

Desiring God's Judgements

I. Grace is found in Judgment - 1 Peter 4:17 (NASB) "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God."

A. Normally this passage would create some dread in my heart.

1. **Even though I was not raised in a Christian home, I heard my parents and others attribute the great calamities and disasters that happened in the world to the "judgment of God."**

2. I got the impression that God was angry at most people because they weren't perfect. And in what some would call "His righteous indignation."

- **He would let a plane crash,**
- He would let a hurricane or a tornado come through an area,
- **He would unleash a new disease like AIDS into the world.**

3. Since I wasn't perfect, then it was just a matter of time before the "judgment of God" came upon my life.

a. **Instead of this becoming a deterrent of sin in my life, it became a driving force to sin even more.**

b. Because I had no hope of ever being perfect thereby escaping the "judgment of God," I then ascribed to the philosophy of "lets eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die."

B. **Not only did I have to worry about God judging my many imperfections, I soon discovered that His creation, mankind, was just as prone to judge.**

1. Throughout my life I learned that weaknesses wouldn't be tolerated and imperfections brought consequences.

- **When I was a child growing up, I was judged too small so I didn't make the basketball team.**
- In baseball, I was judged not good enough so I played right field and batted last.
- **In my teen years, I was judged too rowdy so parents wouldn't let their kids associate with me.**
- My own parents judged me more capable than I was, which caused unrealistic expectations.
- **In school, I was judged too rebellious so I was expelled.**
- When I joined the military, I was judged unable to change so I was undesirably discharged.
- **My family judged me too bothersome so they turned their backs on me.**
- Society judged me too violent so I was sent to prison.

2. **All of these judgments were righteous and true, but they weren't implemented to help me, but to hurt me; not to change me, but to condemn me.**

3. But from the moment that I met Jesus, I discovered that His judgments were totally different than what I thought they would be.

- a. **Not only were they different than man's judgments, they were higher than man's judgment; where man's judgments were penal in nature, God's were redemptive in nature.**
- b. Man's judgments are designed to condemn what is wrong in man, God's judgments are designed to bring forth what is right in man.
- c. **Man's judgments are meant to condemn us where we are at, God's judgments will bring us to where we should be.**
- d. Man's judgments are designed to punish man's problems, God's judgments are designed to develop man's potential.
- e. **When man judges you get hurt, when God judges you get helped.**
- f. Therefore, God's judgments are to be desired and not dreaded, embraced and not rejected, to be ran towards and not ran from
- g. **When the writers of the Bible write of the "judgment of God," they encourage us to seek it, to follow after it, and to get in on it whenever we can. They talk about rewards and benefits that His judgments are meant to bring us.**

C. Psalm 19:9-12 is a good example of what I am talking about, *"The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward."* NASB.

1. This passage says that the judgments of God are true, righteous, desirable, valuable, sweet and full of rewards.

- a. When God judges you, you should be able to say, "man that was sweet" or "gold couldn't do for me what that did for me."
- b. **In 1972 at the age of 22, a Florida judge sentenced me to 30 years in prison. At the time, I thought that this was the worse thing that had ever happened to me, little did I know that it was going to turn out to be one of the best things that could have ever happened to me.**
 - I went into prison as a cheater of society, I came out a champion for society
 - **I went in as one who hurts others, I came out as one who helps people;**
 - I went in a prisoner, I came out a preacher
 - **I went in full of sin, I came out full of the Son.**

2. In verse 11, the Hebrew word for “warned” is “zahar,” whose primary meaning isn’t “warned,” but “to be taught by receiving the light of God.”
 - **The PBV translation states it this way, “by them (the judgments) thy servant is taught.”**
 - The Helen Spurrell translation states “by them thy servant is enlightened.”
 - **The Amplified translation brings even more clarity to this thought, “moreover, by them is Your servant warned (reminded, illuminated, and instructed).”**
 - a The idea is that God’s judgments carry His revelation for our lives. Another way of saying it is that God teaches us by judging us.
 - b My eight years in prison afforded me an education that no amount of money could buy. Sumter Correctional Institution became Sumter Bible College for me.**
 - c This message is a result of all the revelation those eight years of judgment carried for me. I can honestly say that my eight years in prison have enriched me in ways that gold never could have.
3. **Not only has it brought me riches, it has also brought a real sweetness to my life.**
 - a Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary uses these adjectives in describing something sweet, “agreeable, pleasing, fresh, mild, soft, gentle, with the idea of causing one to be grateful.”
 - I am sure you have heard the expression “a hardened con,” because that is what happens to most people who have been in prison.
 - **For most inmates, prison makes them bitter, not better; it makes them troubled, not triumphant; and it makes them hard and not happy.**
 - b. But because I realized that God’s justice is filtered through God’s mercy, then I knew that the intended purpose for the judgment of my life, was to impart His righteousness to my life.
 - **Therefore prison became, for me, a means whereby I was changed for the better.**
 - It was in prison I learned that happiness doesn’t depend on the condition of your circumstances, but on the condition of your heart.
 - **I went into prison a very disagreeable, repugnant, sour, harsh, hard, and rough person, who had caused everyone I knew to regret they ever knew me.**
 - I came out of prison a very agreeable, pleasing, fresh, mild, soft and gentle person, who is now causing everyone I meet to be grateful that I am in their lives.
 - c. **God’s judgment of my life, in those eight years, was one of the sweetest things that has ever happened to me.**

- D. The purpose of God's judgment is not immediately apparent, because God puts the peaceable fruit of righteousness, for our lives, in the midst of the discipline of our lives, Hebrews 12:11.
1. **In Luke 22:31-32, God put the converting of Peter's soul in the midst of the sifting of his life.**
 2. Throughout scripture, God has placed some of His best stuff in what the world would consider some of the worst containers.
 - a. **In the Old Testament,**
 - God used slavery and prison to bring Joseph into the palace of Pharaoh, where he was in position to save his family.
 - **God used 40 years of exile to prepare Moses to lead His people out of slavery.**
 - God used 40 years of wandering around a wilderness to transform a nation of slaves into a nation of kings.
 - b. **In the New Testament,**
 - God uses tribulation to produce perseverance, character and hope into our lives, Romans 5:3-4.
 - **God uses afflictions to produce in us His glory, 2 Corinthians 4:17.**
 - God uses trials to bring us into perfection, where we lack nothing, James 1:2.
 3. **There is an edge to God's judgment that has a way of initially making you think, like He did with Joseph, that He is out to punish you instead of promoting you.**
 - a. It is for this reason that the Psalmist in Psalms 19:11 states concerning the judgments that "*in keeping them there is great reward.*"
 - **The Hebrew word for "*in keeping them*" is "*shamar*," which is defined as "*waiting and watching for the purpose of observing.*"**
 - The idea is that when God brings a judgment into your life, you need to wait and watch for the teaching, the instruction, and the guidance that God wants to bring to you, which will then bring great value into your life.
 - b. **The translation called the Message renders the latter part of verse 11 this way, "*His judgments will direct us to hidden treasure.*"**
 - Isaiah 45:3 out of the Living Translation corroborates this, "*and I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness.*"

- **God's judgments can be dark, but they contain a treasure, and if we wait, watch and observe, we will discover great riches for our lives.**

E. Man's judgments is designed to condemn what is wrong in man. God's judgments are designed to bring forth what is right in man.

1. God's judgments are not meant to condemn us where we are at but to bring us to where we should be.

2. God's judgments are to be desired and not dreaded, embraced and not rejected, to be ran towards and not run from.

3. 1 Timothy 5:24 (NASB) "The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their [sins] follow after."

- Numbers 32:23 -Your sin will find you out - either here or there (it's better it's done here)

- **Hebrews 10:31 - It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

- It's not a terrifying thing to willingly come into the hands of God. When you voluntarily place yourself in His hands than "mercy will triumph over judgment." James 2:13 (*My son breaking of the Terry Bradshaw*)

4. His Grace is found in our need - Hebrews 4:16 - mercy (favor) is shown to give us opportunity to find (perceive) His grace (majesty).

a. Mercy is simply received but grace has to be found.

b. God will grant you mercy in His judgment in order to give you an opportunity to find His grace for your time of need.

c. The question is "While I'm in His mercy, where can His Grace be found?"

d My son this summer had a splinter in his finger - He was wanting healing without the treatment. The grace for his healing was found in the needle.

- It can be found in Confession
- It can be found in **Humility**
- It can be found in Restitution
- It can be found in **Reconciliation**
- It can be found in **Renouncing**
- It can be found in Obedience
- It can be found in **Sacrifice**
- It can be found in Service