

Mercy and Truth Are Joined

#0191A

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 1, 1978

I always enjoy hearing the rustling of the leaves as we turn to the texts in the Bible. The important thing is what God says, and He's speaking through this book.

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" Matthew 19:6.

What God puts together, man is not to separate. There are some things that belong together because God has put them together. Turn now to the 85th Psalm. We're going to read this Psalm, and I want you to look for some things that God has put together.

Now, I'll tell you this, friends, we're in a world and in a generation when *everything* that God has put together the Devil is trying to put asunder. The home, obviously, is one thing, but that isn't the only thing the Devil is aiming at. He's aiming at *anything* that God has joined together. He says, "Separate"; he has a million imps out at work at it trying to segregate, trying to fragment, trying to decimate, trying to get one thing away from something else—disunion, anarchy, that's his program.

"...What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" Matthew 19:6.

The 85th Psalm:

"Lord, Thou hast been favorable unto Thy land: Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people, Thou hast covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath: Thou hast turned Thyself from the fierceness of Thine anger. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever? wilt Thou draw out Thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee? Show us Thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us Thy salvation. I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before

Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps” Psalm 85.

Now you noticed two great traits or attributes that are said to meet together in that 10th verse. In the beautiful repetition of Hebrew poetry the thought is emphasized, “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”

Another of the translations puts it this way:

“Loving-kindness and truth have met together” Psalm 85:10.

Love and truth, in other words, are joined together in God’s program. The *New English Bible* translates it:

“Love and fidelity have come together; justice and peace join hands” Psalm 85:10 (*New English Bible*).

And in another translation:

“Love and loyalty now meet; righteousness and peace now embrace” Psalm 85:10 (unknown translation).

Now why the emphasis on the meeting of these two great attributes? Because the Devil has been trying, for 6,000 years, to separate these two attributes. We may call them justice and mercy. We may call them truth and love. One emphasizes a strict, hew to the line, character of God. The other emphasizes His mercy, His forgiving kindness. And the Devil is trying to do what? Separate them. But “What... God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” Matthew 19:6. And no one—don’t miss this—no one truly understands one side of the character of God on this matter unless he understands the other side. The two are not disassociated. They’re not antagonistic. Each one is a reflection of the other.

“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” Psalm 85:10.

They have embraced. This was wonderfully and gloriously demonstrated at the cross. Here was the complete manifestation of the character of God. At the cross, justice and mercy, love and truth, met and embraced.

I want you to notice a most vivid presentation of this meeting in *Selected Messages*; this is a most sublime presentation:

“The grace of Christ and the law of God are inseparable”
Selected Messages, Book 1, page 349.

What does “inseparable” mean? You can’t separate them. But the Devil says, “I’ll try; just watch me.” God says you cannot do it. Which do you vote for—God or Satan? Do you think they can be separated? I’ll tell you, my friends, there are many things passing for the Gospel today that separate these two things. And when you separate them, you really have neither one when you get through.

“The grace of Christ and the law of God are inseparable. In Jesus, mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. In His life and character, He not only reveals the character of God but the possibility of man. He was the representative of God and the exemplar of humanity. He presented to the world what humanity might become when united by faith with divinity” *Ibid.*

Notice, He was not only a substitute, He was that certainly, but He was a demonstration of what by the grace of God can be wrought in our lives. Aren't you glad?

“He was the representative of God and the exemplar of humanity. He presented to the world what humanity might become when united by faith with divinity” *Ibid.*

Now comes the sublime presentation of what happened at the cross:

“The only-begotten Son of God took upon Him the nature of man, and established His cross between earth and heaven. Through the cross, man was drawn to God, and God to man” *Ibid.*

“Man was drawn to God, and God to man,” where? Through the cross. Are you drawn to God through the cross? In what sense could it be that God was drawn to man through the cross? Did God love man more because of the cross? No. Did He love man more after the cross than before? No. Well then in what sense? In *this* sense, friend—at the cross God demonstrated a way, He revealed a way, and God representing justice upon the throne of the universe saw a way that man could be pardoned without in any sense weakening the structure and justice of the universe. He saw how man could be forgiven without setting the law aside. He saw how He could bend toward the repenting sinner without in any sense accepting or condoning the sin. That's what God saw at the cross.

“Through the cross, man was drawn to God, and God to man. Justice moved from its high and awful position, and the heavenly hosts, the armies of holiness, drew near to the cross, bowing with reverence; for at the cross justice was satisfied” *Ibid.*

Christ on the cross bore everything that justice required. Christ tasted death for every man. He paid the debt. He paid my ransom. Oh, I'm so thankful for that love. Aren't you, friends?

“Justice moved from its high and awful position, and the heavenly hosts, the armies of holiness, drew near to the cross, bowing with reverence; for at the cross justice was satisfied” *Ibid.*

Then in *Desire of Ages*, in that matchless chapter “It Is Finished,” again, these wonderful thoughts are beautifully expressed:

“God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy” *Desire of Ages*, page 762.

I’ve pondered over this statement. On my page I’ve drawn a ring around those words “no less.” That means something, friends. No less. We think of the mercy of God as revealing His love. And what is that mercy, infinite mercy, as we sing in the song “Grace that is greater than all our sins?” An infinite love revealed in infinite mercy. But this says that “God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy.” Justice is just as much an expression of God’s love as mercy.

Now I’ll tell you something. If we don’t comprehend that (should I say if we don’t agree with it, that’s what I mean), I’ll tell you what’s the matter. We either need a different view of justice or else we need a different view of mercy. That’s the point. For “God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy.” And if we understand God aright, we see God’s love in His justice as well as seeing God’s love in His mercy.

“Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love” *Ibid.*

Is the world suffering today because of a permissive attitude toward law-breaking? Are criminals roaming the highways and going through the streets of our cities making life unsafe in both country and city? Why? Because, my friend, there’s only one chance in several that the criminal will ever be caught. If he’s caught, there’s only one chance in several that he’ll ever be convicted. And if he’s convicted, there’s only one chance in several that he’ll suffer the penalty to the nth degree.

So, the law of averages is all on the side of the criminal and lawbreaker. Man has become so soft, so permissive, that the criminal, high-handed rebel that he is, he defies the law.

The justice of God is this, friends: it recognizes that the law must be enforced, and that with that is wrapped up the peace and order of the entire universe. What shall we say then of a Gospel, a so-called Gospel, which would present (watch this) present the obedience of Christ as something which is a substitute for man’s obedience? Christ dies for man’s sins, and man goes free and is free to continue in transgression. He can go right on breaking the law, but he’s saved because of the sacrifice of Christ. My friend, that is not the Gospel. That is not the Gospel.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation *from* sin to everyone that believeth. And in that Gospel, God’s love is revealed in His justice no less than in His mercy.

“Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan’s purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice” *Ibid.*

Interesting word, “divorce.” Our opening text was, speaking now of the bride and the groom, the husband and the wife:

“... they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” Matthew 19:6.

What do we call it when one or the other party gets a legal separation from the other? Divorce. And that’s been the Devil’s purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. That’s been his aim all down through. He’s working at it just as he’s working overtime to fill the divorce courts of our land, so he is working to separate in the mind of the man the concept of mercy and the concept of justice.

“It had been Satan’s purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God’s law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God’s plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other” *Desire of Ages*, page 762.

Oh, I think that’s wonderful, friends. There would be no mercy, no real mercy, no lasting mercy, no worthwhile mercy, no effective mercy in this universe if God’s justice could be set aside or destroyed. And equally so, friends, there would be no justice, no *real* justice, if God’s mercy could be destroyed.

“The one cannot exist without the other” *Ibid*.

And then the prophet quotes this wonderful text which we’ve read here from Psalm 85:10. Let’s read it again together, all together:

“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” Psalm 85:10.

Oh, I think that’s beautiful. Don’t you, friend? You know, when the bride and groom are joined in the wedding, sometimes they not only join hands but embrace. There is a kiss of love. And this is the picture here, “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” There is no war, my friends, between justice and mercy in the character of God. They’re joined, indissolubly joined together.

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” Matthew 19:6.

Now, this must be true in our experience, friends. *Truth* is the revelation of God’s will that we may know it. *Righteousness* is the demonstration of God’s will—doing it. Truth—knowing God’s will. Righteousness—doing it. *Faith* is man’s response, believing the truth, and doing the righteousness. Both are made possible through the gift of Christ. “He is the truth,” John 14:6.

He has given man the gift of faith. Faith is one of the gifts of the Spirit. He has given man the gift of righteousness: righteousness that covers every

transgression that's passed of the penitent; righteousness, which not only covers him, but enters his very mind and soul that:

"The righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" Romans 8:4.

And this righteousness, this truth, this justice, this revelation of the will of God in knowing it and doing it is not something against love, or instead of love. Love is not a substitute for righteousness. Neither is faith a substitute for righteousness. Faith is man's response to God's truth. And love is an expression of man's response to God's love manifested in obedience.

Turn to Galatians 5:

"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" Galatians 5:5–6.

What avails? What's worth something? What gets something done? "Faith which worketh by love."

"Why Paul, do you mean faith works?"

That's what he says. Sure. It was made to work, friends. I thank God. You know what people usually do with some machine they get from the factory that doesn't work? What do they do with it? Send it back. Yes.

James makes a very strong stand. He says that faith that doesn't work, that won't work, that can't work, is what? Dead. And Paul is right in harmony. He says the thing that avails—that is it's worth something, gets something done—is faith which worketh by love.

That doesn't mean to run off and try to work without either faith or love, friends. That won't work. You may try. That's legalism. That's what people say when they see somebody seeking to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. They say that's legalism. They don't understand what legalism is. Legalism is trying to do right without God, trying to be righteous without the forgiving grace and the sanctifying grace of Jesus Christ, trying to keep the law without the indwelling Spirit and the sprinkling of the blood.

Turn over now to 1 Peter 1. I want you to see it's impossible to do that, but it doesn't mean that it's impossible to do it the *right* way. Anything God says can be done, friends. What do you say?

"Where the word of a king is, there is power..."
Ecclesiastes 8:4

"...as many as received Him, to them gave He power..."
John 1:12.

1 Peter 1:2. Peter is writing an epistle to the people of God scattered throughout various parts of the world, and it includes us, friends, because it was written for our admonition:

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,
through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and
sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ...”1 Peter 1:2.

So, this precious grace is unto obedience. That’s the purpose of it. Paul in Romans 1:5, reading the margin, calls it “the obedience of faith.” Does faith obey? Yes. If it doesn’t obey, it is not faith. It’s presumption.

And Jesus, in John 17:17, says:

“Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth”
John 17:17.

As I was meditating on some of these texts, I was thinking about the beautiful rainbow. What color is the rainbow? It’s all colors. Isn’t it beautiful? Red and orange, and yellow, green and blue, and violet, merging and blending. Would you know, all those colors (and don’t miss it) are in every ray of light. Stand out here in the morning sunlight as those rays of glory stream down and remember *every* one of them has red in it. Every one has orange in it. Everyone has all the other colors. They’re all in there.

“Oh,” somebody says, “Is that so? Is it? Well, I can’t see it.”

Well, it’s there anyway. And if you get a shower in the right position with reference to your eye and the sun, and those millions of raindrops act like little prisms breaking up the light into its various colors. You can do the same with a little prism, refract the light—break it up into its colors. The drops of water don’t add any color. They merely show you what is *in* every ray of light.

Am I telling the truth? Is that the way it is, Dr. Aynes? Dr. Aynes is the eye doctor, you know, and he’ll tell me if I’m getting it right. Ah, bless your hearts, friends, at the cross as the storm and tempest of wrath against sin broke upon the head and the heart of Jesus Christ, the divine justice and mercy were seen to be an expression of the infinite love of God. And around the throne forever now, is that rainbow that represents the union of justice and mercy in the plan of salvation.

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put
asunder” Matthew 19:6.

Oh, my friends, I’m afraid of any message which would attempt to emphasize one at the expense of the other, any message which seeks to pit one against the other, any message which would hurl epithets against those who would join both of these. We need both.

White light is not merely red, but it is red. White light is not merely blue, although it includes blue. White light is not just yellow, although it includes yellow.

White light includes the red, and blue, and yellow and all the various blends and combinations of the oranges, the purples, the greens. Beautiful, isn't it, friends?

So it is with the character of God. It's all summed up in that one word love, for "God is love." And as we view that character, and as we bring it to the prism of Calvary and see the justice and the mercy, the life and the death, the glory and the shame, the forgiveness, the justification, the sanctification, the righteousness imputed and the righteousness imparted, as we see all these colors, as it were, of the white light of God's character, let us not seek to run off with one of those colors and say, "This is it. I've got the whole thing." No, you *don't* have the whole thing. The whole thing is the *whole* thing, my friends, and we need every color of the rainbow to make the white light of God's perfect character.

[Audience joins Elder Frazee in singing "Trust and Obey."]

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our way
While we do His goodwill
He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey

Trust and obey
For there is no other way
To be happy in Jesus
But to trust and obey

Trust and obey, are they blended? Suppose I say, "I'll do the trusting, and you do the obeying?" No. Wouldn't it be too bad for me to say, "I'll do the obeying, you do the trusting." Mercy and truth are met together, truth and love are met together, and what God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

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