

October 23rd
THE PLACE WHERE LOVE AND JUSTICE MEET

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins." ROMANS 3:21-25

How can a holy God forgive sinners? If He just allows anyone to join Him in heaven, where's His sense of justice? If He sentences everyone to hell and damnation, where is His sense of love for those he created? Take a ride with me into the world of defending your faith, also known as apologetics. God calls us in I Peter 3 to "always be ready to give an answer to those who ask you for the reason for the hope that is within you but do it with gentleness and respect...". This is God's call for every believer. So, men, I ask you this question—how can you defend God's justice and love at the same time, with the same event? How would you respond to these questions? The Cities of Refuge offer us a way to see our God more clearly. James Boice, in his "Life of Moses," helps us with three connections from Numbers 35 here.

First, the road must be clearly marked. The ESV doesn't quite communicate this well, but if you use the NASB here's what Deuteronomy 19:3 states, "You shall prepare the roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the Lord your God will give you as a possession, so that any manslayer may flee there." God demands that roads be set up to the Cities of Refuge that will ensure successful travel to find refuge. Is it any different with Christ, men? As God's people, we must work at preparing the way to Christ. We work as His ambassadors to point people to their only place of refuge.

Second, according to Boice, the Cities were always open. Think about that for a moment. What was one characteristic that each city carried...gates. The gates would be closed at night to keep out intruders and protect the citizens. However, here the Cities of Refuge don't have gates that ever close. Is it any different with Christ, men? Jesus' work on the cross is open for any sinner at any time that seeks safety and security. They only need to come.

Third, the Cities of Refuge are the only way. God doesn't provide any other method to ensure justice in a trial when accidental death occurs. Without the City providing safety, the perpetrator is on his own. Is it any different with Christ, men? Jesus is the only way that anyone can be saved. Jesus was clear that He is the only way to the Father. Every other way offends a holy God. His justice is satisfied only with our Substitute Jesus. That brings us to our final point.

Men, at the cross we find the perfection of God. We see that God is just; we see that God is love. He declares people "not guilty" because Jesus took the punishment for sin. Only at the cross can God be both the one who is just and the one who is "the justifier" for those who trust Jesus' work on the cross. Here we discover the greatness of our God. This is why we believe. This is why we trust. God makes a way when there seems to be no way, and He does it without compromising His love or justice in the process. What an amazing God!

Spend some time thanking the Lord for His justice and mercy at the cross. Ask Him for more grace to live more thankful today because of His great love and justice.

For Further Reading: Romans 5:1-21