

## “Justice Applied”

Mark 15:16-41

2 Corinthians 5:21

Good Friday

April 14, 2006

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I am about to say some things that I intend to be unnerving, unsettling, hopefully even shocking.

- Can you imagine inviting Mother Theresa to go to a pornographic movie with you?
- Can you imagine forcing a woman who had recently and sadly miscarried to assist in an abortion?
- Can you imagine asking a WWII veteran to desecrate the American flag?

The very ideas are embarrassing or abhorrent to think about.

Those activities are the very antithesis of the character of those people.

We intuitively know that such things would violate them.

Pictures from the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq caused riots in the Islamic world.

I think many Westerners misunderstood why.

Physical torture wasn't the issue; it was humiliation of the worst kind.

It was forcing them to engage in what to them was a violation of what they held sacred; it was a violation of their very being.

What is the most abhorrent thing you can imagine being forced to do?

What could you be forced to say or do that would violate everything you are?

I wish I could leave you with that thought for a minute to really consider it but I must move quickly to the point:

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane before his crucifixion the Bible tells us in Mark 14:33-34, Jesus “ began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,’ he said.”

He said, “My soul is overwhelmed...”

This was his essential nature, his being, his mind and emotions. He was deeply distressed.

The words (Ekthambeisthai) mean to be “in the grip of shuddering horror in the face of a dreadful prospect.” (Cranfield, St. Mark, 432)  
 Troubled means to be in anguish or as Jesus said it, “overwhelmed with sorrow.”

What troubled Jesus so much?

Following Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” and many before him, we are inclined to think that Jesus’ dread was of the physical ordeal he was about to endure.

But I am certain that there were two other factors that weighed much more heavily on Jesus that night and the following day.

**The first is this: Jesus was about to become sin for us.**

2 Corinthian 5:21 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us.”

Before Jesus could pay the penalty for the sins of his people, he had to take that sin upon himself.

Our sin became his sin.

He became **guilty** of our mistreatment of others, our disregard of God, our jealousies, our pride, our hurtful words and our shameful deeds.

**He** became the murderer, the adulterer, the deceiver, the slanderer, the thief, the cheat, and the child-molester.

**He** took on the **guilt** of my sinful thoughts, my failure to obey, my lovelessness, my anger, my pride, and all the rest.

Every sin you and I who belong to him, ever committed or ever will commit, he took on himself that day.

We have seen what our sins do – we have seen the destructive power they have.

We have watched our sin hurt others and reduce others.

We have experienced the shame of our sins – we know the ugliness of them.

As one man wrote of it, “Jesus took on the deformity, the abomination, and the soul-destroying power of sin itself. (Krummacher, *The Suffering Jesus*, 109)

It was bad enough for the Holy Son of God to observe sin in others; it was another for him to experience it subjectively – he became that sin in all its hideousness.

Now back to where I began, could anything be more abhorrent than for the holy God to become unholy, for the sinless God to become sin, or for the righteous Lord to become unrighteous?

Habakkuk 1:13 says, “Your eyes (God) are too pure to look on evil...”

When Jesus was on earth, he wept over the affects of sin.

Is it any wonder that now he was “deeply distressed and troubled?”

He who knew no sin, **became** sin for us.

**Not only did he become sin for us but also secondly he willingly accepted the wrath of God against that sin.**

In his Gospel, Mark records only one sentence by Jesus during the entire crucifixion: Mark 15:34 “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”

The Bible says he cried it out in a loud voice.

Can you imagine the surprise to those standing around; Jesus has been quiet so long, has said so little, and then he cries out.

Is God the Son forsaken by the Father?  
Can it be?

Instead of the oneness of the Father, Son and Spirit, Jesus is alone.  
He who is the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased,  
is now the culprit, the child of wrath, the damned.

You read the story of a war-ravaged country and hear of a child being  
torn from the arms of its mother.

You can only imagine the grief of the mother and the terror of  
the child.

Well imagine not that the child is torn from the unwilling arms of the  
mother but is instead willingly given up for the sake of others.

Now try to imagine the grief of the mother and the anguish of  
the child.

God is absolutely clear:

- Romans 3: “The wages of sin is **death**.
- Ezekiel 18: “The soul that sins will **die**.
- Romans 1: “The **wrath** of God abides on all unrighteousness.
- Isaiah 59:2 “But your iniquities have **separated you** from your  
God; your sins have **hidden** his face from you...”

The just judgment of God against the sins of his people is poured out  
on his own son instead of us.

Jesus, the only one who ever lived wholly to do the will of the  
Father, is now suffering total alienation from the Father not for  
his own sin, but for ours.

Before the creation of the world, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
determined that because of his great love for us, God would suffer  
the degradation of our sin and the judgment of his own wrath against  
our sin so that we might be reconciled to God.

It’s called atonement – It is how God could remain just, fully punishing  
sin and still justify us sinners.

800 years before the fact Isaiah told us: Isaiah 53:5 “But he (God) was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him any by his wounds we are healed.”

It makes possible God’s forgiveness of us but it is NOT cheap forgiveness.

This is forgiveness based on the guilt and punishment for our sins against God and each other being fully borne by another – by our Savior, Jesus.

- And so we who trust in Jesus are declared “not guilty” – Jesus has borne our guilt.
- And we who trust in Jesus are declared no longer under condemnation – Jesus has borne the wrath of God.
- And we who trust in Jesus are declared righteous, okay with God, included, accepted, loved, cherished, and his children forever.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”