

Justice, Mercy & Grace
Crossfire Adult Sunday School
March 2, 2008

JUSTICE: The World's View: Getting what we DESERVE

In the World, JUSTICE means is revenge or getting even; .."An eye for an eye;" "What goes around, comes around," "Do unto others before they do it unto you," "Turnabout is Fair Play," "Don't get mad, get even."

In the world, JUSTICE extracts its payment in many (predictable) ways:

- Do the Crime ... and Do the Time
- Treat others good/bad AND be treated good/bad
- Do the same old thing ... Get the same old results

JUSTICE is what WE often dispense, to justify our own unwillingness to extend the mercy and forgiveness we desire ... to others.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23).

MERCY: God (or the world) does not give us what we deserve!

We usually agree that mercy is a good thing. MERCY means that you do not get what you deserve. We deserve a speeding ticket; we deserve a fine or whatever punishment for breaking the law, but we do not get it. Usually we get MERCY because of good behavior somewhere else. "Well, it's only your first offense, and you seem like a good person, so I'll let you go." We usually agree that MERCY is a good thing, especially when we are the ones who receive MERCY.

GRACE: "God's Riches At Christ's Expense"
undeserved love and forgiveness

If JUSTICE is getting what we deserve and MERCY is not getting what we deserve, GRACE is getting what we do not deserve.

In **Exodus 16: 13-36**, the Israelites, just after God has rescued them, complain against him. If God were about JUSTICE, he would have destroyed them. If God were about MERCY, he would have said "I'll let you get by with it this time." But God responds to Israel's complaining by giving them food. In the evening, they were able to eat quail, and in the morning, they ate this miraculous bread. They were so surprised that they called the bread "manna" which means "What is it?" That is GRACE—God's undeserved love. When GRACE really happens, it is always a surprise.

In addition to God NOT giving me what I deserve, God ALSO gives me what I do not deserve. In addition to forgiving my sins, God ALSO freely gives me abundant and eternal LIFE!

Another amazing thing about God's GRACE is that we can do nothing to earn or deserve itAND it even remains available to people who have repeatedly and consistently ignored and rejected it... for as long as they live.

The wonder of God's LOVE, JUSTICE and MERCY, is NOT that men die for their sins, BUT that we are allowed to live, in spite of them!

Ephesians 2:8-9: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works...