



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?

WARM UP

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?

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:

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1. Holiness
 2. Justice
 3. Sin

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.

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")?

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 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."¹

- 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?

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.

¹ Ibid, 158.