

Think about it! (3)

It seems that Justice is not at its best right now. Well, how much confidence do you have in your country's justice system? I'm reminded of the image that we've all seen – at least in films, if not in real life – of Justice portrayed as a woman, blindfolded, and with a set of scales in one hand and a sword in the other. The blindfold seems particularly poignant – although it's supposed to represent what Justice ought to be: impartial, seen from a somewhat more cynical perspective (and understandably so) it might come across, rather, as an unintended mocking of Justice as actually being blind! After all, who really believes that Justice is exactly the same for rich and poor alike – that money makes no difference whatsoever?! No, there have been (and still are) too many cases of flagrant inequalities, 'bought privileges' and judges who are either incompetent or, worse still, lacking in integrity, etc.

Imagine a judge presiding in a trial in which a woman is accused of a long list of serious crimes; and that, in spite of a whole file full of all kinds of evidence against the accused, she is acquitted or given a laughably light sentence (that is, if such a situation could ever be described as 'laughable'); and then imagine that it were to come to light that the judge and the accused woman were lovers! I suppose it's just about conceivable that people might understand the judge's natural feelings and his personal dilemma, but I somehow doubt that that would lessen the public outcry!

But, strange as it may seem, behaviour that almost nobody would ever accept in a judge, almost everybody expects of God! They expect him to forgive those who are guilty (and which of us is not guilty when judged by his higher law?) and not to punish them, because of his love for them! In other words, whereas we would never accept a judge's love as an excuse for not doing his duty, that is exactly what we expect of the one who, as well as being the God who is love, is the absolutely just Judge (with a capital 'J!'), before whom all of us are going to have to appear, sooner or later.

The Christian message (the real one!) is not that God sacrifices his justice on the altar of his love, but that God brought both things (his perfect justice and his perfect love) together, in the death of his own Son on the Cross. There "steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other" (Psalm 85:10), "so that he [God] might be just and [at the same time] the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). Thanks to Christ crucified, we who are guilty can be acquitted!

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