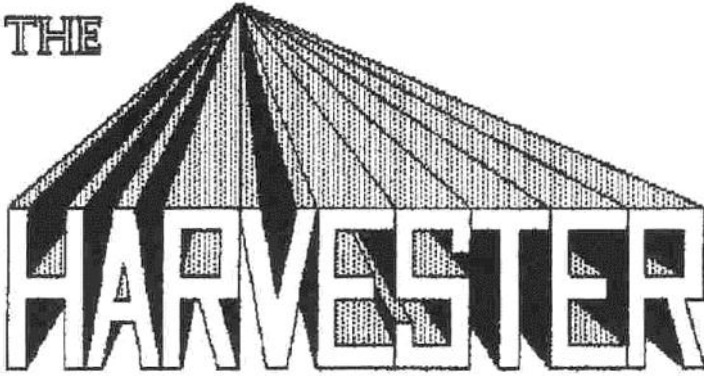


THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

March 2013

No. 327

JUDGMENT, FORGIVENESS, MERCY

In John 3:16-17 we note, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." These are some of the most precious words ever spoken. We have never done anything to deserve God's love. He was under no obligation whatsoever to send Jesus into the world to pay a debt on the cross that we never could. The entire point of God giving Jesus' life on the cross

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was so that through him we "might be saved". God sent Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners: "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Rom. 5:8). God could have chosen not to allow Jesus to die on the cross and to ultimately destroy us because of our sins. However, God is so very loving that He chose to forego a harsh judgment and instead extend mercy, grace, and forgiveness. As we read the *Holy Bible* we note that judgment, mercy, and forgiveness are blessings for which we set the standard of how God will extend them to us.

We will be judged according to what we have done in this life. Our eternal destination will be based on the good and evil that we have done. In 2 Corinthians 5:10 we note, "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*" We are judged according to our works.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (Rev. 20:12-13)

We are going to be judged according to the law of liberty. "*So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty*" (Jas. 2:12). At this point one should begin to wonder, how harsh Jesus will judge us? Will His judgment be unreasonable, severe, and harsh beyond measure? Can we do anything to get Him to have a very lenient judgment? The answer to the last question is yes! We can get Jesus to have a very lenient judgment. How do we do that? He

told us how in Matthew chapter 7:2: *"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."* Could those words be any plainer? Inspiration vividly expounds that the way we judge someone else is how we will be judged. When we look at someone else's conduct and convey an opinion, God in turn will use the same measure or standard that we applied to them on us. However, this does not mean that we are to condone sin or let condemning sins go unnoticed. What does "judging" someone in the context of Matthew chapter 7 mean then? Let's read Matthew 7:3. *"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"* Consider the Contemporary English translation of this verse, *"You can see the speck in your friend's eye, but you don't notice the log in your own eye."* We tend to look at smaller sins in others before we consider the bigger sins in our lives. We are all in need of daily sanctification. We need to ask for forgiveness every single day of our life. Many times instead of being humble, admitting our need for forgiveness and asking God in prayer for it, we will look at the sins of others and make harsh assessments of their shortcomings. However, we keep on practicing the things we are doing that are "worse" than what our brother is committing!

How do we get a lenient judgment from Jesus? Be humble, admit our sins, and ask God's forgiveness before we make an assessment of someone else's life. When we look at someone else and how they conduct themselves, we should be very considerate of the idea that there may be things going on in their lives of which we are unaware. We should also remember that we commit sins just as bad or worse than someone else does. Perhaps you never committed adultery like David or had someone killed to cover up your sins. But, if you have ever had a bout with

pride, ego, jealousy, or envy - you are just as big a sinner as David was! Sin is sin! Let us be humble and ask for forgiveness of our sins. Let us not be harsh with someone else's sins. Then, the Lord will be lenient with us.

How much forgiveness do you want the Lord to extend to you? Can we have any influence on how much forgiveness we get? Yes, we can influence the Lord on how much forgiveness we get. I am sure that we all will readily admit that we are in need of forgiveness and we want as much of it as we can get. How do we get Jesus to extend abundant forgiveness? Jesus taught us how to pray in Matthew chapter 6. In His prayer He told us how much forgiveness we can get via the avenue of prayer, "*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*" (Mat. 6:12). Put simply, we are to ask God to forgive us in the same way we forgive others. If we want TOTAL forgiveness of our sins, we must TOTALLY forgive others of the things they do to us. It is that simple! In our Lord's own words we note,

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Mat. 6:14,15)

If you want to be forgiven of things you have done wrong, you must forgive others. If you hold a grudge and will not forgive, God will not forgive you of your wrongs. One might say, "So-in-so treated me so very badly that I just can't forgive them. They don't deserve it!" Ask yourself a simple question, "Did I deserve Jesus dying on a cross for me?" God so loved us that He let Jesus die for us while we were yet sinners. He extended the avenue of forgiveness via the blood of Christ that we did not earn or deserve. He gave it by his mercy and grace. We, too, must extend forgiveness through mercy and grace.

How much mercy do you want in your life when you are judged? Our Lord tells us in the sermon on the mount, "*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy*" (Mat. 5:7). What does mercy mean? Albert Barnes extols that mercy is shown in "those who are so affected by the sufferings of others as to be disposed to alleviate them." If we think of those who are miserable and are in great need and we are emotionally affected by it to the point of helping them, the Lord will, in turn, have compassion on us. He will comfort us in our times of suffering and need.

In conclusion, we are in need of all the help from the Lord in our lives that we can get Him to extend. We can set the standard of 1) how lax a judgment He extends to us by not judging others harshly and getting rid of our sins before we try to help others with theirs, 2) by totally forgiving those who are our "debtors", and 3) by extending abundant mercy. We cannot be like the Pharisee in Luke 18:11-12 and still expect the Lord to extend a lax judgment.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

The Pharisee looked to the sins of others and exalted himself. Instead, he should have looked to his own sins and asked for forgiveness. We further read in verses 13 and 14:

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Rather than be judgmental, the publican was humble, admitted his sins and asked for forgiveness. He went home justified and the Pharisee did not. We must totally forgive others of things they do to us without any hesitation. We cannot hold a grudge and expect to go to heaven. If we want merciful compassion from God, we must abundantly extend it to others. Brothers and Sisters, we must be humble and treat others like we want to be treated if we expect to live eternally with Jesus Christ in Heaven.

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

and remember last month's questions?

1. The church at Laodicea was accused of being "lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold" therefore God would do what? SPIT THEM OUT OF HIS MOUTH (Revelation 3:16)
2. Where was Paul headed when he was involved in a shipwreck? ITALY (Acts 27:1)
3. "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." To what was Jesus referring? A LILY (Matthew 6:28)
4. "It is better to dwell in a corner of a

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housetop than _____" WITH A BRAWLING WOMAN
IN A WIDE HOUSE (Proverbs 21:9)

5. Why did God consume part of the outskirts
of the Israelites' camp with fire? HE WAS
ANGRY BECAUSE THEY WERE COMPLAINING
(Numbers 11:1)

APOLOGIA

QUESTION: What is the meaning of "judgment" as
it is used in Hebrews 9:27, "*And as it is ap-
pointed unto man once to die, but after this the
judgment?*"

ANSWER: Note other passages where the transla-
tion of this same Greek word for judgment
(κρίσις) results in various shades of meaning.

- Mark 3:29, "*But he that shall blaspheme
against the Holy Ghost hath never for-
givenness, but is in danger of eternal damna-
tion*" (κρίσις, damnation).
- John 3:19, "*And this is the condemnation,
that light is come into the world, and men
loved darkness rather than light, because
their deeds were evil*" (κρίσις, condemna-
tion).
- John 5:24, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you,
He that heareth my word, and believeth on him
that sent me, hath everlasting life, and
shall not come into condemnation; but is
passed from death unto life*" (κρίσις, condem-
nation).
- 2 Peter 2:11, "*Whereas angels, which are*

Gospel Meetings

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
March 1 - 3	Willow Oaks Congregation Russell Springs, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 11 - 15	Owens Road Congregation Prattville, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
March 14 - 17	Junction City Congregation Junction City, KY	Aaron Keeton (West Liberty, KY)
March 18 - 22	Home of Junior Thornton Summit, MS	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 24 - 27	Gilstrap Congregation Morgantown, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
March 29 - 31	Verona Congregation Verona, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 29 - 31	Valley Congregation Valley, AL	Bill Prince, Jr., Chad Prince & Brad Prince

greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord" (κρίσις, accusation)

As noted, the word judgment is exactly the same as damnation, condemnation and accusation. They may be used interchangeably.

Judgment in Hebrews 9:27 does not necessarily refer to a distant judgment day, but may well refer to an immediate judgment and separation at the time of death. In Luke 16:19-31, where reference is made to Lazarus and the rich man, this is precisely how the concept of judgment and condemnation is used.

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