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Here's Hope  
by Rev. Jerry Rea

God has Made a Way

Have you read anything lately out of the book of James? The book of James is very forthright. It has a "black and white" character that may make it sound harsh or unforgiving to some. I like it. We live in such a mushy, gray, and lukewarm world that we hurt for standards truth, and right and wrong. I hunger for a word that is clear and bold (and because of that) helpful. In James 2:13 he tells us that mercy triumphs over judgment.

So, what you have is a writer who "calls it like it is." He is neither afraid nor ashamed to tell us when things are wrong. Obviously from this verse, however, he is also not afraid to tell us when there is mercy... and he does. Judgment is important. Judgment and righteousness are what God Himself is. God is love but He is also holy. He is so holy that Jesus had to die to purge our sins to give us eternal life and the promise of heaven. By the way, heaven is a holy place. He is so holy that the Old Testament Jewish community would not even call His name. He is so holy that no one but the Old Testament High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and approach the presence of God. He is so holy that Jesus was sent to be a mediator. We need a mediator because *we* are *not* holy.

So, let's go back to the book of James. The writer tells us that God's mercy triumphs over God's judgment. His mercy is bigger than His judgment. As important as God's holiness is, we ought never to forget (also) God's mercy.

By God's mercy God sent Jesus. I suppose God knew we'd never "get it" without His help. By God's mercy He made a way whereby we might be eternally forgiven. Because of God's compassionate mercy, He reached out to us. He did not just watch us from a safe distance; God got involved in our lives through Jesus. He could have just sent another prophet, a holy man, or a spokesman. He went further because His mercy is bigger than His judgment. He sent Jesus.

Now, in these facts I find hope. When we truly look at ourselves (and our lack-luster performance) we realize we need God's mercy and grace. After you've tried very hard to be holy, you can either trust God's mercy, or you can altogether give up. We will never be able to measure up and merit His goodness. On our own there is no way we could have a relationship with God. Without His sending Jesus, we would have been doomed to spend out our lives knowing we need God, His presence, and His fellowship but not able to "attain" these things.

Let me put it another way. I can have hope of a true relationship with the God of all eternity. I have that hope, though, not because I've been able to achieve "goodness" or have somehow measured up. I may have fellowship with God because through Jesus God extends His mercy to undeserving humanity.

Truly God has made a way. He made a way for a relationship. He also made a way to repair broken relationships. He forgives because of Jesus. He loves through Jesus. He speaks to my needy soul, in Jesus.

God has made a Way - it's Jesus  
Jerry Rea