



THE COMPASS

A TOOL FOR DISCIPLINERS

The Indian Chief

This is similar to the Judge Illustration. It seeks to draw into sharp relief God's love and his justice and show the tension between the two. Only because of the cross is he able to be "just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." As in the judge illustration you want to heighten awareness of those two attributes, love and justice, and show how both are satisfied by Jesus' death.

It is slightly stronger than the judge illustration in that the punishment is physical and thus more consistent with the cross. It is weaker in as much it's entirely in the third person and not personalizable. Not that "personalizable" is actually a word. Anyway, here's the script:

Do you know why Jesus had to die? Can I tell you a story that might help make it clear?

There is a story told about a particular Indian tribe who was suffering from the effects of a severe drought. Food was scarce and the members of the tribe were beginning to steal from each other in order to survive.

Well the chief knew that that would be the death of the tribe so he issued a law that the next person caught stealing would be taken to the center of the village, tied to a pole and publicly whipped.

The next day, sure enough a thief was caught. Everyone turned up to see who it was and to witness the punishment. To everyone's shock, the thief turned out to be the Chief's own mom. What was he going to do. He was a good chief, and could not justly ignore the law he had made the day before. He had to be just.

But good grief, this was his mom. She was old, and frail, the beating could very well kill her. And he loved her. How could he cause her to suffer?

What do you think he should do? Which should win: His love or his justice?

[Let them respond]

Well, here's what he does. He orders that her wrists be tied to the pole so the beating can begin. And he calls the punisher to step forward, whip in hand.

But before he gives the order to commence, he steps in between his mom and the punisher. He stretches his broad shoulders across her frail back and with her body completely protected underneath his own, orders that the punishment be carried out.

As the cords of the whip fall, they fall on him, and he absorbs the full brunt of her penalty. In that act he was both just, in carrying out the penalty, and loving, by suffering it himself.

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The Indian Chief

That is what Jesus did for us. We are guilty of breaking His laws, and we know it. Everyone of us has a list of things we are ashamed of, and things that we can't stop doing even though we know it's wrong. The Bible is clear that sin earns a penalty and that God is just. The penalty must be paid. But it's also clear that God loves us. He wants good things for us. He doesn't want us to be punished.

So here's what He did. He declared us guilty and ordered that the penalty be paid. Then He came to earth, became a man, and hung on a cross for us. When Jesus was being crucified, what He was doing was stepping in between us who are guilty, and God the Father who demanded justice. He absorbed the blows of that punishment so we wouldn't have to.

Does that make sense?

†End



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