

# WHEN GOD SEEMS MEAN

ser3958 When God Seems Mean, Pt1  
August 2, 2020 E & L

## I. POINT OF INTRIGUE

**A. Today we launch a new sermon series, “When God Seems Mean.”** Here’s how I’d like us to begin. Let’s look at two instances when God appeared to be mean. Possibly, more accurately worded, “When God appeared to act meanly.” Let’s make the first a **biblical moment** and the second a **personal moment**. Let’s get specific:

1. (First) Isolate a time in the Bible when you feel God was mean, or if you please, seemed unfair. **Take 8 seconds.** (Music bed.)
2. (Second) Isolate a time in your life when you feel God was mean, or if you please, seemed unfair. **Take 8 seconds.** (Music bed.)

**B. Let me give you a few instances in the Bible, which at first, to me, God seemed unfair.**

1. *The Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil.* (If God’s plan is to prosper us and



not harm us—why the tree?) (**Genesis 2:17**) ([show photo, p1](#))

2. Moses, when he was not allowed to cross over into the Promised Land. (Here’s the humblest man on the face of the earth, to whom God speaks face to face; he makes one mistake, and it costs him the Promised Land.) (**Deuteronomy 32:51-52**)
3. Then there’s Jonathan losing the throne because it was ripped from his father, Saul. (Why should he pay for his father’s sin?) (**1 Samuel 31:6**)
4. Uzzah when he was struck dead by God for seeking to steady the Ark of the Covenant when it wobbled. (His concern was the safety of the ark, and it cost him his life.) (**2 Samuel 6:7**)
5. The fig tree that was cursed by Jesus and died because it had no fruit. (God made the tree. Was it the tree’s fault it had no fruit?) (**Matthew 21:18-22**)
6. Ananias and Saphira when they were smitten dead for lying. (Doesn’t that seem harsh? Haven’t we all lied at one time or another?) (**Acts 5:1-10**)
7. An eternal hell for EVERY human being who rejects Christ. (Now, that seems really mean.) (**Matthew 10:28, Mark 9:43**)

On the surface, to me (I’m speaking for myself only although I believe many may feel like me), these actions appear to be harsh, mean, even unfair, by a God who

proposes to be “love.” Let’s look at how God describes Himself in His word, the Bible.

### C. God’s explanation, description of Himself:

1. **1 John 4:7-8 (MEV)** tells us God is love.

<sup>7</sup>\*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God,

and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

**NOTE!** Some translations read, “Dear friends.” To me, “beloved” is a more fitting greeting, for it has strong sentiments and speaks of a deep love, a friendship, far beyond that of an acquaintance or casual relationship.

2. In **Psalm 103**, when King David references the LORD, he says,

<sup>8</sup>The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

**D. How do we reconcile, in our minds, a God who says He is love and at the same time appears to be mean and unfair?**

**E. Let’s pray.**

## II. RECONCILING A GOD OF LOVE AND HOLINESS WITH A HOLY GOD OF JUSTICE

**A. Let me begin by saying that most of us could put together an apologetic defending or explaining God’s actions in all eight of the scenarios I mentioned.** Furthermore, if we were to tell *our story* of how we think God was mean or unfair to us, guaranteed, others would have an explanation of why God did or allowed, such and such to happen to us.

Look at Job’s friends. They sat with him for seven days without saying a word. Then they lambasted him, finding a reason, or should I say reasons, why God took everything from him. But...they were wrong. What I am saying is, we can find ways to appease (not necessarily wholly satisfy) our “questions” concerning God, but our answers may not be correct because we are not God.

**B. How about I share a human story to make a spiritual point?**

My father was one of the most integrous men I have ever known. When Jesus referred to Nathaniel, He said of him, “Here is a man in whom there is no guile.” Or, as another translation puts it, “in whom there is no deceit.” My father never treated anyone unfairly, and if you needed a helping hand, no matter who you were, he was there. He installed PA systems in many churches in South Jersey, often using his own money for churches that couldn’t afford one.

Although not tall (standing 5’ 8”), ([show photo, p5](#)) he was as strong as an ox, could outwork any 18 or 28-year-

old, and never took as much as an aspirin his entire life until ... we'll get there.

Every day, I watched him begin his day reading the Bible and kneeling to pray. When the church doors were open, we were there. When we were on vacation, my father would drive around on a Saturday night and find a church that we would attend Sunday morning.

He had one of the most cognitive minds I have ever known. He didn't go to college, but he could solve any math problem my sister or I brought home. I recall, on one occasion, Sandy couldn't figure out an algebra equation. Pop worked with her and came up with the answer. When Sandy got to school the next day, her teacher was amazed at how she had arrived at the correct answer, stating, "I'm not sure how you got that answer, but it is correct." LOL! That was my dad. I could go on, but I believe you get the picture.

When Pop was 82, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. By the time he was 85, he couldn't write out a check, would show up on a Tuesday on the Church campus, wondering why we weren't having service. Wasn't it the Lords' Day?



I recall visiting Mom and Dad at the house, and Pop would be asleep in his favorite chair, with his Bible open, upside down.

Then the day came when we had to put him in a home; he was too strong and too cantankerous for Mom to control. My mother, Sandy, and I took turns visiting every day. Eventually, he didn't speak. He just stared at us.

All I prayed for was that God would let Pop pass in his sleep, reading the Bible in his favorite chair. It never happened.

I remember the day I visited; it was December 21. When I left the hospital, I called Sheryl and said, "Pops a breath away from heaven." He went to his heavenly home the next day at 4:20 am.

Recall, all I asked God for was to let Pop pass in his sleep reading the Bible in his favorite chair. It never happened.

### **III. RECONCILING A GOD OF LOVE AND HOLINESS WITH A HOLY GOD OF JUSTICE**

#### **A. Here's the reality:**

1. We are not God.
2. His thoughts are not our thoughts.
3. His ways are not our ways.

In the *Love Chapter*, the Spirit of God, speaking through the Apostle Paul, tells us, "Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

(1 Corinthians 13:12)

**Let's continue.**

4. How can sinful man understand the ways of a holy and just God?
5. Scripture tells us, "The wicked do not understand justice."
6. Here's the truth about justice: "The day you eat of the Tree in the Center of the Garden, you will surely die." (Genesis 2:17)
7. "The wages of sin is death" (Roman 6:23) ... but. We'll get to that in a moment.

**B. Here's the reality—who are we to ask God:**

1. What is just and unjust?
2. What is right and wrong?
3. What is fair or unfair?
4. What is appropriate or inappropriate punishment?
5. What is reasonable and unreasonable?
6. What we will and will not accept in the Bible?

7. When does the clay say to the potter, "Why did you make me this way?" (show photo)



8. Do we want to be rebuked like Job and his friends? Do we want God to say to us, "*Brace yourself, Bruce, and tell Me if you can explain to Me the Universe and all its workings, and all that it contains?*"
9. It's one thing to be embarrassed by a fellow human being; it's still another thing to be embarrassed by God.
10. So, when we don't understand why God allows things to happen that appear mean and unfair, REST IN THIS:

**Psalm 103 (NKJV)**

- <sup>9</sup> He will not always accuse, neither will He keep His anger forever.
- <sup>10</sup> He does not treat us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- <sup>11</sup> For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
- <sup>12</sup> as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

<sup>13</sup> Like a father shows compassion to his children,  
so the LORD gives compassion to those who fear Him.

<sup>14</sup> For He knows how we are formed;  
He remembers that we are dust.

<sup>17</sup> But the mercy of the LORD  
is from everlasting to everlasting  
upon those who fear Him,  
and His righteousness to children's children



**C. If you still can't trust God, consider this (show picture of the Cross)—when there is NO OTHER explanation to life, look to the Cross.** What more could God do, what more could God say, to show you that you are loved and that His mercy is greater than what you don't understand, that His mercy is greater than your sin?

Here's the bottom line—God is so far beyond an answer.

#### IV. Invitation

The outstanding question is: Will we enter into His mercy or remain in our pride? One grants us "salvation," the other "damnation." The CHOICE is ours. Say "yes," to salvation. Here's how:

**Admit**- your sins have separated you from God.  
(Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3: 23);

**Believe** – that God did something about your sins through Jesus Christ. (The final Pascal Lamb/Messiah.)  
(Lev 17:10; Heb 9: 19-22);

**Commit** – yourself to His righteousness by confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior. (Isa 53:5; Col 1:22);

**Do it today!** (Isa 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2).

Father in Heaven, I'm sorry for the things I've done that are wrong: I am a sinner; forgive me. Thank You for loving me and sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for my sin. Holy Spirit, come into my heart; Jesus be my Lord and Savior. I give You my life. Amen.

ser3958, *When God Seems Mean* (When God Seems Mean, Pt1) 1818 words (approximately 14 minutes with Invitation and no HG detours. © )