

Mercy and Truth; Righteousness and Peace

Psalms 85:10

"Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other," (Psalms 85:10).

As the diligent student reads through the Word of God and devotes attention to various passages, it becomes clear that God has linked certain things together. Once we understand this, we shouldn't have any trouble realizing that man has no business tampering with or unconnecting things God has put together. As in marriage, so with other things God has put together: "...what God has joined together, let not man separate," (Matt. 19:6).

Notice some things God has put together: Faith is expressed by works of obedience (Jas. 2:14-26); Love is manifested through obedience (Jno. 14:15); Christ is the Head of His church (Eph. 5:23); and Reverence toward deity is displayed through acts of worship (Jno. 4:24). These are things God has put together.

And, in Psalms 85:10, "mercy and truth have met together," and "righteousness and peace" are likewise joined. What do these connections tell us about the person of Deity?

It is a mistake to regard God as a multi-personality being. When we study His attributes and characteristics, there may be a tendency to divide the Supreme Person of Deity into "blocks" of character - His power, then (separate from that), His love, etc. But this isn't the way God is. He is a unified whole person, each attribute connected to the other.

God's truth and mercy are compatible. That means, there is nothing about God's origination and His revelation of truth that interferes with His mercy. Both are part of the whole character of God. Likewise, His righteousness and peace enjoy perfect harmony.

It follows - if someone suggests that there is some sort of conflict between God's mercy and God's truth, that suggestion ought to be quickly rejected. All theories, doctrines or arguments which array one quality of God against another are in error, regardless of the debater, the cause or the consequence.

For instance, the mercy of God which brings about pardon for sin is wrought through the message, the gospel of Christ. God's mercy is active in forgiving us, but this mercy is executed through the message, the truth of the gospel. No conflict!

Also, the demands of God's perfect righteousness were met by the Savior's meritorious death, "the righteous for the unrighteous." As a result, sinners can be reconciled to God, thus "making peace." [1 Pet. 3:18; Eph. 2:14-22] In the gospel plan of salvation, revealed in the New Testament of Jesus Christ, there is "Mercy and Truth" meeting each other, and righteousness and peace kissing each other.

But perhaps you've heard something like this: I know what the truth (of God's Word) says, but I believe mercy demands that we tolerate violation. This pits mercy against truth; it actually places mercy above truth. Objecting to the application of truth on grounds of mercy is not plausible! Objecting to righteousness on grounds of peace is likewise invalid. In God's person and in God's perfect revelation, mercy and truth meet; righteousness and peace kiss.

It is commendable to "pursue peace with all people," but the same verse says we must also pursue "holiness, without which no one will see the Lord," (Heb. 12:14). Christians are to "be diligent to be found by Him in peace," but the same verse adds: "without spot and blameless," (2 Pet. 3:14). The "wisdom that is from above is" peaceable but it is "first pure," (Jas. 3:17). It is a mistake, therefore, to isolate peace from other virtues and qualities and build some kind of "loop-hole" or permissive argument on the grounds of peace alone!

"Affection" and "mercy" motivates us to be likeminded (Phil. 2:1-2), but we are warned not to boast or lie against the truth (Jas. 3:14).

The truth and love of Christ motivates us to "glorify God for His mercy ... But in every nation who ever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him," (Rom. 15:9; Acts 10:35).

The God who made us and who is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth," (Ex. 34:6).

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