

*Jesus Christ,
our Mediator,
pays the price
that we are not
able to pay so
we can return
to live with
our Heavenly
Father.*



THE MEDIATOR

JESUS CHRIST

Let me tell you a story—a parable.

There once was a man who wanted something very much. It seemed more important than anything else in his life. In order for him to have his desire, he incurred [took on] a great debt.

He had been warned about going into that much debt and particularly about his creditor, the one who lent the money. But it seemed so important for him to have what he wanted right now. He was sure he could pay for it later.

So he signed a contract. He would pay it off some time along the way. He didn't worry too much about it, for the due date seemed such a long time away. He had what he wanted now, and that was what seemed important.

The creditor was always somewhere in the back of his mind, and he made token [small] payments now and again, thinking somehow that the day of reckoning [the day he had to repay all the money] would never really come.

Justice or Mercy?

But as it always does, the day came and the contract fell due. The debt had not been fully paid. His creditor appeared and

demanded payment in full. Only then did he realize that his creditor had not only the power to repossess [take away] all that he owned but also the power to cast him into prison as well.

"I cannot pay you, for I have not the power to do so," he confessed.

"Then," said the creditor, "we will take your possessions, and you shall go to prison. You agreed to that. It was your choice. You signed the contract, and now it must be enforced."

"Can you not extend the time or forgive the debt?" the debtor begged. "Arrange some way for me to keep what I have and not go to prison. Surely you believe in mercy? Will you not show mercy?"

The creditor replied, "Mercy is always so one-sided. It would serve only you. If I show mercy to you, it will leave me unpaid. It is justice I demand. Do you believe in justice?"

"I believed in justice when I signed the contract," the debtor said. "It was on my side then, for I thought it would protect me. I did not need mercy then nor think I should need it ever."

"It is justice that demands that you pay the contract or suffer the penalty," the creditor replied. "That is the law. You have agreed to it, and that is the way it must be. Mercy cannot rob justice."



**By President
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President of the Quorum
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By eternal law, mercy cannot be extended unless there be one who is both willing and able to assume our debt and pay the price and arrange the terms for our redemption.

NEmore

To learn more about this topic, read Alma 42, the prophet Alma's explanation of justice, mercy, and the Atonement.

There they were: One meting out justice, the other pleading for mercy. Neither could prevail [win] except at the expense of the other.

"If you do not forgive the debt, there will be no mercy," the debtor pleaded.

"If I do, there will be no justice," was the reply.

Both laws, it seemed, could not be served. They are two eternal ideals that appear to contradict one another. Is there no way for justice to be fully served and mercy also?

There is a way! The law of justice *can* be fully satisfied and mercy *can* be fully extended—but it takes someone else. And so it happened this time.

His Mediator

The debtor had a friend. He came to help. He knew the debtor well. He thought him foolish to have gotten himself into such a predicament. Nevertheless, he wanted to help because he loved him. He stepped between them, faced the creditor, and made this offer: "I will pay the debt if you will free the debtor from his contract so that he may keep his possessions and not go to prison."

As the creditor was pondering the offer, the mediator added, "You demanded justice. Though he cannot pay you, I will do so. You will have been justly dealt with and can ask no more. It would not be just."

And so the creditor agreed.

The mediator turned then to the debtor. "If I pay your debt, will you accept me as your creditor?"

"Oh yes, yes," cried the debtor. "You save me from prison and show mercy to me."

"Then," said the benefactor [one who helps], "you will pay the debt to me, and I will set the terms. It will not be easy, but it will be possible. I will provide a way. You need not go to prison."

And so it was that the creditor was paid in

full. He had been justly dealt with. No contract had been broken. The debtor, in turn, had been extended mercy. Both laws stood fulfilled. Because there was a mediator, justice had claimed its full share and mercy was fully satisfied.

Our Mediator

Each of us lives on a kind of spiritual credit, a debt. One day the account will be closed, a settlement demanded. However casually we may view it now, when that day comes and the foreclosure is imminent [near], we will look around in restless agony for someone, anyone, to help us.

And by eternal law, mercy cannot be extended save there be one who is both willing and able to assume our debt and pay the price and arrange the terms for our redemption.

Unless there is a mediator, unless we have a friend, the full weight of justice must fall on us. The full payment for every transgression, however minor or however deep, will be exacted [taken] from us to the uttermost.

But know this: Truth, glorious truth, proclaims there is such a Mediator. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Through Him mercy can be fully extended to each of us without offending the eternal law of justice.

The extension of mercy will not be automatic. It will be through covenant with Him. It will be on His terms, His generous terms, which include, as an absolute essential, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.

All mankind can be protected by the law of justice, and at once each of us individually may be extended the redeeming and healing blessing of mercy. **NE**

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