

When Justice and Mercy Meets

I John 2:1-2

Introduction

John talked about the holiness of God and how in him there is no sin. He also talked about those who disregarded sin and claimed to have no sin. He said that those people were not believers—truth was not in them. Most of those people had left the church and that confused the believers in the church. So John encourages his flock by telling them how they can know that they are Christians, namely by their walking in the light, confession of sins, and by their increasing holiness in their walk of life. However, John wanted to make sure that his flock did not despair by thinking that if they failed to confess their sins perfectly or they were not killing their sins that they were in danger of losing their salvation. He then says “If anyone does sin,” and the Greek here is emphatic that it is an “if and will” statement. “If anyone sins and this will happen,” then (John lays this incredible foundation for us all in that encouragement) we have an Advocate. Jesus’ role as an Advocate is predicated on justice and mercy, and how He fulfills both.

I. Justice of God Demanded

- Courtroom Setting
 - God the Father as the Judge
 - We are the guilty lawbreakers
 - Satan is the accuser (**Revelations 12:10; Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Zechariah 3:1**)
Note: implied from other places in Scripture
- Justice must be done
 - All those who are guilty must be punished (**Exodus 34:7; Proverbs 11:21; Nahum 1:7**)
 - Every sin must be dealt with (**Luke 8:16-17**)
 - God is angry with the wicked everyday (**Psalms 7:11**)
 - Wages of sin is death (**Romans 6:23, Ezekiel 18:4, 20**)
Note 1: Because of His holiness and that He cannot look upon sin and that His law has been broken, Justice must be demanded. God must be consistent with His character that justice be paid.
Note 2: We need to be saved from God because of His wrath to us (Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:5).
Note 3: Exodus 34:6—He is merciful; so how does mercy and justice meet? How can a sinner be free from condemnation? We cannot offer anything good in us because we are totally guilty of sin, and there is nothing good in us that can come to our defense. Therefore it is Godward.

Transition: If we cannot obtain mercy on our own, then God is the one that provides the mercy, and He provides it Himself by giving us His Son!

II. Mercy of God provided

- The Advocate
 - NIV—who speaks to the Father in our defense (or Defense Attorney)
 - *Parakletos*—Greek meaning “one who stands alongside”
- Who is this Advocate?
 - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One
 - **Hebrews 4:15**
Note: Jesus Himself is the defender
- God has appointed us the Advocate
 - **Micah 7:18-19**
 - **Romans 8:32**
 - **Romans 5:8**

Note 1: Some people believe that Jesus is for us and God is against us. Nothing could be further from the truth as we learn that it is God the Father, Himself, that sent His Son. He is the One that gave us the Defense Attorney to defend us because of what His Son did on the cross.

Note 2: The same Jesus that is our Defender is also an Accuser to those who reject Him. Jesus will say to those that He never knew them.

Transition: Jesus is our Advocate because He is the sinless sacrifice that appeases God's wrath.

III. When Justice and Mercy meet

- The cross of Christ (**Romans 3:25**)
- Propitiation
 - Satisfied, appeased—concept is that the wrath of God is satisfied
 - NIV—atoning sacrifice
- Old Testament usage
 - Mercy Seat—Ark of Covenant (**Exodus 25**)
Note: Golden box that contained the Ark of the Covenant. Covered with a lid of gold with two angels at the ends and God's Shekinah glory would be upon it. This was always in the Most Holy Place.
 - Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 16**)
Note: Once a year, the high priest would sacrifice a goat and then take its blood and enter the Most Holy Place.
 - Blood sprinkled on the Mercy Seat
Note: God's institution of the sacrificial system was only to point to the reality in Christ because it was not the blood of the goats and bulls that removed the guilt (and they had to do it day after day).
- Fulfilled in Christ
 - Jesus Christ is both the High Priest and the Sacrifice (**Hebrews 7:26-28**)
Note: Christ offered Himself.
 - Through Christ—God's wrath is all at once and forever satisfied
- Effectiveness of the Propitiation
 - **I John 1:7 and 9** (cleans us of all sins and forgive us of all sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness)
 - Not for ours only—the Jewish believers
 - But the whole world—Gentile believers
 - Not about universalism (every person is saved)
 - **Romans 8:1**

Conclusion

John writes this to Christians to be hopeful, that when we sin, we can come to Jesus and know that He has taken care of us. By no means does John mean that if we sin, we should sin more so we can get more grace because this thought is totally alien in John's teaching and life. He is writing that we do not sin...that we kill sin entirely. He is urging us to live holy. How are we urged to live holy? It is because "Christ's love compels us" to live holy and proclaim the gospel. Therefore let us shout, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen." (**Romans 11:36**)