

# The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES  
with Pastor Greg Formey



## Justice, Mercy, and Grace

Romans 6:23

April 5, 2026

**“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** ESV

The human heart often cries out for fairness, yet when we stand before the holiness of God, "fairness" is the last thing we truly want. To understand the Gospel, we must understand three distinct pillars of God's character: Justice, Mercy, and Grace. Today, we look at the reality of our accountability before a holy God and the "calculus of the Cross" that determines our eternal destiny.

### **JUSTICE: GETTING WHAT WE DESERVE**

Justice is the foundation of God's throne. It is the simple, terrifying reality of getting exactly what we have earned.

The Scripture teaches that a day is coming when every person will stand before God to give an account.

#### **Revelation 20:12**

**And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened... and the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.**

Everything done in the dark will be exposed for all to see.

Perfect justice means punishment for everything a person has done wrong. There are no "clerical errors" in heaven.

God misses nothing; every thought, every hidden motive, and every secret act is weighed. Romans 6:23 begins with a legal fact - **"The wages of sin is death."** A wage is something you have earned; it is the just payment for work you have done.

But remember - **If you demand justice from God, you must be prepared to receive the full weight of what your life has produced.**

### **MERCY: NOT GETTING WHAT WE DESERVE**

If Justice is getting the punishment we deserve, mercy is God's decision to withhold that punishment.

The truth is either Jesus pays or you pay. Because God is perfectly just, sin must be paid for. It cannot be ignored or swept under a rug.

The bad news is that you are guilty, and the debt is so great you will never repay it.

The good news is that Jesus stepped into the courtroom and offered to pay the debt Himself.

### **1 Peter 3:18**

**For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.**

We do people no favors by minimizing the "bad news." Especially for those who are facing their own mortality, we must be transparent about the gravity of judgment. Only when we see the height of the cliff do we truly value the hand that catches us when we fall over it.

## **GRACE: GETTING WHAT WE DO NOT DESERVE**

### **Romans 6:23b**

**but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** ESV

Grace goes a step beyond mercy. Mercy is the stay of execution; Grace is the invitation to the King's banquet.

How do we move from the "Justice" column to the "Grace" column?

### **Luke 18:10-14**

**10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”** ESV

The practical steps are these:

Be humble - Acknowledge God's sovereignty.

Have regret - Express genuine sorrow for your attitudes and actions.

Plea for mercy - Ask Jesus to forgive you and apply His payment to your debt.

Commit yourself - Get up and follow Jesus and never stop.

## **Conclusion**

### **Romans 10:9**

**If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** NLT

Whether you are thinking of a friend, a stranger, or looking at your own life, the reality remains that you will stand before God.

Justice is coming for us all, mercy is available to us all, and grace is offered to us all.

Either Jesus pays or you pay. Which will you choose today?