

God's Holy Dilemma

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-5 Kelly: Children@Risk. Strike Out Slavery. R&R/Women's Min. (Jessica, Mom's on a Mission)
- B. Slide6 Harvest Crusade this weekend.
- C. Slide7 Children's ministry volunteers Sun&Wed. Teachers, assistants, support staff (eg. greeters, playground, snack attendants) are needed. See Tony & Jasmine info booth.
- D. Slide8 Care Ministry: if you know someone who is housebound, sick, recovering from surgery, or are limited by a disability in our area. Our Care Ministry would love to reach out to them. Please contact Cindy's email.

II. Slide9 Intro: God's Holy Dilemma

- A. Here we have a struggle between what Yahweh **ought to do** because of His righteousness; & what He **cannot do** because of His love.
 - 1. How does this all work/balance? Justice/mercy? God of love/God of judgment? If God is so loving, why doesn't He just forgive us? Isn't there a big diff between the God of the OT & the God of the NT? Was there an extreme God make-over? Did He get counsel from the arch angels, look, love is going to be a big deal in the future. The Beatles are going to come along & sing All you Need is Love. [Nope, God is exactly the same]
- B. How many of you like watching Action films? 007, the Jason Bourne trilogy, or Taken, or Mission Impossible? (heathens!)
 - 1. When you're watching the end, what do you want to happen to the bad guy? Not just catch, but die. Not just die accidentally, getting hit by a bus. But that he would be caught, know that he's going to die, then die a slow death, suffering all the way, then die...to pay for his crime.
 - 2. We all yearn for justice.
 - a) Mercy is a problem...it sets aside the law that you broke.
 - b) In every religion but 1, mercy happens at the expense of justice (by definition).

(1) You'd love the judge to show you *mercy* & let you go on your speeding ticket...but you wouldn't appreciate the judge showing *mercy* to the man who raped your sister.

- c) Only in the *Christian faith* does God exercise His mercy, *not at the expense of justice* but *through* it. Thus the justice of the cross, where *the price is paid* for what was done wrong. *God upheld His justice & extends His mercy.*

III. Slide10a **DIVIDED HEARTS** (Ch.10)

A. Slide10b **HALF HEARTED** (1-11)

B. (1) NLT *How prosperous Israel is - a luxuriant vine loaded with fruit. But the richer the people get, the more pagan altars they build.*

1. Prosperity isn't always healthy, especially if the heart isn't in the right place.

C. Slide10c **What was wrong w/Israel?** 4 things:

1. She tried to **serve 2 masters** (2)

- a) [lit.] *Their heart was divided in loyalty.* Fickle.

2. She **lied to God** (3,4)

- a) NLT *They spout empty words and make covenants they don't intend to keep. So injustice springs up among them like poisonous weeds in a farmer's field. People couldn't trust one another & few kept their promises; therefore, they had to sue one another to get what they deserved.*

- b) The people's **lack of respect for the Lord** was illustrated by their **lack of regard for legal agreements** they made with **each other**.

3. She **worshiped idols** (5,6)

4. Their **hearts were hard & needed plowing up** (11)

- a) Haven't we been guilty of the same 4?

D. Slide10d (9) **The days of Gibeah** – Judges 19-21. **A reference to the awful sins of the men of Gibeah & the tragic civil war that followed.** One of the darkest days for Israel.

1. Gibeah (a town occupied by tribe of Benjamin); in the days of the Judges.
A Levite on a trip w/his concubine; stopped in Gibeah for a night. A man took

them in. A band of **depraved youth** came to the door demanding the Levite man (to have him sexually). In the end the **concubine** was sent out to the men to use her all night. She stumbles back to the door...& is found dead in the door step in the morning. The man took her home w/him & she chopped her up & sent a piece of her to the 12 tribes (obviously for shock value). It worked, the 11 tribes came together against Benjamin & a Civil War ensued, almost to the demise of the tribe of Benj.

- E. (11) Israel was *like a heifer* that enjoys treading out the grain because she can eat & work at the same time.
1. But now God would make her *yoke hard, her burden heavy*, as He fitted her for *the Assyrian yoke*.
- F. Slide11a SOW & REAP PRINCIPLE (12-15)
- G. (12) Sow, reap, fallow ground, rain.
- H. Fallow ground – is land that has lain idle & becomes hard & full of weeds.
1. The plow of conviction must 1st break up our hard hearts. Then the seed of *the Word* can be planted. Next, the gracious rain will be sent from heaven.
 2. Is He not *the Lord of the compost heap*, who can take our garbage & turn it into good soil & ultimately bring forth fruit & beauty in full measure?
- I. (13) Job 4:8 *Those who plow iniquity & sow trouble reap the same.*
1. We go out looking for the pleasures of sin, & always end up in someone's backyard feeding swine.
 2. We know the outcome of the story of the **prodigal**, yet we venture there anyway???
- J. Slide11b NLT *I said, Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you. But you have cultivated wickedness and harvested a thriving crop of sins.*

IV. Slide12a THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD (Ch.11) *Father, Father, Father*

- A. Slide12b THE ADOPTIVE PARENT (1,2)

B. **Out of Egypt I called My son** - Hosea was writing of God's calling **Israel** out of **Egypt** into the **Exodus**.

1. **Israel was God's chosen son by adoption** (Ex. 4:22,23 *Then you* (Moses) *will tell him* (Pharaoh), *This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son. I commanded you, Let my son go, so he can worship me.*)
2. But then in Mt.2:14,15 it says, *That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: "I called my Son out of Egypt.*
 - a) Matthew, gave new understanding to these words. He viewed this experience as **Messiah** being identified with the **nation**. In both cases the descent into Egypt was to *escape danger*, and the return was important to the nation's *providential history*.
3. Romans 8:15 *you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father. Praise is the language of sinners set free.*

C. (2) NLT *But the more I called to him, the farther he moved from me.*

D. **Slide12c THE TENDER FATHER** (3-4)

- E. In love He delivered a child from Egypt, carried him, fed him, & taught him to walk and work...and that child abandoned Him for idols. What ingratitude. (www)
- F. (4) A considerate master lifts the yoke from the neck of the beast that he might eat more comfortably.
 1. If we **obey not** the **gentile drawings of His love**, He will send **affliction** to drive us into *closer intimacy w/Himself*.

G. **Slide12d THE REBELLIOUS SON** (5-9)

H. **What do we do with rebellious children?** Pray!

- I. (7) *Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him for the life of your young children.* Lam.2:19
 1. Max Lucado says, *to raise our children in a greenhouse of prayer.*
 2. He says, Dads, we can do this. **We can be loyal advocates, stubborn intercessors.** We can take our **parenting fears** to Christ. In fact, if we don't, we'll take our fears out on our kids. **Fear turns some parents into paranoid**

prison guards who monitor every minute, check the background of every friend. They stifle growth and communicate distrust. A family with no breathing room suffocates a child.

3. **On the other hand**, fear can also create **permissive parents**. For fear that their child will feel too confined or fenced in, they lower all boundaries. **High on hugs and low on discipline**. They don't realize that appropriate discipline is an expression of love. **Permissive parents**. **Paranoid parents**. **How can we avoid the extremes? We pray.**

4. Prayer is the saucer into which parental fears are poured to cool. His big message to moms and dads...**Bring** your children to me. Raise them in a greenhouse of **prayer**.

J. (8) **Admah & Zeboiim** were cities destroyed w/Sodom & Gomorrah. Deut.29:23

1. God could not stand to treat Israel, the people He loved, like He had treated Admah & Zeboiim, even though Israel's behavior resembled theirs.

K. **Slide13** Here we have God's Holy Dilemma.

1. A struggle between what Yahweh **ought to do** because of **His righteousness**; & what He **cannot do** because of **His love**.

2. **How does this all work?** Justice/mercy? God of love/God of judgment? **If God is so loving my doesn't He just forgive us?**

L. When someone speaks the words to you ***I love you***, they only mean something if that persons knows you!

M. **Slide14a** **Read the lyrics** from a group of contemporary philosophers, *Black Eyed Pea's*, ***Where is the love***. (Justin Timberlake helped write)

1. People killin', people dyin' - Children hurt and you hear them cryin'
Will you practice what you preach? - And would you turn the other cheek
Father, father, father, help us - Send some guidance from above
These people got me, got me questionin' - ***Where is the love?***

2. I feel the weight of the world on my shoulder - As I'm getting older, people are getting colder. **Most of us only care about money-makin'** - **Selfishness got us followin' the wrong direction**. Wrong information always shown by the media -

Negative images is the main criteria. Infecting the young minds faster than bacteria - Kids wanna act like what they see in the cinema.

3. Whatever happened to the values of humanity?
Whatever happened to the fairness and equality?
Instead of spreadin' love we spreadin' animosity
Lack of understandin' leading us away from unity. (*than the kicker*)
4. Slide14b The **truth** is kept secret - it swept under the rug.
If you've never known **truth**, then you've never known **love**. (absolutely correct)
 - a) If you've never known **truth** you've never known **love**. *I love you* is only meaningful when the person speaking it *knows the real you*. This is precisely how **God loves us**. True love doesn't exist in the *absence* of judgment but only *in its presence*. (pause)

N. Slide15a Now a few words about Justice. Michael Ramsden said, we all yearn for Justice. When **Justice** collapses, **hope** collapses.

1. When Justice collapses it breeds *despair* in a nation, or in your life (*i.e.* a breakdown in lawlessness, law).
2. *Despair runs deep and strong*. That's why every **victim** cries out for **Justice**. Everyone wants it, when they have been wronged. *Though it's much different if we were the one who did the wronging*.
3. **Illustration**: your car gets keyed out in our lot this morning. You find out that our camera's picked it up & we have video. Then watching you know who it is, it's your neighbor! (he's always had it in for you). Then the next day you invite him over for coffee, you sit down with him & say I want to play you something (cue the tape).
 - a) **Now**, how are you feeling when you press play? How do you feel if you're the person who keyed the car & thought you got away from it? **See**, it depends what side of this you are personally on. [ever get angry when you've been caught?]
 - b) **Now**, what side of the law are **you** standing on if **you're** upset when you hear *God is going to judge the world?*

O. Slide15b We get confused or forget **why** we have **Justice** in our western world. There are 3 theories behind the theory of justice, especially it's punishment:

1. **Retribution** – the criminal should get what he/she deserves.
2. **Rehabilitation** – you make them better.
3. **Deterrence** – punishment is to deter other people from doing the same thing.
 - a) **Slide15c** CS Lewis said, *“you cannot build an adequate theory of justice, on **deterrence and rehabilitation**. It’s only because we have inherited biblically the idea of **retribution**, that if you’ve done something wrong, a price should be paid.”*
4. **Slide15d** We have a system called **jurisprudence** where we have **3 key principles**:
 - (1) you only punish the guilty (2) the punishment shall be proportional to the crime. (3) it should be equitable, you treat all people the same.

P. **Slide16a** Don’t miss **Gods heart** for the backslidden (8b)

1. **Sympathy/compassion**, which is a compound word (to make **a moral judgment** on something. **Then** to be moved to the deepest core of your being to **do something** about it)
 - a) If you're **not** moved to **do anything** about it, it is just **morality**.
 - b) **Slide16b** God was **moved** by our sin to the depth of His being **and** He **did** something about it...**it was the Cross**. **Justice is fulfilled**. **Mercy is extended**.

Q. (9) **The Holy One in your midst** – They were sinning against a flood of light.

1. When you & I sin today...how much light are we sinning against? (compare to people groups w/o the word of God)
2. **What light source would you compare it to?** (If **Israel** was sinning against a **flashlight**, **then we** are sinning against **a lightning flash**)

R. **FUTURE RESTORATION** (10,11)

S. This roar was a good roar.