



## THE WIN

The win this week is for your group to explore the holiness of God and develop a broader biblical understanding of His justice and mercy.

3-5  
minutes

### **SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

In the message this week, we learned that modern day Jihad and God's ordained conquest of Canaan in the Old Testament are very different.

Some of the truths discussed:

- God's Word is always right
- God is always just in what he does and commands
- God is merciful and calls His people to show mercy
- God is sovereign: we can't always know His purposes but we do know His character
- God is love, displayed by His sacrifice on our behalf

God's conquest of the Canaanites should be viewed in light of His character. In contrast, Islamic Jihad, when interpreted as viable in the Qur'an, stresses Allah as sheer will (as opposed to the moral goodness in God's character). As a result, the "struggle" of Jihad is viewed as a means to bring greater submission to Allah by the non-Muslim world.

What questions or topics from the sermon would you like to discuss with the group?

3-5  
minutes

## WARM UP

ASK THIS:

Is there a time when you have been a victim of injustice? Describe it. How did it make you feel?

Have you ever received mercy from someone in your life? That is, you did not get punished at a time when you deserved it? Describe it. How did this make you feel?

---

## THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

### READ THIS:

The passages and topic from this week cause us to wrestle with both the "kindness and severity" of God (Romans 11:22). We struggle sometimes in associating severity with God in any light. It is easy for us to talk about the kind, loving, compassionate aspects of God. However, when faced with any thought of wrath or judgment by God, most of us would rather change the subject! To properly appreciate God's mercy towards us there are three biblical concepts that we will explore today:

1. Holiness
2. Justice
3. Sin

### DO THIS:

Divide into three groups to Research and Report on each of these concepts:

#### **Holiness**

Read the following passages and summarize what each has to say about holiness:

- 1 Samuel 2:2
- Psalm 99:1-5
- Isaiah 6:1-5
- Ezekiel 1:26-28
- Luke 5:1-8

What do these passages say about God?

What do they say about people?

What can we learn about holiness?

#### **Justice**

Read the following passages and summarize what each has to say about justice:

- Genesis 18:20-33; 19:27-29
- Job 34:10-12

What do these passages say about God?

What do they say about people?

What can we learn about justice?

#### **Sin**

- Psalm 51:3-5
- Romans 1:18-24
- Psalm 2:1-3
- Isaiah 59:2
- Ephesians 2:1-3

What do these passages say about God?

---

What do they say about people?

What can we learn about sin?

Gather the groups back together and have a representative from each group describe their findings for the larger group. Together, work towards a biblical understanding of each.

Leaders: Make sure that your group grasps the following concepts. The commentary is included to help:

**Holiness:** "Holiness means to be "separate" or "transcendent." The word transcendence means literally "to climb across." It is defined as "exceeding usual limits." To transcend is to rise above something, to go above and beyond a certain limit. When we speak of the transcendence of God we are talking about that sense in which God is above and beyond us. It tries to get at His supreme and absolute greatness. The word is used to describe God's relationship to the world. He is higher than the world. He has absolute power over the world. The world has no power over Him. Transcendence describes God in His consuming majesty, His exalted loftiness. It points to the infinite distance that separates Him from every creature. He is an infinite cut above everything else."<sup>1</sup>

**Justice:** "When the Bible speaks of God's justice, it usually links it to divine righteousness. There is no such thing as evil justice in God. The justice of God is always and ever an expression of His holy character. The word justice in the Bible refers to conformity to a rule or a norm. God plays by the rules. The ultimate norm of justice is His own holy character. What God *does* is always consistent with who God *is*. He always acts according to His holy character. God's "internal righteousness" is the moral excellence of His character. It is rooted in his absolute purity. As a holy God, He is utterly incapable of an unholy act."<sup>2</sup>

**Sin:** "Sin is cosmic treason. Sin is treason against a perfectly pure Sovereign. It is an act of supreme ingratitude toward One to whom we owe everything, to the One who has given us life itself. Have you ever considered the implications of the slightest sin? What are we saying to our Creator when we disobey Him at the slightest point? We are saying no to the righteousness of God. We are saying "God, Your law is not good. My judgment is better than Yours. Your authority does not apply to me. I am above and beyond your jurisdiction. I have the right to do what I want to do, not what You command me to do." It is an insult to His holiness. When we sin as the image-bearers of God, we are saying to the whole creation, "This is how God is. This is how your Creator behaves."<sup>3</sup>

ASK THIS:

How does this understanding of holiness, justice, and sin create a problem for humanity? How does it impact the need for grace ("we get what we don't deserve") and mercy ("we don't get what we do deserve")?

Have someone in the group READ THIS:

All of this sets the stage for the most stunning picture of God's "kindness" and "severity," which is seen in the crucifixion:

"The most violent expression of God's wrath and justice is seen in the cross. If ever a person had room to complain of injustice, it was Jesus. He was the only innocent man ever to be punished by God. If we stagger at the wrath of God, let us stagger at the cross. Here is where our astonishment should be focused.

The cross was at once the most horrible and the most beautiful example of God's wrath. It was the most just and the most gracious act in history. God would have been more than unjust; He would have been diabolical to punish Jesus if Jesus had not first willingly taken upon Himself the sins of the world. Once Christ had done that, once He volunteered to be the Lamb of God, laden with our sin, then He became the most grotesque and vile thing on this planet. With the concentrated load of sin He carried, He became utterly repugnant to the Father. God poured out His wrath on this obscene thing. God made Christ accursed for the sin He bore. Herein was God's holy justice perfectly [displayed]. Yet it was done for us. He took what justice demanded from us. This "for

---

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), 55.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 142-43.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 152.

---

us" aspect of the cross is what displays the majesty of its grace. At the same time justice and grace, wrath and mercy. It is too astonishing to fathom."<sup>4</sup>

ASK THIS:

- Discuss as a group God's plan of salvation. How is God's justice perfectly satisfied while His love, mercy, and holiness are not compromised?
- Because of what Christ has done for us, how does our approach to advancing the Kingdom of God differ from Jihad?
- If Jesus has fully appeased God's wrath, how will you respond the next time someone treats you with injustice?

10  
minutes

## DIGGING DEEPER

These incredible truths should cause our emotions to be stirred in response to what God has done. This is a great time to pray as a group in adoration to our God. Gratitude is the fuel of worship and prayer! Allow each member time to praise God for who He is and what He is done for all mankind and for them personally.

## CLOSING THOUGHT

Do you have any friends or acquaintances that are Muslims? God loves them! This is a great week to invite them to coffee or dinner and prayerfully initiate conversations about the differences between Yahweh and Allah. This will require a step of faith, but the Holy Spirit will guide you through His power, not yours.

For further study, here are some excellent resources:

- *The Holiness of God* by RC Sproul. Available in print and on RightNow Media.
- *Holiness* by Matt Chandler. Available on RightNow Media.
- *Yawning at Tigers: You Can't Tame God, So Stop Trying* by Drew Dyck.
- *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* by Nabeel Qureshi.
- *What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an* by James R. White.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 158.