

## Does God care about justice?

Okay everyone, let me draw you together. We're going to take a bit of time to answer our big question of tonight, and that is the question, "Does God care about Justice?"

There is a very short answer to that question, and the short answer is, "Yes" But you may want me to expand on that a little bit more. In fact, I think that from my understanding of the Bible, not only does God care about justice but I think God cares more passionately about justice than any one of us. But it doesn't take a genius to work out why many people in our country don't think that is true. You could do a little experiment when you go home, you can listen to the radio, you could put on the TV news, you could have a look at all sorts of newspapers on the internet, and you will find example after example, I am sure, of wrong doing. We see it at the individual level, we see it at the family level, we see it at the national level, we see it at the international level. Example after example of things that don't go as they should.

So it doesn't take a genius to work out why many people think, "I just don't think God really is committed to justice". So why I can I say so confidently that "Yes, he is". Well, because of what we've learned tonight. What have we been focusing on tonight? One of the aspects of our discussion tonight has been the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. And it is the cross of Jesus, the death of Jesus, that gives us sure evidence that our God is absolutely, passionately committed to justice.

You might think, "That sounds really quite strange, how does that work?" because you might think to yourself, "Surely the cross is a place that you will go to if you want to find God's love demonstrated". And that is true because what do we discover about the cross? We know that it was there, where the Father sacrificed his only Son, who willingly went to suffer in the place of rebels so that we can be rescued, so that we could be set free from the punishment we deserve. It is a wonderful sacrifice of love. And as a Christian, I go back again and again to look at the death of Jesus. When I get up in the mornings and my feelings are all over the place, when events happen to me that make me emotionally doubt the love of God, the cross is a great place to go, a demonstration of God's love.

But it is also a place where the justice of God is demonstrated. Now to work this out, you've got to see the link between crime and punishment. We know there is a clear link. Serious crimes demand serious punishments, and the Bible says that because of how we have lived we deserve to endure God's punishment. In fact, to endure it for eternity. And you can just imagine, a human court can't you, where the criminal's there in the dock, they have been proven to be guilty, and they say to the Judge, "Well, I'm sorry." And the Judge goes, "Okay then, off you go". You just think to yourself, "There's something wrong about that!" If that was in the newspapers you'd be thinking to yourself, "That's not fair! That's unjust!" How much more, in the divine courts! Yes, our God is gracious. Yes, he is wonderfully, overwhelmingly forgiving, but if God does not punish our wrong doing, then there will be big, big questions about the character of God.

Now what do we know? We know that on the cross as Jesus suffered, God was punishing wrong doing. It wasn't as if God swept it under the carpet and didn't want to deal with it. But God was so passionately committed to justice, that he sent his one and only Son so that rebels who deserved it could avoid it. Not because judgement wasn't issued, but because Jesus suffered the punishment in our place. There was God, committed to justice. At the same place, we have a wonderful demonstration of the overwhelming and generous love of God and also God's commitment to justice.

Now you think to yourself, "How do you reconcile that with all the evidences in our lives day by day where we don't see justice done? How can God be so committed to justice and yet us not see it in the world?" Well, the Bible's answer to that is look to the future. Because the Bible says there is a wonderful day coming when justice will be seen. When every single human being will stand before King Jesus, the risen King Jesus. We will stand before him and have to give an account of how we

have lived our life. That will be a day of justice. Now the great news is that we can stand before our judge, not as an enemy, but as a friend and as a follower. But here is the thing. The Bible says that if we do not meet Jesus as a friend and as a follower then we will pay for our wrong doings our self, for all eternity.

Now I know that there are some sitting here tonight, who are counting the cost of following Jesus. You're trying to count the cost of what it will mean to put him in charge of your life. You're trying to count the cost of what it will mean to surrender to Jesus. Well, great. Do it. But here's what I want you to consider. What is the cost of not?

Because the Bible says that there will be a day when you will stand before King Jesus, and if you do not meet him as a friend and as a follower, you will pay for your wrong doings yourself for all eternity. And yet here is Jesus offering to every single one of us tonight, he's offering forgiveness. And he's offering not just a pardon, he's offering an opportunity to be found perfect in him. And so I would encourage you if you are thinking about that, counting the cost, take advantage of the grace of God and come into his arms.

Is God committed to justice? Absolutely! But he's also committed to mercy. And he offers us the chance to come into his loving arms before it is too late.

Well, why don't you take a few minutes around your tables to talk about that.

Identity – Who is God? Who are we?

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