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What We Believe – part 6

The nature of God

We believe there is only one true God who is the eternal King, Creator and Redeemer of all that is. He has revealed Himself to be eternally self-existent – one being in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He is the almighty Creator, Savior and Judge, who sustains and governs all things according to His sovereign will for His own glory. He is perfectly holy, just, loving, and truthful.

Recap:

The nature of God

We started by looking at the four basic descriptions and definitions we have in the Word of who God is in His own essential nature and being.

- A. God is Spirit**
- B. God is Light**
- C. God is Love**
- D. God is a Consuming Fire**

Attributes of God

Attributes are the characteristics or qualities belonging to a person. Thus, when we speak of the attributes of God, we mean those characteristics or qualities that belong to God as God, that make God who and what He is.

The attributes of God fall into two main groupings: essential and moral.

Essential attributes are those attributes or qualities that essentially belong to God. They are characteristics of God that make God who He is.

Essential Attributes

- 1. God is not created.**
- 2. God is Eternal**
- 3. God is Immutable (not changing)**
- 4. God is Omnipotent (universal power)**
- 5. God is Omnipresent (God is all-present, not limited by space or time)**
- 6. God is Omniscient (all knowing)**

Now this brings us to the

Moral Attributes

Moral attributes are those characteristics or qualities that belong to God especially in relation to His creatures.

These attributes are also those that God intends for us to strive to possess and thus they are called communicable or transmittable attributes.

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

1. Perfect Holiness

The perfect holiness of God speaks of absolute purity. He cannot sin nor tolerate sin. He is sinless perfection. Holiness is God's inward character and as such it is underived.

He is perfectly holy in all He thinks, says, and does. So, according to how we often define holiness, holiness is not about how you live, but how you live is a result of who you are.

As you pursue Christ, as you become more like Him, you will become Holy.

Leviticus 19:2

“Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, “you shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.”

2. Perfect Righteousness

Righteousness and justice are synonymous.

Kevin Conner defines Righteousness as holiness in action against sin.

The holiness of God demands that sin be judged and the sinner punished.

Such punishment is the righteousness and justice of God in action.

Righteousness is a holy God acting in a just and upright manner towards His creatures.

- This justice is seen in both punishment,

Genesis 2:17

but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

- and reward.

Romans 2:7

to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;

3. Perfect Love

a. The Love of God

Love is the heart of God's nature.

God not only has love, God is love.

This love is not merely an emotion. It is an act of God's will in which He eternally gives Himself.

Now concern the nature of love itself.

1. There must be the lover,
2. There must be the love
3. And there must be the loved.

So love is in of itself triune – it has three components.

So in the Godhead love finds its perfect expression in the

1. The Father (Lover),
2. The Son (Loved), and
3. The Holy Spirit (Love).

In God we have:

The Father who so loved that He gave. (John 3:16; 17:24)

The Son of His love. (Colossians 1:13),

and the love of the Spirit. (Romans 15:30; Galatians 5:22)

What the love of God is not.

- 1 weak and sappy
2. Not without standards.
3. No without accountability
4. Does not mean you can do whatever you want, wherever you want, with no consequences.

b. The Goodness of God

The goodness of God is God's providential care for all His creatures.

Psalm 145:9

*The Lord is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

Psalm 145:15

*The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.*

Psalm 145:16

*You open your hand;
you satisfy the desire of every living thing.*

Mercy vs. Justice

Now I want to give you four quick individual qualities and then tie them together as we finish with look at the concept of mercy and justice in

c. The Grace of God

Grace is the undeserved, unearned and unmerited favor of God bestowed upon sinful men.

(Ephesians 1:2,6,7; 2:5-8; 3:2; 11 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; 11 Thessalonians 3:17-18)

d. The Mercy of God

Mercy is the pity of God upon the miserable condition of the sinner because of sin.

(Ephesians 2:4; James 5:11; Psalm 102:13; Romans 11:30-31; Isaiah 55:7; Luke 1:50,72; Exodus 20:6; Titus 1:4; 1 Timothy 1:2; 11 Timothy 1:2; Psalm 85:10; Luke 6:36; Matthew 5:45; 11 Peter 3:9)

e. The Compassion of God

Compassion is sorrow for the sufferings of another with the urge to help.

Jesus was often moved with compassion in His ministry.

Compassion is pity, sympathy, relating very much to mercy.

(Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 18:27; 15:32; Luke 15:20; Psalm 78:38; 86:15; 145:8; 130:7; 103:8-18)

f. The Kindness of God

Kindness is the gentle benevolence of God.

(Ephesians 2:7; Colossians 3:12; Titus 3:4; Psalm 31:21; Isaiah 54:8,10; Joel 2:13)

4. Perfect Faithfulness

The perfect faithfulness of God means that God is absolutely trustworthy, loyal, reliable and true to His Word.

His Word is truth and He is absolutely reliable. (Isaiah 25:1; Deuteronomy 7:9; Isaiah 49:7; Deuteronomy 32:4)

Faithfulness is applied in Scripture to both God and His Word.

God's Word is as sure as Himself. God cannot lie. He is the only true God.

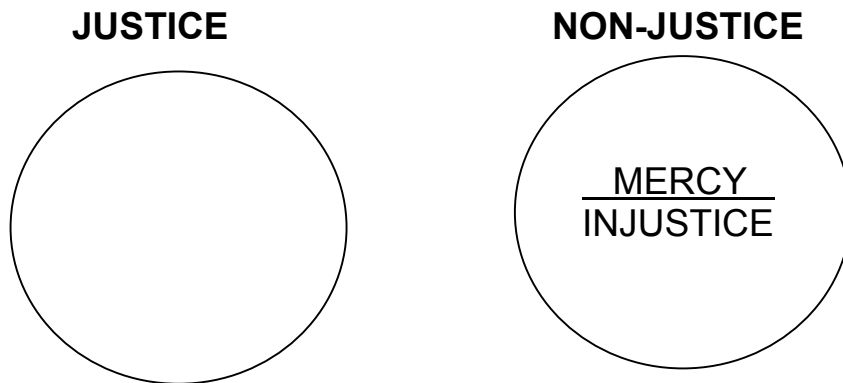
Definition of terms:

Often when we deal with the whole issue of the sovereignty of God, Grace, and Mercy, we get terms and definitions confused.

- Justice is: righteousness, even handedness, fairness
- Non-justice is: everything outside of justice
- Injustice is: unfair, or unjust treatment
- Mercy is: Kindness and forgiveness shown to an offender

Mercy is not justice, but neither is it injustice; it is *non-justice*

Injustice is a bad form of Non-justice.
Mercy is a good form of non-justice.



God never performs an injustice because He is incapable of being bad, however God reserves the right of clemency.

God's mercy is voluntary.
He is obligated to be merciful. Yet He reserves the right to have mercy upon whom He will have mercy.

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a wage.

When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize.

When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award.

But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award—yet receives such a gift anyway—that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace and mercy of God.