

STRANGER THING  
[written in oral form]

Deut. 10:12-19  
2019

September 29,

[A social justice exercise: People are separated in 4 class groups]

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I am not sure I can do "justice" to this justice passage.

I think the 18th century revivalist, preacher, Jonathan Edwards, could better bellow out this message. His most famous sermon is "Sinners in the hands of an angry God."

I do not resonate with his theology, but his tone would fit with this text.

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Verse 12 gets our attention -- "What Does God require of you?"

We better take heed.  
An extremely important lesson is about to be presented.

The demand begins with the warning, "Fear God!" This reminds us how important it is to know what God requires, because we better fear God.

I do not think our fear should be as prey before a predator.  
But rather, a humble acknowledgement that God is all powerful, and demands our dedication, commitment and total respect.

Subsequently, we would be wise to listen and obey.

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Next, we are told to walk / live in God's ways.  
God's ways? ??? We better know what this means.

There is insight about this, later on.  
We are to love God, and to serve God with all our heart and soul.

We are to keep God's commandments, and the **decree** commanded, and soon to be presented, in this text, which is the insight to God's way.

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There is another warning that states, for our own well being, we would be wise to heed God's requirements.

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Before the revelation, we are reminded that God loves his people, and we believe that we have been adopted. We are God's people.  
This is a petition of compassion, God is for us, and we are prompted to open up and be compassionate, too.

We are told to CUT off the covering, the protective wall over our hearts, so that we will not be self serving and stubborn.

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Moreover, we can Not buy or bribe our way out of being submissive and faithful. And, substitution will not work either.

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This passage proclaims: God is great, mighty and awesome!

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Verses 18 and 19 present God's WAY,... and God's way Must be our way.  
Here is God's way:

God does Justice for the weak and marginalized. God fights for parity and equality.

God Loves the outcasts, the forgotten--**the strangers!**

God provides for them! And, how does God do that? Also, how does God do justice? ????  
Through us, of course.

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Here is the commandment: You Shall also love the stranger!

We are to love strangers, those outside our tribe, outside our group.

We are to Love those who are forgotten, those who are neglected, those who are weak and marginalized, and those unlike ourselves.

We are to love those outside of our class and culture.

We are to love NOT just respect, and Not just tolerate, but love.

We are to love, and I think we know what love means .... and what love inspires us to do. From love, we endlessly give of ourselves.

This is what Jesus modelled. We do justice out of love. We are to love even those we do not know or understand.

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With this awareness, we end the social justice experiment.

We will No longer be separated.

Please all come in and come together.

The ushers and ministers will hand out bulletins and hymn books for all.

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I do thank you for taking part in this exercise, and I apologize to those who were in a less than desirable group, and to group 1 who were in first class and may have felt the scorn of those heading to the steerage section.

This worship service also presents the passion / an example for those who appreciate "Kingdom Spirituality". Some people find it worshipful to do action and social justice. Others may not have found this experience worshipful. It may have been uncomfortable.

The four Welcoming Sundays this month, each had a different flavour to remind us that we are different and to be welcoming, even if it makes us a little uncomfortable.

Today's exercise:

There were four groups.

1. <..... the privileged and affluent with lots of resources.
2. ....general masses, with limited resources
3. ... the out of culture, with few usable resources ... the bulletin<
4. ... the powerless, marginalized. virtually no resources or respect.

So,..... we have a mic ready [Craig]

Please feel free to share your observations and feelings?

How did it feel to be in your group? [1,2,3,4]

How did you respond? Share? revolt? irritated?  
??? get chairs?

Afraid to break the rules? typical!

Those in power make the rules,... and they are self serving.

slavery and apartheid were legal.

Doing justice may require breaking the rules, challenging the laws.

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How did the music sound?

Other comments?

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The purpose was to demonstrate social injustice / social separation and imbalances.

We are one people, yet for awhile today, we were separated. Some had more benefits and some had none. No ONE deserved to be in their section. That is part of the injustice, and part of the lesson.

On this planet, we are all one people, yet....we tend to separate people, look down on some and lift up others, all based on prejudice, fear and false assumptions.

The prejudice, separation and subsequent treatment are unjust.

The strange thing is that we know this.

The strange thing is we try to ease the pain of those marginalized or alienated, yet do little to change the system.

Sometimes, it seems like patronizing, colonialism when we try to help "those" poor people or have pity on those victimized by racism, without changing the conditions.

That is the strange thing.

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In our culture, a fundamental aspect to this injustice, which also tends to blind us, is **white privilege**.

We white folks assume opportunities are fair and equal, but they are not!

People of colour have to work much harder for respect and to reach opportunities we take for granted.

White privilege is embedded in our society, and preserved by whites.

When students evaluate their classes at U. of Waterloo. White male professors get higher ratings than any other, and black women are at the bottom. That's wrong.

A white student may consider taking a year or so off to travel or whatever. A student of colour dare not risk such frivolousness. They are in a battle to catch up /to survive.

I know one black student who was warned, by her father, to **not** put on her resume that she volunteered at a centre for black youth.

He feared racism would block even her first step at being considered for a job.

For most of us here, that is not our world. That is alien thinking.

That is injustice,.....and from our white privilege perspective, Those in that world / having that reality.... are strangers to us.

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And, I could go on and on about the ongoing injustices to indigenous peoples. Plus, we have too often marginalized those who are non-binary.

We must love strangers / those who are different / those we do not know. I interpret that loving action could mean turning strangers into good friends, and that takes work. That work will change us, too.

With love, love for God and God's way, we can do that work.

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This begins with getting to know strangers--those who are not in our tribe or culture.

Perhaps, we could talk to strangers.

I heard someone wrote a good book about talking to strangers.

I plan to read it.

We will learn a lot when we **humbly, Humbly** talk to strangers.

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In addition, we can do introspection. We can examine our white privilege-- the benefits for us and the liabilities it has on others.

Most of the time, we don't even recognize it. We don't look for it either, because.... life is fine for us.

We must do better.

We can confront injustices when we see it, and stand with those who are persecuted or regarded as less.

Moreover, we must be humble.

We do not deserve our status, nor do others, but we can work hard at doing justice.

And, this can only be accomplished from love / from God.

This is God's doing / God's way.