No Justice, No Peace

There is much said, many slogans, and signs attempting to address the turmoil in our country. Some calling for action, promoting a movement, or expressing frustration with the current condition. One sign in particular caught my attention, "No Justice, No Peace." That phrase has a lot of truth to it so in this article, we want to define the terms "justice" and "peace" and how they are established between us and our fellowman, but also between man and God.

Justice is defined as fairness; that which is right, and righteous. A just and fair law will treat everyone equally, reward the law abiding, and punish the law breaker. These are the ideals expressed in the Bible. Romans 13.1-4 teaches us to be subject to the governing authorities and those authorities are to punish the disobedient. They are "God's minister" to execute wrath. A problem man often has is defining and understand what is just and fair. From time to time, laws are enacted which are unjust and unfair. While growing up in the West End of Louisville, my family would occasionally go to an amusement park called "Fountain Ferry." However, black people were not allowed to enter until sometime after 1964. Was this fair or just?

Our concept of justice and fairness comes from the Bible. **'You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 'You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 19:35- 36)** A pound is the same no matter what your skin color, sex, or social standing. It is unjust to change the weights and measurements in order to charge more than others. Six of the 10 Commandments deal with man's treatment of his fellowman. Justice and fairness is do not kill, not bear false witness, not covet your neighbor's good, and so on. If everyone obeyed God's word then everyone would be just.

However, in the absence of justice we have enmity and strife. Peace is the freedom from disturbance, for soundness, and healthy relationships. Some see the lack of justice in people killing one another, stealing, and hurting each other. God's purpose in His law is to be just and thus the result will be peace.

"**Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1:17)** In seeking justice one will learn to do good, to stand against the lawless, and help the misfortunate.

But man finds trouble in determining what is just and how to have peace. Recently a movement has started to "defund the police". But will simply ignoring crimes create peace? Will allowing lawlessness make people be fairer to each other? I submit the opposite will happen.

In order to have true justice we must understand God's justice. The Bible affirms the very essence of God is justice. "**Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me**." **(Isaiah 45:21)** God does not lie, He is impartial, etc. Let no man ever accuse God of these things.

God's law is also just. "**The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether**." **(Psalms 19:8).** We may not like a particular law such as the speed limit or a no parking sign but we cannot violate it without repercussions, i.e. a ticket. The same goes for God's law. There may things God does not allow or He demands that we might not understand or agree with but that does not mean we can violate His word at our discretion. "**Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge." (James 4:11)** We are not to judge of the law but be subjects to it.

Romans 3.23 says we have all violated God's law; none of us are perfect. Romans 6.23a says the penalty for such violations is death. One thing God's perfect law has that man's law is grace. The Law or Christ contains God's grace to mankind. "**For the law was given through Moses, but grace and**

truth came through Jesus Christ.” (**John 1:17**)

Only in and through Christ can we have peace with God. The very message proclaimed by the heavenly host to the shepherds in the fields on the night of Jesus' birth was **"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2.14)** The peace being proclaimed was between man and God.

However, through Christ man can have peace with his fellow man. "**For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace." (Ephesians 2:14-15)** In Christ the partition between Jews and Gentiles, and the Old Law was gone. Also gone is the distinction between slave or free man, black or white, rich or poor.

Unfortunately, I have not heard a solution to the enmity and strife in our country. That answer is more teaching from the Bible. I have not heard our national leaders say we need more preaching, or calls for repentance. Such if did occur it would be met with ridicule but the way to justice and peace is through Christ. – Dennis Tucker