

# Thank God he's not like us!

## John 3:17 NKJ

***'For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved'***

Once we cry 'it's not fair!' at some childhood wrong, we rarely abandon the sentiment in adult life. We want justice whether it's for murder, tax evasion, welfare cheating or just inconsiderate self-serving behaviour; we want it to include retribution and we can get upset when it doesn't. We know it's a forlorn hope but occasionally the world is fair, if only in small ways:-

Our local supermarket has been squeezed onto a site that is smaller than normal and at busy times it gets congested. At Christmas it was grid-locked. The queues for the check-outs extended halfway down the aisles. By unspoken agreement a gap was left between the top of all the aisles and the checkouts so that shoppers could still move about. As one person paid up and left, and before we could all move up, we watched someone take advantage of this 'alley', and nip in, positioning their groaning trolley second in line and leaving all of us still staring at soups and cereals in the aisles, obediently waiting our turn.

Of course no one said anything, but I wouldn't like to put to print the collective thoughts of the weary shoppers towards this blatant queue jumper, even in the 'season of goodwill'. However, our queue jumper had pushed in behind someone who got into an argument with the cashier and we actually reached the tills and got our groceries scanned and paid for, while the queue jumper was still waiting. I bet that all those who saw what happened left feeling rather pleased.

God knows we don't like to see people getting away with things. But more importantly than our reactions to even the most heinous crime, the disposition of our hearts to condemn others can leave us struggling with God's grace. How well Jesus portrayed our wrong-headed reaction to his grace at the end of the parable of the Prodigal Son: "It's not fair," the elder brother shouts as he stomps out of the house in an angry resentful sulk, offended by his father's forgiveness and complete restitution of his younger, undeserving, disrespectful, dissolute brother.

But God does not discriminate and his grace extends to all of us, however unworthy we may consider each other to be. Look at the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14, where the king commands his servants to go out into the highways and invite everyone they can find to come to the wedding. It says that the servants gather up everyone, both the bad and good. So who's left out? Regardless of what we have done *everybody* can come to the marriage feast. Because Jesus didn't come to give us our comeuppance - he came to save us.