

JUSTICE, MERCY AND GRACE

Can you distinguish between “JUSTICE, MERCY AND GRACE?” Here is a story that may help.

A couple years ago I picked up a junior high home school student to help me on my project of building a log cabin. As Nick and I journeyed to the building sight I was excited and in a hurry. Driving along Highway Q I glanced to the right and I saw her. It was Officer Bailey from our community and she was pulling out of the parking lot I just passed. Letting off the accelerator and looking in the rear view mirror my feelings of foreboding were realized. I could see the lights flash on her patrol car. I was right at my house and I pulled into the driveway with Ms. Bailey pulling in right behind me, lights still flashing. “Is this your home,” she asked. “Yes mam,” I responded. She then proceeded, “Do you know why I pulled you over?” I hung my head said, “I was speeding.”



At this juncture I assigned Nick the duty of fetching water from the house for our trek to the woods. I intended to occupy him—keeping him from the discussion. Before I could say “Jack Frost” Nick was back standing at my side with 2 water bottles eager to see me get my consequences. Then, wouldn’t you know it, at that moment my Mail Lady drops off my mail. “Don’t give him a ticket,” she calls out, “he prays for me.” I was getting more and more embarrassed.

Officer Bailey went to her cruiser, after checking for any warrants for my arrest she handed back my license. In a serious tone she said, “I am NOT going to give you a ticket Mr. Carlson, but I suggest you slow down.” “Yes Mam,” was my reply with a huge smile on my face. She then said, “Just a minute.” She strolled over to her cruiser again and returned with a certificate for a Dilly Bar from our local Dairy Queen. She handed it to Nick.

Justice is a “Ticket”—Getting what I deserved!

Mercy is “No Ticket”—Not getting what I deserved!

Grace is a “Dilly Bar”—Getting what I don’t deserve.

I love James 2:13b “...Mercy triumphs over judgment.” God’s mercy calls us to present our bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). But grace is greater than all: Our salvation (Ephesians 2:8); Our gifting (Ephesians 4:7f); Our strengthening (Hebrews 13:9); and Our Jesus (Titus 2:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:16).

Pastor Eldon Carlson

VCN Midwest/CBNC Networking Director