

still waters

home church studies

psalm 5.1-8

[Worship]

1 Give ear to my words, O LORD; give heed to my sighing.
2 Listen to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you I pray. 3 O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I plead my case to you, and watch. 4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil will not sojourn with you. 5 The boastful will not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. 6 You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful. 7 But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house, I will bow down toward your holy temple in awe of you. 8 Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me.

galatians 2.19 & 21

[Think & Pray...]

For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. . .

I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

Consider:

We love law. After all, it is what keeps us honest--working together in a spirit of fairness. Without it there would be anarchy.

Interestingly, the descriptive, terms for heresy means to depart from the commonly agreed upon orthodoxy--the conventional, mutually accepted beliefs, standards, and norms, that we all adhere to, and understand in order to act morally within our shared culture. We have come to believe that heresy is a departure from the law.

In our Psalm this week, we have another pleading with God to uphold the Psalter because he is good, assured of God's mercy toward him. But he ascribes hatred to those "evildoers" (or "heretics") who "lie and boast" and are his enemies. Are they law breakers? Heretics? And what "laws" do they break?

Good questions, but what about Jesus?

In our gospel text, Jesus (a heretic Himself) reaches beyond just *law-keeping*, to a higher Way, that of senseless mercy, and in so doing, He forces us to wrestle with a dilemma; What is Justice in light of Mercy? Is it God's morality to just keep the orthodoxy, or to find the way, at all costs, to reach beyond law to a place where there truly is nether Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; Where our Pharisaical personal rightness is superseded by a deliberate refusal to ascribe justified hatred, opting for unjustified mercy.



Are you justified because you have obeyed the orthodoxy (reflected by a very little love toward those who are not like you), or do you have a sober judgment of yourself in true appreciation of a very big dept cancellation--exhibited by a very heretical mercy, love, and appreciation, for those God loves? Have you just been religiously right, or sacrificially--*heretically*--reaching to love with senselessly mercy?

Incidentally, Jesus and this woman are both heretically reaching to save a learned Pharisee from the death of personal religious correctness.

In God's holy perfection, He is not wringing His hands trying to figure out how to be Just *and* Merciful to His world. In our humanity and sinfulness, we do... Let's try to think in His terms; let's rethink the term Gospel...

galatians 2.15-21

[The Scripture]

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 16 yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. 17 But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! 18 But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. 19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; 20 and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.