

## CHRIST and YOU

If you have ever been asked to think about your need for Christ, you may have asked some of the same questions others have asked under the same circumstances. You may be wondering, “Why was it necessary for Christ to go the cross?” And, “If there is a logical explanation for his suffering that horrible death, what difference does it make to me; what need do I have to submit to the gospel, the word of that cross?”

The answer has to do with law and justice, concepts with which you are already familiar. Law simply defines right and wrong and requires punishment of the law breaker. So, also, with the spiritual law of God (Romans 5:12-14; 6:23). A just God cannot be expected to ignore man’s sin any more than such dishonesty would be tolerable in a court of human law.

Happily, God is also merciful. As David put it in a beautiful psalm, “The LORD is merciful and gracious.... He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities” (Psalms 103:8 10).

At this point, as you think carefully, you are aware of a seemingly insurmountable contradiction. How can God deal justly with sinful mankind while at the same time being merciful and forgiving? If he forgives us of our sins instead of penalizing us with death, he must deny what justice requires. But if he exacts the law’s required penalty for sin, then there would be no mercy and the sinner must die!

This, then, is where the matter comes down to YOU, and to every human being. The only way YOU can satisfy God’s justice is by forfeiture of your own life. But suppose there was one who had no sin of his own. He could offer his life, not for his sins since he would have none, but for yours—assuming he was willing to make such a sacrifice.

Well, there was such a one who was not only willing to die in your place, but actually did so, offering himself to pay the penalty for your sins. That one was Jesus Christ in whose cross the requirement of justice was satisfied and at the same time the mercy of God was extended. As the psalmist put it, “Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed other” (Psalms 85:10). This, friend, is what the Christ of the cross means to YOU. —Jerry F. Bassett