

The Myth Of Fairness

Equity, Not Equality

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Given 20-Feb-10; Sermon #978c

I read just today about a story coming out of London, and that is that the British Labour Party, under Gordon Brown, will unveil a new campaign slogan for the upcoming campaign. The way their laws are written, their election has to occur sometime before June 3, so we expect it in late May or early June. But this new slogan that they have decided to use is, "A fair future for all."

Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister, is in an uphill battle against the Conservative Party over there. The Conservative Party has been out of power for since John Major, I think. It's been a long time. Remember him? Tony Blair came in and stayed and stayed and stayed, and then Gordon Brown has had more longevity than I think most people gave him credit for when he started. But the Conservative Party has a commanding lead in this election because Labour has mishandled the economy over there as bad as the Democrats have handled it here. There has also been a handful of scandals that have shaken Number 10 Downing Street, having involved the Prime Minister or some of his aides or his office.

So, Labor is looking to be drubbed in this upcoming election, and the Labour Party officials who are, as I mentioned, analogous to American Democrats (but probably even little further to the left) are taking a page out of the Obama campaign's strategy book to win Britons back to the Labour Party. "Change we can believe in"—that was the Obama strategy. Well, theirs is, "A fair future for all."

But "promises, promises." "A fair future for all." Is that pie in the sky or what? How can a politician or a political party or even an entire government, promise fairness to an entire nation for all—everyone; man, woman, children? If that is truly the Progressive Party's goal, it sounds to me that they are terribly naïve. Either that, or they do not know what true fairness is—or maybe they do, and they have an altogether different idea of *what* fairness is than we do.

It's my contention that it's a mixture of all three. It's naivete, it's ignorance, and it's obfuscation about fairness. It's all three of those things combined. They have a Pollyanish-like view of how fairness can become a reality. They actually think it can happen. They have no conception of true fairness, and they obscure their objectives by using the term *fairness* as a code word for something else—something they really have is their goal.

The dictionary will define *fairness* as "equality or even handedness or justice." And these are correct definitions, as far as they go—"equality, even handedness or justice." However, you can't apply dictionary definitions to political speech. In political speech, fairness is *interpreted*—it has to be interpreted—as "leveling the playing field to ensure equal *outcomes*." That's a very important concept to understand if you're going to listen to politicians speak about fairness in this day and age. They are talking about leveling the playing field to ensure equal outcomes. Not that everybody starts fair and has a fair playing field; that's not what they mean at all. They want everybody to *end up* the same. That's very different.

This is *not* the idea that is written in the Declaration of Independence, where it says, "all men are created equal." That's not what Thomas Jefferson meant. Thomas Jefferson's concept of equality meant simply that under God, all human lives have equal worth. That's kind of the essence of what he meant there. If you want to put it in a political sense, Thomas Jefferson meant that each person has an equal say in government. Or, as we would say today, "one man, one vote." We are all equal in that respect.

It's clear that if we put any two people—it could even be identical twins—side-by-side and compare them, and they are not going to be equal. There is no actual equality. Fairness is a myth, in that sense. A man and a woman are not equal in gender. You can't tell me that a man and a woman are the same.

What I'm trying to say here is that *fairness* is not *sameness*. One man may be taller or stronger or faster than another. We see that in the Olympics this week. One might have a better aptitude for math or science or communication. One may be a hard worker. Another maybe a lazy slob. One man may have come from wealth, another from poverty. One may be handsome, the other one quite homely. So even by birth, there is no fairness, no sameness, no equality.

What Jefferson and the other founders were really alluding to is a *biblical* concept that came through English common law, and what we understand today as the word *equity*. Not *equality*, but *equity*. *Equity* is a legal term that denotes justice, *impartiality* and fairness. Now we are seeing a little bit of a different idea here. We're not talking *sameness*; we're talking about *impartiality*. What Jefferson and the other Founders meant is that the *law* is applied the same way—impartially—to everyone, no matter what their age, their gender, their ethnicity, their race, their class, their economic status, their education, their religion, whatever it is. And they got this out of the Bible.

If you will, turn to Exodus twenty three will read a bit from the Old Covenant. This is how

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far back it goes. This was in the very covenant God gave to Israel, and the Israelitish nations have a sense of this from history.

Exodus 23:1-3 “You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. [We are talking about courts here.] You shall not follow a crowd to do evil [don't get into mob rule]; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

Exodus 23:6-9 “You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. [The are two opposite things. You are not supposed to be partial to the poor man, but on the other hand, you are supposed to be impartial in whatever he brings. You are not supposed to be partial to the rich man either. You are supposed to judge it all fairly.] Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous. Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Every one of these principles has to do with equity—judging impartially. Even a person who was not even a citizen, a stranger, was supposed to be dealt with in a fair manner—an equitable manner—because Israel had known much oppression in Egypt.

Deuteronomy 16:19-20 says essentially the same thing:

Deuteronomy 16:19-20 You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

We are all to be equal under the law. If you are a poor black woman who dropped out of high school, you are supposed to be treated just as fairly under the law as a rich white man with a Harvard education—and vice versa! The rich man is supposed to be treated just as fairly as the poor woman.

America was never truly equitable. No nation has ever been truly equitable. When Jefferson penned those words in the Constitution, a few million black slaves in the South were not considered to be full persons! It was written in our Constitution that they

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were only 3/5^{ths}. Right off the bat, we were not equitable. Germans, Italians, Irish, Jews, Slavs, Latinos, and other minorities have all suffered inequities under U.S. law. They are to be regretted and should not have occurred. How wonderful it would have been if we had stuck to our founding principles. But that is human nature for you. Even if you try to be equitable—you try to be fair—it doesn't happen. Like I said, *fairness* in many cases is a myth. It is an ideal.

What the progressives want when they speak of “fairness” is not a return to equity, not an equal playing field, even, for everyone. What they desire are “equal outcomes”—and that’s a whole different kettle of fish! They have for years—from the early 1900s at least—been manipulating the law to penalize the strong and give unfair advantages to the weak. Maybe the best example of this is Affirmative Action, where everything has been tilted toward minorities, and basically the majority people in the country now have an unfair disadvantage in terms of getting jobs, getting into college, etc. In other words, progressives are bending the rules of the game and *distorting* the playing field. If we really wanted to be fair, we would do it right by saying everybody has an equal chance. But that's not how this nation has evolved.

This is the same reason they clamor for redistribution of wealth—because want to take the rich man’s profit, leaving him with enough to live on, and then give it to the poor, bringing them up to a kind of medium. What they fail to say when they give these speeches about doing this is that this is grand larceny; this is nothing more than government Robin-Hoodism. Ultimately, as can be seen in all the places it has been tried (the Soviet Union, China, and other communist regimes like that), it makes everyone—except for a very small slice of the elite at the top—*equally* miserable! That is the only equality you can expect under such a regime.

That is not what God wants. He alone provides true equity under the law. He judges everyone fairly and impartially, and then He allows us the freedom to unleash our human potential. That is God's way. Really, when it comes down to it, only God can truly proclaim “A Fair Future for All”!