

Divine Justice And The Sinner

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I was having a conversation with a Christian who made the following comment. She said, "I don't think it's fair for God to send someone to hell who has never heard the gospel like the native in the jungles of Africa who has never heard the gospel. I don't think it's fair for God to send that person to hell." Now, before we accuse God of being unjust, let us examine who God is. He is the Great God Almighty who made heaven and earth and his very name is holy. He dwells among the cherubim and seraphim who praise him for his majesty and bow before his authority as a Supreme Ruler of all things. The trouble with that lady's comment is the fact that her view of God is too small. She has shrunken God down to her level of understanding and by her interpretation she accuses God of unfairness, of injustice, in sending someone to hell who has never heard the gospel. But nobody asked her. Her opinion doesn't matter. God is a fair and just Judge and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

That is what we're going to look at this morning, friends, why God is a just Judge and why he has every right to send someone to hell who has broken his law because that is the bottom line. Man is a sinner, a law breaker, a guilty rebel who already stands convicted and guilty as charged and the sinner's only hope is to find refuge in the person of Jesus Christ because the wrath of God will, indeed, be poured out upon all guilty rebels who have broken the law of God. God's law is strict, God's law is severe and God requires perfection to get into his heaven and man is not perfect, man is a law breaker, a poor sinner in need of pardon. Man is not on probation here on earth, friends. No sir, man already stands guilty before God for breaking his holy law through sin.

A future day is coming, a day of judgment, where the Judge of all the earth will sit on a throne of judgment and each person who has ever lived will be brought before that throne. It will be a courtroom scene: the angels will be the bailiffs, the sinner will stand before the Judge's bench and his case will be reviewed. Time will be taken to present the evidence of that person's life: their actions, words, thoughts and motives will be presented to the Judge who sits on that throne and that person's life will be held up against the strictness and severity of God's holy law and everyone will fail that test because divine justice must be carried out, the sentencing of the law must be carried out. The poor miserable sinner will stand there with no excuse. The Bible says "every mouth will be stopped." He will stand there guilty as charged. He will stand there in his own merits as he is held up against that strict and severe law of God and he will fail that test.

Listen friends, I know I'm a sinner and I need a sin substitute in the person of Jesus Christ and so do you, friend. So do you. But the trouble is, man does not see his condition as dangerous. His concept of God is too small. God is to him like a human who is on his level, who thinks as he does and in his mind, God won't send anybody to hell. And man is blind to his great danger of dying in his sins and being cast into a burning hell for all eternity because he does not see himself for what he is: a guilty rebel, one who is guilty as charged, one who deserves to be sent to hell for divine justice must be enforced.

His trouble is how he compares himself with others. He compares himself with others and comes to the conclusion that he's not so bad after all, that there are some really bad people in this world and he is not as bad as they. Why, he's done some good things in his life: he's supported charities; he's even given money to the church; he helps his neighbor when his neighbor is in need. He's a pretty good person compared to many others so he concludes he will go to heaven when it is all said and done. But the problem is he is greatly mistaken because it doesn't matter a hill of beans how he sees himself. What matters is how God sees him and when God looks at him, he sees a transgressor of his holy law, he sees an enemy before him, a guilty rebel who hates the very attributes of a holy God and who refuses to bow to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and allow Christ to reign in his life with utter authority. Rather, he sits on the throne of his life and he lives unto himself. He's broken the law of God time and time again because man drinks iniquity like it's water. He loves his sins and hugs them, coddles them, indulges them and because of sin, God stands against him ready to cut him down with his sword of justice.

Now, you won't hear that message from many pulpits in America these days because it's not a popular message but that's my message this morning, friends, and my message is entitled "Divine Justice And The Sinner." Our text today is found in 2 Thessalonians in chapter 1 and verses 7 through 9. You may turn in your Bibles there now. There is a coming day of judgment, friend. You can count on that as surely as the sunrise in the morning. Every mother's son will stand before the bar of God on that day, on that day of judgment.

Here now is the word of God,

"7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Now, that is not a text you will hear from your average pastor in America today. It's not an encouraging word. It's not a politically correct one either because it speaks of hell and its fire and it speaks of the wrath of God poured out on sinners, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And there are a good many church members who fall into that category as well: baptized church members who never submitted to the reign of the Lord Jesus in their lives. They joined the church but remained in their sins. They became good church members but they were

never changed individuals. They were still mean to their family members; bitter, hateful, angry church members who look good on Sunday morning but the rest of the week they live like the devil himself because the devil is still their Father. Although they are baptized, they've never passed from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light and life. They've never been awakened to their lost condition. Never been convicted of sin. And never been born again by the Spirit of God. They are not washed in the blood and born from above, rather, they are filthy still and God will take vengeance upon them even if they are deacons in good standing. God is no respecter of persons.

You see, friends, when you come to Christ savingly, something happens. Self is dethroned and another is enthroned there, the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice our text in 2 Thessalonians mentions Christ Jesus three times in this text and all three times, he is referred to as "Lord." Listen, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Listen friend, if he isn't your Lord, he isn't your Savior. You've been duped by the modern gospel of our hour, the modern gospel that only declares, "God loves you. God has a wonderful plan for your life. All you have to do to go to heaven and to be with God forever is to accept his Son, Jesus Christ. Just invite him into your heart now, friend. Just repeat this prayer and you will be saved. Welcome friend, you are now a Christian."

That is the modern diluted gospel of your day and mine and that watered down version of the gospel can't save a flea let alone a guilty sinner who loves his sins. If you're going to be saved, friend, you're going to bow to the Lordship of Christ and surrender your all to his claims and rights on your life. Where Christ Jesus the Lord reigns, he must reign. His is a living Lord who sits at the right hand of the Father and he earned that right by way of a bloody cross. You must come to him there. You must submit to him there. You must throw down your shotgun of rebellion. You must pull up that stake in your life, that stake you have planted in the ground, that area of rebellion in your life where you have told God, "Okay God, I will follow you and you can have all these other areas in my life but you can't touch this one. I'm holding on to that. I'm putting a stake in the ground and attaching a sign to it that says in capital letters, KEEP OFF THE GRASS. KEEP OFF THIS AREA OF MY LIFE."

But you, friend, by doing that, do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his rights and claims on you where he declares, "If any man follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." You, sir, are a haughty rebel. You, ma'am, are a haughty rebel. You, young lady, are a haughty rebel. You, young man, are a haughty rebel who's told God not to touch your life and leave you alone to hug your sins. You are sitting on a false foundation of carnal security and you stand with the same crowd in the Bible who cried out, "We will not have this man reign over us!"

You fall into the same category of the crowd in George Whitfield's day. When George Whitfield, the great evangelist, was in America in 1740 during the Great Awakening, he was preaching on Boston Common to 20,000 hearers. At the time, Boston had a population of 60,000 people so Whitfield had the ear of 1/3 of that city. I've been out to

Boston Common many a time; I have walked the spot where Whitfield preached. It's still a grassy area today. Just picture in your mind those 20,000 people standing out there beneath the sky to hear him preach and this is what he told them. He said,

“You are monsters of iniquity. You are half-devils and half-beasts and your great problem is you do not have God's good grace to see your wretched condition. You won't cry and lament over your sins but if you won't cry over your sins as great as they are, as numerous as they are, George Whitfield will cry for you.”

And that great man would throw back his noble head and weep like a baby, weep over poor blind sinners who were ignorant to their own condition.

That is your problem, friend. You've never been awakened to your lost condition and your perilous position outside of Christ. You are a transgressor of the law of God and an enemy of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ because you still sit on the throne of your life and rule there. You cry out, “We will not have this man reign over us!” You reign but your reign will come to a sad end for a day is coming which is spoken of here in our text today, and you'd better listen more closely to it this time than you did the first time when I read it before. Let me read it to you again,

“7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

Listen friend, divine justice must be meted out by a holy God who hates sin. There is a foolish statement made by many evangelists today. They say, “God loves the sinner but hates the sin.” That is a politically correct version of a perverted gospel. Listen friend, if you are outside of Christ, God stands against you. You are an enemy in his sight. An enemy who deserves to be cut off and sent to hell. Listen to his word which declares, “God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword. He hath bent his bow and made it ready.” God stands against you with the sword of his divine justice unsheathed, ready to cut you down. Your only hope is to fly to the refuge of the Lord Jesus Christ and stand in his merits. Jesus is the substitute for sin. When he hung on that bloody tree, the wrath of God was poured out upon him because of sin. Hell came to Calvary that day and darkness settled over the land as the Father turned away from looking at his Son because God hates sin so much he could not even look at it.

Divine justice was carried out at Calvary that day, friend, by a broken-hearted God who had to look away from his only begotten Son. And divine justice that day, friend, was taken care of. Jesus said from the cross, “It is finished.” Divine justice was paid in full by the blood of the Lamb. I deserve that divine justice; I deserve hell. I'm a guilty rebel and so are you, my self-righteous friend. But I, like Paul, have obtained mercy. I am washed in the blood. How about you? How about you?