definition of sin.
 - 2. It is not a disease or a disability.

3. It is not a mistake, or a simply falling short of the mark.
4. It is conscious, willful disobedience to what you know to be the law of God.

III. So how can God forgive a sinner?

- A. Here is where the confusion arises in the minds of those who do not know God and his Word.
- B. God is presented as a God of love and forgiveness and He certainly is.
- C. God is also a God of judgment, which is not a contradiction.
 1. Many people cannot reconcile these two attributes of God.
 2. They cannot understand how a God of love could send someone to hell if He loved them.

For God so loved the world, **John 3:16**

3. God loves the whole of his creation and all He does is for the good of the whole.
4. He will not sacrifice the good of the whole human race for one person – though He did sacrifice One for the good of the whole human race.
- D. The laws of God also govern God and He cannot deny or contradict himself.
- E. This is why Jesus had to suffer and die – He fulfilled the law of God.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: **1 Pet. 3:18**

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. **Rom. 3:25-26**

IV. So the challenge for us is to get the message across to sinners in a way that does not encourage them to sin, but yet extends the offer of forgiveness.

- A. The unregenerate mind will quickly misinterpret the idea that God will forgive sin.
 1. It will say, “Well then it is no big deal. All I have to do is repent and tell God I am sorry and that will take care of it. So for now I can go on and indulge myself in my lusts.”
- B. This is a fatal error because it does not work as simply and easily as that.
- C. When a person casts aside the law of God and plunges headlong into sin they are affected in ways they do not anticipate.
 1. Their mind and manner of thinking is affected.
 2. They are blinded by their sin.
 3. They alienate themselves from God and from God’s people.
 4. They become the enemies of God and of God’s people.
- D. While God is willing to forgive them, the problem is with their hardened heart and mind.
 1. They cannot overcome themselves to get to God.
 2. They have justified themselves in their own mind before they entered into sin and threw off God’s laws and so they have convinced themselves that they do not deserve anything but mercy and love from God.
 3. In THEIR case, it is OK to break God’s law in this matter or that, and God just did not foresee the circumstances in THEIR case, so He will be willing to overlook their disregard for his law.

- E. The message from God's messengers to these people must be first a message of judgment.
 1. They must be warned that if they die or the Lord comes for his people while they are in this state of mind and heart they are going to be cast out of God's presence and perish in hell forever.
- F. The next part of the "weightier matters of the law" is MERCY.
 1. They must be offered mercy, and shown that God is that God of mercy and love that is presented in the Bible so often.
 2. That for those who have shipwrecked in life and made a mess of things, there IS hope for a new start and a new life.
 3. That God WILL forgive, and that God's people WILL forgive.
 4. That God WILL accept you and love you and make you one of his own.
- G. The next part of God's plan is FAITH.
 1. They must be made to understand that mercy can only be obtained by faith in Christ and his Atonement for sin.
 2. They must be made to understand that they must turn on themselves and side with God in condemning themselves.
 3. As long as there is the slightest self-justification and making excuses, or blaming of others for their condition they will not obtain mercy and forgiveness from God.

Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. **Jer. 3:13**

- H. A sinner must be convinced of his true condition and predicament.

And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die. **2 Kin. 7:3-4**

1. If he stays where he is he will die forever.
2. If he casts himself upon the mercy of God the worst that could happen is better than what he is certain to face if he continues where he is.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. **John 6:37**

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. **Matt. 11:28-29**

- I. This is what Jesus meant when He talked about the weightier matters of the law being judgment, mercy, and faith.