

**“...A paradox, a paradox a most ingenious
paradox...”**

On the 25th December the majority of the Christian world will stop to celebrate the birth of Christ. It is not the intent of this article to argue the veracity of the day but to explain the paradox of justice and mercy meeting at the Cross.

Contradictions seem to abound in our Christian society. A whole nation is up in arms about the death penalty of a convicted drug smuggler but is mute to the thousands of abortions taking place and particularly to those babies born alive after a botched abortion.

Jessica Jane 22 weeks old is such a baby – a perfect tiny baby who was slipped into a dish (where she remained for 80 minutes) crying until she died.

Then we have the family who think they are the family Crusoe alone on an Island demanding an apology from a school principle for mentioning the word “Christmas” too often in a school newsletter.

Innocent people die every minute, people are being raped, murdered, abused continually and racism is being vented in our streets.

No wonder the “Christian’s” belief system is in tatters.

The birth of Christ ushered in hope for all humanity but it is His death, which provides us with life. Yet when we see all the injustice in this world we are confronted with what seems to be a seemingly absurd or contradictory behaviour in Christ’s death on the cross in relation to God’s justice and mercy when in reality, they are in fact a harmonious demonstration of God’s love for all humanity.

Mankind needs to recognise that God does not take any action that violates His code of “morality or justice”. Under His own code of ethics God has to exercise His authority in the maintenance of right.

John Stott in his book *The Essential John Stott* asks, “Why do the wicked flourish and the innocent suffer...so why do we not more frequently see sinners overwhelmed? Instead, more often than not, they seem to escape with impunity. The righteous, on the other hand, is frequently overtaken by disaster. Not only does God not protect them, he does not answer their prayers or seem to care about their fate.”¹

The response to Stott’s question is God’s final judgement (future) and secondly the decisive judgement which took place on the cross. Stott states that what seemed an attitude of indifference (or inaction) in the face of sin “was not moral indifference but personal forbearance until Christ should come and deal with it on the Cross.”²

¹ *The Essential John Stott* p.192

² *The Essential John Stott* p. 193

“...God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public – to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured. This is not only clear, but it’s now – this current history! God set things right. He also makes it possible for us to live in rightness.” (Romans 3: 25-26 Message Bible).

As Christians we should take comfort in the knowledge that God is just, righteous and dispenses discipline with mercy. He is a loving God. We must understand that God’s ways are mysterious and unsearchable. However, He loves us. ³

As can be seen from the Scripture above justice and mercy are not seen as a paradox of meetings at the Cross-but rather juxtaposition. They dwell side by side.

³ John 3: 16