

From punishment to peace



One With Christ (Day 10)
by Derek Prince

We have looked briefly in the root problem of the human race, which is self-will - going our own way. It's not necessarily committing some dramatic sin like murder, or adultery, or stealing. But turning from God's way, and going our own way - turning our back on God - doing our own thing - living by our own standards - pleasing ourselves - making ourselves the center of the universe.

In the following days we will be looking at various specific aspects of this divinely ordained exchange that was accomplished through the death of Jesus. The aspect of the exchange that I want to focus on today, is contained in Isaiah 53, verse 5:

> "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." (NIV)

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him. Jesus was punished for our sins because he became our substitute. You see, man's sin and God's mercy together created a problem that only God Himself could solve. God longs to be merciful. He longs to forgive. But at the same time justice is the very foundation of His throne, and God cannot do anything on any other basis but that of perfect justice. He cannot compromise his own justice to forgive.

This paradox, this tension is stated in a revelation that the Lord gave to Moses. In Exodus chapter 34, verses 5 through 7, Moses cried out to God. He said "let me see your glory." And the Lord came down and gave him a personal revelation of Himself. These are the words in which it's described there in Exodus 34:

> "Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him [that's with Moses] and proclaimed his name [the Lord proclaimed his own name, and he said this] the Lord. And then he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, [that's the sacred name] the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining

> love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished…'" (NIV)

Notice the tension. God forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin, but because of his justice he cannot leave the guilty unpunished. So there's the great, if I may call it, problem for God. He wants to forgive the sinner, but he cannot condone his sin. His justice demands the punishment of the sin, his mercy longs to offer the sinner forgiveness and pardon.

How could that problem be resolved? Only one person could resolve that problem, God himself. There was only one way that he could resolve that problem. It was through the sinner substitute, through Jesus, the Son of Man, the last Adam, who became legitimately and totally identified with the sins that we committed and then suffered their full penalty so that God's justice was satisfied and he was free without compromising his justice to offer forgiveness.

Devotional

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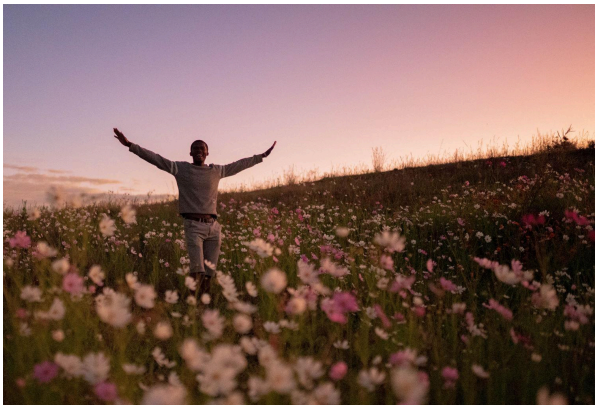

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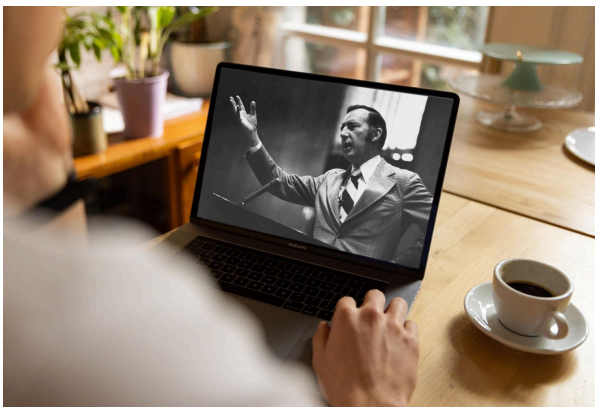

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