

System of Justice

by Jerald Prater

Two weeks ago, a highly publicized case was sent to a jury in Florida. The particulars of the case are available, in varying degrees, all over the internet. In short, a man named George Zimmerman was on trial for 2nd Degree murder of a man named Trayvon Martin. Mr. Zimmerman was claiming self defense in order to justify the fact that he shot Mr. Martin. Early on July 14th, the jury returned a verdict of **Not Guilty**, thereby releasing Mr. Zimmerman and making him a “free man” in the eyes of the law.

Long before the verdict was reached (and even more so afterwards), everyone and their uncle was giving their opinions about justice, race relations, the court system, self defense laws, right to carry concealed weapons laws, as well as opinions about everyone else who was offering an opinion on those same subjects.

After I reflected on all of this, it occurred to me that people (myself sadly included) are very adept at pointing out inequality or unfairness, as long as they are the victims and not the perpetrators.

The scripture talks about several of these topics, as well as the underlying ideals of “fairness” and “justice.”

1. Systems made by man are never going to be perfect, because man is imperfect (Isaiah 55:9). We have, what I consider, to be the finest system of jurisprudence in the world. It is specifically designed to protect the rights of all, even at the possibility of letting guilty people go free. People yell and scream when a verdict or ruling doesn't go their way, often resembling children throwing a temper tantrum. We can all be “unfair.” Do we give God the time He deserves? Do we ever put Him second on our list of priorities? Do we ever take credit for His work? Each one of us has to answer those questions for ourselves. We should know that every good and perfect gift comes from Him (James 1:17). Doing anything that diminishes our belief or respect for that fact is not only “unfair,” but it shows a capacity on our part to be very “unjust.”
2. Judgments we make about others are never going to be perfect, because there is no way we will ever have “all” the information. Investigators, witnesses, forensic evidence, surveillance equipment and modern technology can all work together and make getting away with crime very, very difficult. However, it will never be impossible to break man's law and escape earthly punishment. Only God knows the hearts and every thought of man. Not only does God see every public and private act (Jeremiah 23:24), but He knows the motivation behind all of the things we do and the thoughts we think (Ecclesiastes 12:14).
3. What we truly want from God is mercy. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). And the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). If we were to receive what we “deserve” from the only being capable of perfectly “impartial justice,” we would all be doomed to an eternity of torture in the absence of God. Those of us who believe in God and know of the judgment to come pray that if we follow Jesus, He as our “*perfect high priest*” (Hebrews 4:14) will intercede on our behalf. While it is very easy to want those who “*trespass against us*” dealt with harshly, Jesus teaches us to forgive them, and hopefully, they will forgive us when we have been unjust (Luke 11:4).
4. Ignoring God is as pointless as ignoring the law. The only person you fool is yourself (Galatians 6:7). The criminal who carefully devises a plan to steal millions via electronic theft, the rapist who waits in a dark alley, the man who runs a red light at 2:00 in the morning. . . they all have one thing in common: they don't think they will be caught or have to answer for their crimes. We know that there will be a final judgment (Revelation 20:11-13). In the laws of men, even if you are acquitted of a crime, you could face other repercussions: civil charges (as might happen in. . .

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