

Ezekiel 33:17

by Chuck Smith

God's ways are not equal to human standards of fairness and justice, but are based on His perfect righteousness and love.

Scripture: Ezekiel 33:17, Matthew 5:20, Matthew 6:12, Luke 18:9, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:2

Topics: "God's Justice", "Grace and Forgiveness"

Description

Chuck Smith addresses the common accusation against God regarding His fairness and justice, emphasizing that humanity's suffering stems from sin and rebellion against God. He explains that God's grace in forgiving sins often troubles people, as they struggle to accept that the guilty can be forgiven without suffering. Smith highlights that true righteousness cannot be achieved through human efforts, and only through faith in Jesus can one attain the righteousness necessary for salvation. He concludes by reminding us that while people may question God's ways, it is ultimately their own ways that are unequal, as they fail to extend the same grace they desire for themselves to others.

Transcript

The Equal Ways of God

I. This is an oft repeated accusation against God.

A. It began in the Garden of Eden.

1. Satan had suggested to Eve, that God was trying to

hold back something good from man to protect Himself.

2. The reason that God does not want you to eat of the

fruit is He knows that the day that you eat of it,

you will become like gods.

B. When Abraham was told of the impending judgment that was to

come upon Sodom, he questioned, "Shall not the Judge of all

the earth do right?"

C. Today the accusations usually begin with the query, "Why would a God of love allow" and then they point to any number of world catastrophe's. The insinuation is that He is not a God of love, His is not fair to allow innocent children to be born with a physical handicap.

D. What is not taken into consideration is the fact that we are born into a world that has been suffering the consequence of rebellion against the law of God for almost 6,000 years. The cause behind all the ills is sin. Had it not been for sin I believe that we would be living in perfect bodies in a perfect world.

E. Man through sin turned the title deed of the earth over to Satan and he now is the god of this world. He is the one that is controlling the flow of the worlds tide.

1. In Eph.2 Paul said in times past you also walked after the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.

2. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of them who believe not."

II. The problem that bothered the people was God's grace in the forgiveness of sins. A. God had declared that if a wicked man doomed to die, would turn from his sin and do that which was lawful and right and begin to walk in the statutes of life, he would live and not die. None of his past sins would be mentioned to him. 1. The grace of God in the forgiveness of sins has always been a problem for many people, including Christians. a. We are not willing to let the guilty get off scott free. b.

We look for our pound of flesh. c. We want them to suffer at least for a time. d. We are not as ready to forgive their transgression as is God. We say there cannot be immediate restoration we must give them some time. e. Though we gladly accept the grace for our own iniquities we are not quite so ready to offer it to others. That is why God responded to the accusation by saying, "Your ways are not equal." You gladly accept for yourselves what you are not willing to offer to others. f.

We so often stand with the Pharisee's with stone in hand ready to take vengeance upon the guilty, but according to Jesus, none of us are qualified to throw our stones. B. God also declared that the righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. The righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness in the day that he sins. 1. Jesus had told the crowd listening to the Sermon on the Mount, that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees they could not hope to enter into the kingdom of heaven. a.

As far as living by the standards of the law, no one exceeded the Scribes and Pharisees. They spent their entire existence trying to keep the law. b. The problem is that they had developed self righteousness they were trusting in their own outward works, while within they were filled with all sorts of evil attitudes. c. The sepulcher's were whitewashed on the outside, but within were dead men's bones. The outside of the cup was clean, but within was extortion and excesses. 2.

You can be a good moral, honest person filled with integrity and of excellent reputation, and when you die end up in hell. 3. You can be guilty of the most heinous evil and come to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and end up in heaven. 4. You may say, that is not fair, the ways of the Lord are not equal. 5. Your good deeds or righteous acts can never secure you a place in heaven. a. Our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God. b. The righteous standard that God requires to enter the kingdom of heaven, was manifested by Jesus Christ, who was able to say, "I do always those things that please the Father." and also, "He that has seen Me, has seen the Father." c.

Jesus said that the Spirit would testify of righteousness because I ascend unto the Father. The ascension of Jesus into heaven was God's declaration to the world that here is the righteousness necessary to grant you entrance into the heavenly kingdom. d. You say, but no human could be that righteous. Good, you are beginning to get the picture. If you are trusting in your own righteousness no matter how good you may have been, you will never make it. e. That is why God has offered to impute to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ by our mere faith and trust in Him, as we surrender to His Lordship over our lives. 6.

How long does it take for God to forgive us our iniquities? 7. How many months did the Lord require that Peter sit on the shelf for his horrible failure when he denied his Lord with cursing? a. Jesus had told Peter that Satan had desired him that he might sift him like wheat, but when he was converted he was to strengthen his brethren. b. When Jesus met Peter face to face after Peter's denial, He talked to him of going out and tending the Lord's sheep, and feeding the sheep. c.

Peter became a more understanding undershepherd as the result of his failure, because before his denial of the Lord, he was boastful and proud thinking himself to be above the others. "Though they may all deny you, I would never deny you." After his own personal failure, he ministered from a place of brokenness.

III. There will always be those who will be saying, "The ways of the Lord are not equal." God's response is, "Your ways are not equal."

A. The same people that are out with their signs, and screaming that we should save the trees, are the very same people that are out with the signs saying pro choice. Kill the babies, but save the trees. Yet they say the ways of the Lord are not

equal.

B. The government will fine you and give you a possible jail term if you destroy the egg of a bald eagle. It recognizes that the egg holds the life of the new eagle. That same government will pay for you to destroy the child being formed in your womb, declaring that it is just tissue. No wonder God responds, "Your ways are not equal."

C. Jesus said, that your Father in heaven has forgiven you a huge debt, yet you are unwilling to forgive a minor debt of your brother, but are demanding your pound of flesh.

D. What audacity for man to challenge the justice of God.

E. We hear the cry, "Their ain't no justice." This may be very true of our judicial system. Your attorney will be the first to tell you that you cannot be assured of justice if you go to court over the issue.

F. Whenever someone challenges the justice of God with the queries concerning the people who have never heard of Jesus Christ, how a just God could condemn them to eternal punishment, I just say where God is silent, I must be silent, I do not know what God's sentence of judgment will be concerning them, but I know when it is announced, we will all say, "Righteous and true are your judgments O Lord." And when you who have heard of Jesus Christ but steadfastly refuse His love and grace toward you, as He announces your doom, again we will be forced to say, "Righteous and true are your judgments O Lord." You had better start being concerned for yourself, for you stand in the place of

greater condemnation.

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