

# the justice and mercy of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] It's a blessing to be here this morning. To greet you in Jesus' name, like Tim said. No other, there is no other name among men whereby we shall be saved.

No greater name than that name. And something has been on my heart just lately here is this thing of one of the attributes that God has.

We know that God is a judge overall. He's a just God. He's a righteous God. And we also know that he's a God of mercy.

And if God was a God of justice only, where would we find ourselves?

And if God was just mercy, all mercy, and no judgment, what would this world be like? What would eternity be like?

[ 1 : 23 ] And so, I want to just look at that a little bit today. Okay. How can he be both?

You know, we have already said this, you know, if there's a... I know, I think it's Ray Comfort that uses this a lot, is how that God is a judge.

He's going to judge the world. And then he'll use this allegory of a judge in our court system today. You know, if a judge would hear a guilty person or a person on trial, and that person has murdered somebody or was a thief or a very bad person.

And, but that person would tell the judge that, listen, I... That was a long time ago, and I haven't done it since. And I won't do it again. But he murdered somebody.

If the judge would just say, oh, okay, I believe you, and I'll just let you go. In our country today, would that be a righteous judge? Would he have made a right decision? No.

[ 2 : 53 ] We know that judge wouldn't last long at all in this country. He'd be, even though some of them are becoming a little bit like that, maybe. That would not be considered a good judge.

And the same way with God. If God would just overlook sin and would not punish sin, then he wouldn't be a righteous judge.

He doesn't overlook sin. But so how can God be merciful and that kind of a judge at the same time? Where he cannot and will not tolerate sin. He won't accept it. He won't overlook it. All sin will be judged. So how can he show mercy?

And be both. Let's turn to Exodus chapter 34. Thank you. Just to look at a few things where we can get a glimpse in the book of beginnings of God's heart.

[ 4 : 11 ] Exodus chapter 34. Starting in verse 1. And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first.

And I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou breakest. So here we have, almost like God's reminding Moses of something he did.

Go get yourself two more tables. And I'll write on those words that were on the first tables, the ones you broke.

And be ready in the morning and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai. And present thyself there to me in the top of the mount.

And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount. Neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

[ 5 : 16 ] And he went and he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first. And Moses rose up early in the morning and went up unto Mount Sinai.

As the Lord commanded him and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

So God was going to meet Moses on this mountain. He told him no other person should come.

And don't even let your flocks get all the animals away from this mountain. Because I'm going to show up. Verse 6 it says, And that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the

fathers upon the children and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth generation. Here God is saying to Moses that and the Lord passed by him and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant.

[6:58] We know this in the New Testament. But here God in the Old Testament, in the beginning, said these words. That he is long-suffering.

He's gracious. He's abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands. And forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

Verse 8. And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped. And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let me, Lord, I pray thee, go among us. For it is a stiff-necked people. And pardon our iniquity and our sin. And take us for thine inheritance. And he said, Behold, I make a covenant before all the people.

I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. And all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord.

[8:07] For it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. Observe thou that which I command thee this day. Behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Pivite, and the Jebusite, and it doesn't say Hutterite, but there's a lot of ites in there.

Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land. Whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee.

But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves. And this is another verse that I wanted. For thou shalt worship no other god.

For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Did you know that was one of God's names?

His name is Jealous. He's a jealous God. That tells us a lot. That tells us that He doesn't want any other god in our lives.

[9:29] He wants nothing in front of Him. He wants all of us. He wants everything. All of you. All of me. Not just some.

No, He's jealous. When somebody's jealous, they want something, right? For us to be jealous isn't right. But this is a pure and a right jealousy.

He wants to be God. Because He is God. After all, there's none like Him. Now in Hebrews 9, verse 27, it says, And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment.

We know, we've been taught, I believe most of us all our lives, that there's judgment day coming.

There's a day of judgment. There's a time to die, and then the judgment.

Hebrews also says, how can we escape, how does it say? If we neglect.

[10:37] Yes. How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? How are we going to escape the wrath and the judgment of God? Let's turn to Galatians chapter 3.

Read some there. How do we go from this justice, this judgment of sin?

How do we go from that to mercy? In Galatians chapter 3, verse 6, it says, Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for what?

For righteousness. He believed God, and God accounted it for him, to him, for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same, are the children of Abraham.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

[12:05] So then they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.

For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident.

For the just shall live by faith. We see in this passage that Abraham had something that was accounted to him for righteousness.

Something that made him right with God. What was it? We just read it. Faith. He had faith in God. He had faith in God's plan, in God's way of thinking, in what God designed for us. God's salvation.

[13:16] So we are justified. We are judged by our faith in Christ. At the cross, our sins were brought to judgment.

That's where it all happened. And that's the only place that we will find mercy is when our sins have been judged.

by faith in the new covenant, through the cross, through Christ's crucifixion and his resurrection, in the new testament, in the new covenant, by faith, we can be made righteous before a holy and just God.

A God that can never just overlook sin. A God that will judge all sin. But you know, at the cross, it was paid for.

And this is nothing new. We all know this. And I have some points to make about it, though. And hopefully some challenges.

[ 14 : 43 ] But at the cross, sin has been paid for. And by faith in him, we receive his mercy and forgiveness. See, without the cross, without the payment for our sin, there would be no mercy.

We would only get what we deserve. And that's justice. We would just get judgment. There would be no forgiveness.

So we are justified. We are judged by faith in Christ. What a harsh penalty. What a harsh judgment. That sin cost the Son. Christ. We are studying about the Son. Who the Son is in our Wednesday night study.

How great is our sinfulness. You know, if my sin sent God to the cross, how great is that sinfulness.

[ 15 : 58 ] And I want to look at sin this morning a little bit. And ask some questions. How great is our sinfulness?

Have you and I really been that bad? How do we know if we have been sinful enough to deserve hell, death, and judgment?

And this is kind of, right here is the burden of my message this morning. Why are so many church people no different from the rest of the world? Why are so many, quote, Christians so ungrateful and indifferent about their salvation?

Why is there so little joy and so little rejoicing? I wonder sometimes how God sees what are called His people.

The church. How He must feel. So little rejoicing. What causes that? What causes our hearts to be like Brother Dan shared?

[ 17 : 20 ] You know, I can relate with that totally. Of feeling dry at times and just not close to God. But what causes us to have so little joy?

So little that, you know, what's that term? I'm trying to think of the term about having such little joy that nobody can see it.

Oh, it's so deep that nobody can see it. Something like that. No. This kind of joy people can see. Let's turn to a story in Luke chapter 7 that I want to read from.

I know this is just a very simple message but it is to challenge us today whatever the Lord shows us in these scriptures and through the message here.

In Luke chapter 7 we're going to start in verse 36 but before we do let's just pray again. I just feel like I need to pray. Father, we just come to you Lord and we just ask you to speak to our hearts today.

[ 18 : 41 ] Lord, even though it's simple maybe and I haven't put a lot of time into this but Lord, I just ask you to speak to our hearts directly.

Whatever we stand in need of. Whether we need encouragement or we need to be chastened or reminded of your grace and your mercy Lord and reminded of how great our sin is before a holy God.

Lord, just speak your words to my heart and to all our hearts in Jesus' name. Luke 7 verse 36 and one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him and he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meet and behold a woman in the city which was a sinner when she knew that Jesus sat at meet in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at his feet behind him weeping and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment now when the Pharisee which had bidden him or invited him saw it he spake within himself saying this man if he were a prophet would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him for she is a sinner now let's just pause there for a minute this

Pharisee we know in the next verse his name was Simon he invited Jesus and he probably went out on a limb by doing so because the Pharisees were opposed to Jesus they didn't invite him over for dinner but Simon did there must have been something in his heart that he was willing to take that risk of his fellow Pharisees and others that you know but it didn't mean that he believed in

Jesus it just means that my guess is he was maybe like Nicodemus he was curious about Jesus and he wanted to learn more about him I'm not sure I didn't study this or figure out why he invited him but it says here that when this woman came and did this took that alabaster box which by the way was not a cheap thing

I don't know if this woman she probably was poor I don't know but she probably was not a rich person but that alabaster box of ointment was worth a normal year's wages in American dollars it was something like \$55,000 worth and that was a while ago so today probably more than that but it was worth a lot of money and she poured this out over Jesus and wept and well what we just read and but this Pharisee you know he was still right he was still you know he really didn't need Jesus he was probably just curious because he said in his heart that she is a sinner and if Jesus would know do you think Jesus knew wow

[ 22 : 32 ] Jesus also knew that he was a sinner but not the Pharisee he didn't think so if he was a good prophet then he would have known that she is a sinner and Jesus answered answering said unto him Simon I have somewhat to say unto thee and he saith master say on there he calls him master there was a certain creditor which had two debtors two people that owed him money the one 500 pence and the other 50 and when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both he freely forgave them tell me therefore which which of them will love him the most very simple isn't it we can understand that the one that had the 50 or the one that was forgiven 10 times that much 500 and even the

Pharisee could answer that he said I suppose that he to whom he forgave most and he said unto him thou hast rightly judged and he turned to the woman and he said unto Simon seest thou this woman I entered into thine house thou gavest me no water for my feet but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head thou gavest me no yeah verse 45 thou gavest me no kiss but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet my head with oil thou didst not anoint but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment and we could say very expensive ointment wherefore I say unto thee her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little and he said unto her thy sins are forgiven and they that sat at meet with him began to say within themselves who is this that forgiveth sins also and he said unto the woman thy faith hath saved thee go in peace it's a familiar story we all have known it but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little

I wonder church if we've been forgiven a lot or just a little maybe that's the problem in churches where there's no joy very little joy have we been forgiven this woman knew she was a sinner here's some thoughts she probably didn't know how big her sin was though and how great it was and how offensive it was until she was in the presence of a holy God when she came and met Jesus in that room at that house she knew she had entered into a holy place

I believe that a place a man that you know these other men like Simon looked at Jesus like wow he must be a false prophet he must be you know he's accepting sin like that but they were so wrong he wasn't accepting her sin he wasn't overlooking who she was he just knew who he was that's the difference he was the son of God he was the one the creator of this woman he created her he came to give his life for her so that she can be forgiven in fact he said thy faith he saw her faith she believed she was willing to pour out her life savings upon him to give whatever was dear to her heart and in that presence she saw her sinfulness

I'm not saying she didn't know before because she came with her sin to this Jesus but I believe in that presence she really saw her sin and she couldn't stop crying how about us you know when God is at a distance we still know that we have sin because the Bible tells us so we know that in our minds but having committed sins and having made mistakes is only part of the problem the real problem is not that people did bad stuff it's that we are bad it's the real problem is why do people sin it's because they are sinners we are sinners we are we are we are there with

[ 28 : 55 ] Jesus she must have felt her complete and total lostness and she realized that day that without a savior there is no hope what about us you know we know all this stuff but really do we do I really know this are we still thinking that there is still some good in me I mean yeah I need Jesus but I'm a pretty good guy too you know people think that we tend to the human nature wants to make us believe that that there is some good in me and I'm convinced that the reason church people have so little joy and so little rejoicing is because in their minds they're only forgiven a little only forgiven a little bit could it be that we need a greater revelation a greater closeness if you will to our

Christ so that we can see ourselves for who we are and yes he will make us holy he will make us completely righteous and just justified but when people spend so little or no time with Christ they don't see themselves like Christ sees them we want to look at a few other examples in the Bible when we spend so little time in the presence of a holy and a righteous and a just God and we really don't see ourselves like Mary saw herself even if it's in our past and we've been redeemed we still need to remember that without Christ we are nothing and we can do nothing in

Genesis chapter 6 verse 5 there's a couple verses I want to read and God saw the wickedness of man he saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart God was actually grieved that he created man at one point and the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth both man and beasts and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air for it repenteth me that I have made them but thankfully he said it says the next verse says but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord he found grace one righteous man and his family but that flood that came had to do with man's evil heart it says here

God said that or God saw that the wickedness of man was great and that his heart was only evil continually that's how we are without God that's how man is without God in Jeremiah 17 verse 9 it says the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can know it I the Lord search the heart I try the reins even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings that's the old nature that's the old man that is desperately wicked and I don't think that you know I don't know how to put this in words quite but this thing of being grateful this thing of having been forgiven and having sinned much or sinned little is not based on what we have done but I believe it's based on what God reveals to us it's based on accepting the fact that I am a sinner the apostle

Paul what did he say when he was talking about sinners he said of whom I am chief he wrote most of the New Testament books he was used by God in a mighty way and yet he's like of all those sinners including that Mary I'm chief he was a man that was close to God I believe very close very committed very dedicated a man of prayer a man of spiritual warfare and he saw himself as chief of sinners we have examples like that Peter and I know this was probably before he was converted but remember when Jesus came on the scene when he was fishing and what miracle did Jesus do he did something what was it when

[ 35 : 13 ] Peter said Lord depart from me I'm a sinful man is it when they caught all the fish I think he saw that oh I'm in the presence of a holy God I can't be in this presence I'm sinful God showed him his sin I mean nobody really told him Jesus didn't say you're a sinner but just being in the presence of this God so if you want to know how sinful you really are stay in the presence of God you know and I'm not talking about not being set free and all that because we are God sets us free but to be mindful of the fact that without him we are the worst of sinners even if we didn't do bad stuff we are the worst of sinners God says so all have sin and come short of the glory of

God and the wages of sin is death but a heart that turns towards this holy and righteous God just think of Mary as her heart was turning and as she was repenting of her sin and coming to Jesus there on her knees and crying and wiping her tears from his feet with a heart that says have mercy on me I need mercy I don't want justice I can't pay it I need mercy and then faith begins to come into that heart and then everything changes as that heart looks begins to look at the cross and the savior that went there and then the holy righteousness of God along with his angels proclaim that person righteous forgiven redeemed washed cleansed in the blood are we forgiven much or do we still compare ourselves with others and think well I didn't do all that stuff

I'm actually a pretty good guy or person or do we see that we have that terrible bent towards sin even in just our thoughts perhaps are we forgiven has God forgiven us have we spent time with our savior do we worship him do we worship like Mary did perhaps or do we still think we have a little bit of righteousness of our own and without God I'd still be a pretty good person maybe you are without God this morning do we cling to our own wood hay and stubble things that are just going to burn up that is what makes the difference and our view of mercy and justice mercy and grace it will make the difference on how much we love that's what

Jesus was teaching there with Mary there to whom little is forgiven the same love as little you have a lot of love for God don't have a lot a lot of people have this idea of deserving talked about that a while back about having a deserving attitude selfishness and so on just a couple more people that

want to look at here you know that woman that came to Jesus and asked for the crumbs that woman from Canaan we read that in

Matthew 15 where she said have mercy on me O Lord thou son of David and see how did Jesus answer her the disciples said to Jesus send her away for she cryeth after us and he said I am I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel then came she and worshipped him saying Lord help me but I but he answered and said it is not neat to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs and she saith truth Lord yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table then Jesus answered and said unto her O woman great is thy faith be it unto thee as thou wilt and her daughter was made whole from that very hour great is thy faith she wasn't deserving or demanding she just just crumbs just a little bit of you

[ 41 : 38 ] Jesus would take care of my problems if she would have had a selfish heart she would have been the most offended at what Jesus said to her she would have probably went home and blamed all her problems on Jesus he called us dogs he didn't even care about my daughter and the bitterness would have spread like wildfire defiling many but instead she expressed a faith that was so great in the sight of the Lord or do we have a deserving and a demanding attitude toward God or are we okay with just some crumbs that he might allow us to have how do we look at that another woman also in Matthew 9 says and behold a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years came behind him and touched the hem of his garment for she said within herself if

I may but touch his garment I shall be whole but Jesus turned about and when he saw her he said daughter be of good comfort thy faith hath made thee whole and the woman was made whole from that hour hurt he this woman tried so hard not to draw attention to herself she didn't feel deserving but she knew that if she could just touch his clothing that she would be healed.

What does our faith express to the Lord? Do we deserve it? Or is our health a gift? And we worship him simply because we simply don't deserve how he has blessed us.

There was another story, another person in the Bible, also in Matthew chapter 19, a rich young man. And behold, one came, verse 16, and behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?

There's a real problem in that question. What good thing must I do? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good?

[ 44 : 14 ] Jesus challenged him right away. He said, Why do you call me good? There is none good but one, that is God. And Jesus was obviously pointing to his own deity.

But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He said unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, bear false witness, on her father and mother, and thou shalt also love thy neighbor as thyself.

And we know he went on to say how he's done all these things from his youth up. I've always been a good boy. Well, if he had loved his neighbor as his self, he might have had a little less goods. He was a hoarder. He had wealth, great wealth. The Bible says for this man, there's a different outcome. He went away sorrowful because he had great riches.

One other example I want to bring out. And some of you have maybe studied more on John Newton's life, but John Newton was the man that wrote the song Amazing Grace.

[ 45 : 40 ] Amazing Grace. If you think about his life and what he was doing, you would, you know, it would probably seem like perhaps one of the worst kinds of sinners.

How could you do what he was doing? He was calling slaves to be sold to other people, to other men on a ship. And when God saved him, he wrote that song Amazing Grace.

Can you imagine those slaves hearing him? I don't know if they did or not, but they tell me that the music that was put to that song was actually black African music, like a Negro spiritual, they call it. We watched a video on that the other night. And because that's who he was with, and perhaps they put that music to those words that he wrote. Their captain.

If you think about that, it's just amazing. But that man found Amazing Grace. How sweet the sound. A wretch like me.

[ 47 : 11 ] How do we see ourselves? I think perhaps if I would spend more time with my Lord, maybe if you would spend more time with your Lord.

And worship him. For who he is. I think that's where we see our need. That's where we see that we need that cross in our life.

We are undone. We are unworthy. Even after all that Paul did in his lifetime, he was still just an unworthy servant.

Didn't he say in Romans 12, it's just our reasonable service to present our bodies a living sacrifice to him.

It's just reasonable. After all that he has done. And then, you know, then there should be rejoicing in the fact that we've been forgiven. That God no longer holds those sins against us.

[ 48 : 24 ] He doesn't even remember them. He casts them as far as the east is from the west. And yet, so little rejoicing at times.

So little thankfulness. Always wanting more. Not being satisfied. The Bible says, Godliness with contentment is great gain.

And if we can remember this going forward, maybe it'll keep us from having all those dry spells. Maybe at least not so many.

Or for so long. That's my heart. That's what I want for my life. I believe God gave me this just because I need it. I needed this word myself.

Shall we pray? Shall we pray?