

## The Wednesday Word, June 28, 2023

### Justice vs. Love

*“For God hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”(2 Cor. 5:21).*

God is Love, but He is also Just. In His Justice, God demanded the death penalty for those who had sinned (Romans 6:23). But, at the same time that Justice called for the death penalty, Love called for Mercy. Now, here’s the problem, Mercy cannot be granted at the expense of Justice. He who sits upon the Throne is "the high and lofty One, that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy." (Isaiah 57:15). The Holy God must ruthlessly punish sin because He is Just.

Now here is a divine fact that can’t happen in a human courtroom. A man comes in to stand before the Judge. He is a lawbreaker. He is guilty; therefore, he must pay. But God takes this person’s sin and charges it to someone else and that other person has no sin of his own. This is good news, (especially for the guilty sinner). This is exactly what God has done for us in the gospel. God has taken our sin, placed it on Christ Jesus, and punished Him as if He were us. However, that is only half of the story. The other half is that God then takes all of Christ’s righteousness, and places it on us.

Listen again to the Word of the Lord,

*“For God hath made him (Jesus Christ) to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”(2 Cor. 5:21).*

Christ was regarded as a hell-deserving sinner, as He was executed upon the cross. He received our verdict of guilty and we received His verdict of righteous. This is indeed very good news. Our verdict of death has been reversed because of one man. This one man, Christ Jesus, is now our only hope and indeed all our hope. This is why God can say in Romans 4:5 that He, “justifies the ungodly.” We don’t have to water that down and say He justifies (*declares not guilty*), those who are not so bad, or those who try very hard. No, He justifies the ungodly ... that is radical ... but it is good news--especially for the ungodly.

#### Outside of and apart from us

In the same way, as our condemnation took place outside of ourselves, so our justification also took place outside of us. Adam’s work got us into trouble while the Last Adam’s work got us out. (see 1Corinthians15:45-47; Romans 5:12-21). We cannot overstress that our salvation was accomplished outside of and apart from us. Just as we weren’t there when Adam got us into trouble, neither were we there when Christ got us out.

#### We were not there?

Well, that’s almost true. We were there in the Garden when Adam sinned. We were there by representation. Adam represented us. We were reckoned as being in Adam. He is the Father of the human race, and as Father of the race when he rebelled, we rebelled. When he sinned, we sinned. When he was separated from God, we were also separated. “But that’s not fair,” says

someone, “that all happened apart from me”. Yes, but consider this, we were not there, except by representation, when the “Last Adam,” Jesus Christ, went to the cross. When He died, He died as our representative. He accomplished our redemption outside of and apart from us. (See Romans .5:12-19).

The big issue for us to face is whether we are “in Adam” or “in Christ.” In Christ, we receive a new verdict. It’s one of acquittal, not death.

And remember, we grasp and receive our new verdict by faith alone. Genuine faith lays hold of the fact that all our sins have been given to the Lord Jesus Christ and that His entire righteousness has been reckoned to us.

And that’s the Gospel Truth!