

Justice vs Mercy

Micah 6:6-8

With what shall I come to the Lord
And bow myself before the God on high?
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,
With yearling calves?
Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams,
In ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I present my first-born for my rebellious acts,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has told you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?

Both the Old and New Testaments acknowledge that people sin, yet tell of hope in the lovingkindness of God. In religious discussions, however, the mercy of God and the justice of God often have been placed in opposition to one another.

9:14-15 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

2:1-3 Therefore, you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same thing. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things...

3:5-6 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say then? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! For otherwise how will God judge the world?

As Paul explains in detail in Romans, God's standard of righteousness is faith (an attainable goal), not perfect performance (an unattainable goal).

2:4-11 ...the kindness of God leads you to repentance...to those who seek, eternal life...there is no partiality with God.

2:16 Not the hearers of the Law will be just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.

But how can God be just and merciful at the same time. The demands of justice must be met. Therefore, a sacrifice was required.

3:20-26 ...by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith...that He might be just and the justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus.

4:25 ...delivered up because of our transgressions...raised because of our justification.

5:8-11 God demonstrated His great love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him...

8:3 ...sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh...

We also die in this faith. However, our deaths are not sacrificial, we being unsuitable sacrifices until the sacrifice is made. Instead, we are under obligation.

6:4-11 ...we have been buried with Him through baptism into death...our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with...

8:12-13 ...we are under obligation...