

“Got Questions” Series
Week 2: The question of justice
October 5, 2025

Introduction

- What is your reaction (Emotionally? Intellectually?) to the term “Social Justice”?
 - What goes through your mind? Maybe it will help to add some other terms.
 - Climate change
 - Gender inequality
 - Immigration crisis
 - Homelessness
 - Food insecurity
 - Child exploitation
 - Positive? Negative? Some of both?
 - I think the one thing we might agree on is that these are polarizing issues. Some of them might not be issues of justice for you. Some of them might be things you are passionate about. Other ones you might be totally opposed to.
 - Most likely, each one of us has a specific view on a specific aspect of many of these.
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- We began a new five week series last week called “Got Questions” and we are going to spend five weeks discussing five topics, topics that have a lot of mind space, press and opinion in our culture today.
 - The reason we decided to do this was in a culture that limits debate, and is very polarizing, we wanted to examine the heart of our heavenly father in relation to these topics and how we as followers of Jesus are to interact with our world when it comes to these things.
 - Last week, Jonathan did an excellent job talking about how God sees government and the difference between government and politics.
 - I loved when he said “I wonder what would change if we spent more time praying and less time criticizing.” So convicting.
 - So this week we are tackling the issue of justice.
 - You might have all kinds of takes when it comes to the idea of social justice, but do your thoughts change if we stripped that away to simply . . . justice?
 - Most people want justice.
 - All of you have been wronged at one time or another. Most of you, probably, have been wronged seriously by someone who has never apologized or done anything sufficient to make it right. There is a part of us that wants, even demands that it does.
 - “It’s not fair.” “They should pay.” You can’t get away with that.” “It’s not right.”
 - I want us to understand this morning that those feelings, those thoughts, those emotions, are not “bad.” Our love for justice is rooted in our created character, because God loves justice.
 - BUT, and this is huge . . .
 - Our *view* of justice is skewed and tainted by our sinful nature – no one person can adequately identify or “get” justice. We get our hearts, souls, and our very witness in this world messed up, when our response and reaction to these feelings and thoughts do not reflect the heart of our heavenly Father.
 - So what I want to explore this morning is how does God feel about justice? How does this differ from the world around us? And most importantly, what is his call to us in our daily lives in this arena?

Main Sermon Text

- How important is justice to God?

I. God and justice

- If you do any search in your bible for the words justice or injustice you will find that God is deeply concerned about justice.
- It all begins with the character of God.

Isaiah 30:18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

Isaiah 61:8 "For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing.

- Justice is a fundamental part of who God is. And this plays out in what he does.

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Psalms 9:16 The LORD is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.

- In other words, the fact that God IS a just God means that his actions ARE just and it is how he is known. Sometimes, this justice of God looks kind of scary.

Psalms 10:5 The LORD examines the righteous, but the wicked, those who love violence, he hates with a passion. 6 On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot. 7 For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.

Psalms 7:11 God is a righteous judge, a God who displays his wrath every day.

- When we think about God bringing justice on the world, these are the verses we like. Go get 'em God. Make them pay. We want to see Charlie Kirk's murderer get justice. We want to see corrupt politicians get what's coming to them. We pray that anti-God governments get replaced.
- My problem is that I love God's justice when it comes to others and I love God's mercy when it comes to me.
- "Judge them, have mercy on me." Have you ever prayed, "have mercy on them and judge me"?
- God's heart for justice is not all about retribution for crime or immorality – he has a much larger view of justice.
- What this all means, and this is so important, is that **justice is defined by God: it flows from who he is**. You cannot separate justice from the author of justice.
- This means injustice is anything that is contrary to God's character, will and ways.
- And our God is concerned with things like fairness and impartiality. God is concerned about and fights for the needy. God always speaks the truth.
- In Scripture, God talked about justice in the courts, justice economically and justice in social systems
- Why? Because God loves people passionately, all of them, and desires for them to know him. God's justice is intimately connected to and the result of his love?
- But this is why we have a problem with justice in our world. Justice, apart from God, has always been a moving target.
- Without God, justice is whatever "seems right" in the moment, or at that time in history.
- Justice gets twisted. For the follower of Jesus, we don't have to look any further than Jesus to understand justice.

II. Jesus and justice.

- When Jesus comes along, he seems . . . different from God the Father. But Jesus is God, and so all the statements of justice apply to Jesus.
- Matthew, quoting from Isaiah 42, says this about Jesus:
Matthew 12:18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations."
- Then the description that follows seems at odds with this statement.
19 He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory.
- The disciples view of justice was God uprooting the evil and godless Roman empire and bringing Israel to prominence. But just as this prophecy said, Jesus brought justice differently.
- Everything culminated at the cross. Jonathan did a great job last week showing how the cross demonstrates (is the ultimate symbol) of God's justice.
- God's justice promises that all things will be made right and brought into right account. God will make sure that every injustice will be made right.
- Without the cross, the only way that would happen is through the destruction and punishment of every living person.
- Instead, God let his son be our substitute and take the punishment, the judgment, that I was due. That he did so was an expression of his love and mercy.
- We escape the wrath and judgment of God only through the loving sacrifice of Jesus.
- Jesus is a God of justice and a God of love. As with God his Father, they are intertwined and interconnected.
- After Jesus is raised from the dead, the disciples see Jesus more clearly. Peter preached"
Acts 10:42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.
- He saw Jesus as a God of justice, just not what he had originally thought.
- When God gave the apostle John a view of the end of all things, he saw Jesus as judge.
Revelation 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war.
- OK, so far you might be with me. Justice is foundational to God's character – it is connected directly to his love. And we know that Jesus is the one who will judge the world.
- What is our responsibility now, until that happens? What does this mean to how we act? React? Talk? Believe?

III. God's calls his followers to be his agents of justice.

- But I believe this looks different than we often think.
- In an often quoted verse from the OT, Jesus told the nation of Israel:
Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
- *Hosea 12:6 But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.*
- He has strong words for those who don't live justly. He condemns them.
- The logical question to me, is "How do I live justly? How do I act justly. How do I maintain justice – especially if I'm not someone who makes or enforces laws?"
- The answer comes from the passage from Romans that Scott read at the beginning.
Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful

to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- It is a two part answer. When it comes to living justly, we need to know what is NOT our responsibility and what IS our responsibility.

A. What is NOT my responsibility?

- According to what we just read, vengeance, revenge, retribution and even punishment is not my responsibility.
- My job is not to even the scales, to make sure the wicked pay.
- While punishment is part of the job of government, as we saw last week, and we have courts, laws and judges for that purpose, it is never MY personal responsibility to make sure someone pays.
- It is God's job to punish the wicked.
- This means that God will put all things right in the end. Both personally and socially.
- It's not fair that you were wronged and they did not suffer any apparent consequences.
- It's not right that people are promoting evil or actively doing wrong and getting away with it.
- It was horrible that you got fired and a less decent person got promoted.
- Remember, no one "get's away with" anything. God's got it.
- What is the action for us? Actively surrender my need for justice to my heavenly Father. As Paul says, let God be God.
- We do this by blessing the other person. Seeking their good. Praying for them. Helping them where it makes sense.
- It is important that we get this, because until we do, we cannot fully do what is our responsibility.

B. What IS my responsibility?

- Let me read some verses and see if you can pick up a theme that runs throughout the Scripture and that reflects God's heart.

Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

Zechariah 7:9 "This is what the LORD Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.'

Leviticus 19:15 Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

- This goes on and on throughout Scripture.
- Fairness. Equity. Lifting others up.
- Then Jesus came along and raised the bar.

Matthew 5:38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

- James, the brother of Jesus, wrote in his letter:

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

- It is amazing how much God ties justice to how we treat others. Because God's greatest concern is drawing people into a relationship with himself. If God was only interested in justice without mercy, he would not have sent Jesus to the cross.
- Instead, I now have opportunity to experience his mercy instead of his justice.

- Then Jesus invites us to follow him and his ways. This means you leverage your voice, resources, talents and position for the benefit of others. Injustice is leveraging things for yourself at the expense of others.
- When we demand justice for ourselves, we have a personal stake in it.
- God doesn't tell us to defend ourselves. He tells us to defend others. Have you noticed that Jesus never demanded justice for himself. But he made a point of practicing it for others. For the woman caught in adultery, the bleeding woman, facing off against the Pharisees who took advantage of others.
- How do we practice justice?
- By standing up for the person being made fun of by a group of people and not being silent.
- Helping someone go to the DMV to ensure they get what they need when they don't understand.
- It's giving money and time to help the poor, homeless and disadvantaged.
- We practice justice when we take time to listen to those that no one listens to.
- Justice is speaking for and lifting someone or some people group up rather than criticizing those who are doing the oppression.
- We saw last week that the church is to be an agent of transformation in culture. My friends, followers of Jesus should be champions of justice. We should be known as the people who help those who cannot help themselves.
- The church has had a huge impact on this world when it got this principle.
- In the early Roman empire, when unwanted babies were tossed out, they took them in.
- When plagues came and everyone abandoned them, the followers of Jesus risked their lives to help.
- It was saying the truth in the face of an evil regime, even when it cost them their lives.
- We are not just to speak against unbiblical morality. We must boldly advocate for, speak up for, and help others, especially those who can't do this for themselves.
- The church is God's way of transforming the world. We are agents of righteousness in a world of unrighteousness.
- We are to tell the truth even when it hurts us. We are to give voice for those who have no voice. A voice that communicates God's care, love, acceptance – all the things that we get through Jesus.
- Justice is NOT the province of a political party. It is not the way one group thinks over another. It is not the current popular buzz. It is seeing people that Jesus created, people he loved and died for, and doing everything in our power to help them know him.

Conclusion

- God is a God of justice. This is great news. No one gets away with flaunting the law of God and his ways and treating people poorly. God will make it right.
- But praise God he is a loving and merciful God, who sent his son to die, or every one of us would have a front row, stare in the face experience with the justice of God.
- For you and me, God sees justice not as much about what we are against as much as who we are for.
- Justice bookends the story of God

Exodus 34:6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished"

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

- Leave ultimate justice in the hands of your heavenly Father. Everyone will be judged.
- While we long for the day when God will put everything right, in our time here our job is to represent Jesus so that more people can experience his love, grace and forgiveness instead of his justice.
- If our words and actions draw others to God and treats people as God treated us, this is justice.
- Being God's agent of justice will cost you. Because it means flying against the wind. Going against society.
- It will mean speaking up when you want to be silent.
- It will mean biting your lip when you want to lash out.
- It will mean spending money on others you want for yourself.
- It will mean giving up time and energy for others that gets you nothing back.
- But it will mean a "Well done, good and faithful servant" from the one who died so YOU could face God's justice through the death of your Savior.