

# God is good, He is the just judge

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Let's share our prayer together. Heavenly Father, we humbly bow in your presence. May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your great glory our supreme concern.
- ! Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.! God is good all the time, and all the time God is good. That we experience injustice in life is a great challenge to the goodness of God.
- There are at least two reflections on this theme of injustice in the book of Ecclesiastes in chapter 8. Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.
- The outcome of justice is a sentence being passed against someone who has been found guilty. But if the system of justice breaks down at this point, if the judge declares a sentence and it is not speedily carried out, the community will quickly lose confidence in the practice of justice and may well end up taking matters into its own hands.
- Or what about chapter 3 in Ecclesiastes? Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness.
- [ 1 : 48 ]     The best human and our best human efforts are weakened by sin.
- At our best, we pursue justice. We set aside places, we might call them courtrooms, for the exercise of justice.
- However, have we not all observed during our life that even there, in the place where justice should be exercised, even there, there is wickedness.
- We should all greatly value justice. By justice, someone accused of a crime has the evidence against them weighed and tested to establish what can be proved, beyond reasonable doubt or on the balance of probabilities.
- And what can be proved is the measure of justice. We should rightly pursue justice and love justice. When we hear in our country of a senior judge proposing that we limit trial by jury, because at present there is such a backlog that it's going to take until 2029 to have all the trials heard, we should be deeply concerned about this.
- [ 3 : 23 ]     If someone accused of a crime must wait up to four years to have their case heard, or if some victim of a crime must wait up to four years before justice is exercised, then the justice system is not being exercised speedily.
- We do need a dependable justice system. And for that, we need a God who is just and who will do justice.
- You might remember the account. Abraham had three visitors came to his tent one day. They came to tell him and Sarah that this time next year, they would have a son.
- But before leaving, the visitor, who is revealed to be the Lord, informs Abraham that he's leaving Abraham's tent and he's going down to Sodom to rain fire and brimstone upon the place of wickedness.
- And what follows is one of the most profound and searching conversations in all of Scripture. Abraham asks the Lord, Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?

[ 4 : 40 ] How can you pour down fire and brimstone on a whole town? Is there no one there who is righteous? What about if there are 50? What about if there are 45 or 40 or 30 or 10?

Will you sweep 10 righteous ones away with all the wicked? In this dialogue, Abraham challenges the Lord.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is right? This is our God. This is our Father. The judge of all the earth who will do what is just.

At the end, when we stand in the Father's presence, with the glory of his goodness shining all around him, we will fall on our faces and declare that everything he has done is just and right.

God is good all the time. And all the time, God is good. And that sentence works just as well. God is just all the time.

[ 5 : 49 ] And all the time, God is just. And so this is the theme of Psalm 75. Can we depend upon the Lord to do justice?

Will the goodness of God reach even to the exercise of justice? Especially when we don't see it being worked out in our lives day by day.

Psalm begins with thanksgiving. We give thanks to you, O God. We give thanks for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds. Often in the Psalms, we read verses almost exactly word for word like this one.

We sing of your wondrous deeds. We recount your wondrous deeds. We tell of your wondrous deeds. And when we think about that, there is a temptation to jump to a standard set of wondrous deeds.

Oh well, we must think about creation. That's a wondrous deed of God. And indeed it is. Or what about the exodus from Egypt when God brought his people up out of slavery?

[ 7 : 00 ] Or if we want to be New Testament about it, what about the cross? What about the resurrection? What about Pentecost? What about the life and growth of the church? And yes, all these can be great examples of the mighty works of God.

But we should first of all stick to the psalm before us. What does this psalm recognize?

As the wondrous works of God for which we are to give thanks. In verse 2, God says, I will judge with equity. In verse 7, it is God who exercises judgment.

God's mighty work is justice. God's wondrous deeds are his doing what is right.

The thanksgiving in verse 1 is based upon our recognizing that God has done justice in the past and our expectation and hope that God will continue to do justice today and into every future.

[ 8 : 12 ] Such thanksgiving for the works of God increases our faith. We are reminded when we give thanks of who God is and all that he has already done for us.

We are strengthened in our hope that God who has worked justice for our parents will work justice for us and also for our children until Christ comes.

What are we doing to inform ourselves of God's works for justice? I've got a friend, Mark Cameron, lives in Edinburgh and works for a group called the International Justice Mission.

Part of their work is in Southeast Asia where whole families are being enslaved to work in mines, mineral mines or precious metal mines.

And the work of the International Justice Mission in that area is to use the justice system of that country to see those families set free from slavery.

[ 9 : 26 ] They will employ local lawyers and prepare cases and pursue the matter through the justice system so that they will achieve justice not only for one family but they pray for all the families enslaved in that mine.

What a great thing to inform ourselves of the works that God is doing through his people to pursue justice in our time.

We give thanks to the God who is just to the God who is good and whose wondrous deeds include great works of justice. God says at the same time that I appoint I will judge with equity when the earth totters and all its inhabitants it is I who keep steady its pillars.

Verses 2 and 3 in our psalm report the words of God. Verse 2 tells us that God has already appointed a time for judgment. How we wish that time were now.

Our eyes are filled with the sight of injustice in the world and we long for God to judge with equity. But God's time is not our time and it turns out we should give thanks to God for that.

[ 10 : 55 ] In verse 3 God gives us an assurance no matter how much wickedness we see in the place of justice the pillars of justice will never fall.

The earth and its inhabitants will be shaken and troubled by injustice but we shall not be crushed or overcome by injustice. At first glance these verses appear to be in conflict with the observation from Ecclesiastes 8 about the need for the speedy exercise of justice.

But the speed of exercising justice always needs to be balanced that's a good word when you think about justice balanced with the rightness of justice.

How many times have we known of situations where a judgment has been rushed before all the evidence has been gathered and weighed? Time is really important.

The right time to act and the right time to judge and the right time is always God's time. God is good all the time and in all times God is good.

[ 12 : 10 ] God will be good in his appointed time and God will do justice. And so the central portion of our psalm this morning verses 4 to 9 is a warning cry.

A shout of watch out to the wicked. Crying out to the unjust about the danger of their injustice.

Twice they are named as the wicked and then the boastful or the haughty or the arrogant. I say to the boastful do not boast to the wicked do not lift up your horn do not lift up your horn on high or speak with a haughty neck.

There are some people who love to make themselves great. You never need to wonder who these people are because they'll tell you about it.

The self promoters always grasping and striving to make more of themselves than they should. In this context of thanksgiving to God for his works of justice of the assurance that God will do justice the psalmist calls out directly to those boastful ones.

[ 13 : 31 ] You are placing yourself in danger of falling under God's righteous judgment. Verses 6, 7 and 8 all begin with the same word the word for giving an explanation.

Why is this warning valid? For not from the east or the west nor from the wilderness comes lifting up. Although the boastful and proud are lifting themselves up, true lifting up is not a human work.

We do not exalt ourselves. If we are to be lifted up, it is God who must do the lifting up. It is God who exercises judgment, putting down one and lifting up the other.

Only God can truly put down and lift up. And that's what he does when he exercises justice. When in your pride and arrogance you presume to lift yourself up, you are seizing for yourself the work which belongs only to God.

You are trying to do something that only God can do and you need to stop it. First, because you can't do what God can do, so don't begin to try.

[ 14 : 52 ] Secondly, you end up placing yourself in opposition to God, which will always deserve his judgment. Be warned, for in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine well mixed he pours out from it and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to its drakes.

Do we not rejoice to come here and gather round this table to share together the cup of salvation in the blood of our saviour Jesus?

But in this psalm it is the cup of God's wrath, the cup of his anger against all human pride, the cup of his righteous judgment against all human wickedness which is being poured out.

The day will come when this cup is passed round and on that day the wicked ones will drain it down to the drakes. Thanks be to God then for his great patience, for the delay in his appointed time.

Today there is still time to escape this judgment. Hear the good news of God's timing as Peter wrote it down for us, 2 Peter 3.

[ 16 : 19 ] The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Our good God, the judge of all the earth, who will do what is right, does not wish that any would fall under his judgment. In that day when God picks up the cup of his wrath and hands it towards the wicked, he will rejoice if there are no wicked to take it.

But the only way there will be no wicked ones to take it is if they have found shelter in Jesus. If they have come through repentance to the cross and been covered in Christ.

That's what God wants. And today there is time for all the wicked ones to come. there is time for all the ones who do injustice in the world to come to repentance.

All those who are persecuting God's church, all those throwing bombs and missiles, all those whose greed causes hunger, all those whose selfishness is harming our planet, all those trafficking young girls to come to our city, there is time for them to come to repentance.

[ 17 : 52 ] repentance. Sometimes in our injustice, we dare to think, I hope they don't come to repentance, I hope they get what they deserve.

How we should tremble when that thought rises within us. Thanks be to the good God who alone is the righteous judge. Jesus is the way for all.

for all to come that all may escape from the righteous judgment of God as their sin is punished in the flesh of our bleeding saviour.

Thank God often, daily, that we are not the judge or the world would be filled with the victims of our shallow judgment.

God and so today there is also time for us for all of us to come to repentance.

[ 18 : 59 ] Do not presume that we are free from injustice which deserves the judgment of God. Your hands are just as stained as mine.

man, we must never presume upon the justice of God. Rather, every day we must depend upon the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

at the cross, I find that the righteous judgment of God which should have fallen upon me has fallen upon him and fallen upon him heavily and fallen upon him and broken his body.

Thank God, thank God daily that our Father held back the exercise of his justice so long that we had time to come to the cross and be found in Jesus before that day of judgment.

How then can we not shout out a warning to everyone else? Come to Jesus, run to the cross, that's the only place you can be safe from the coming judgment of God which rightly falls upon you because of your injustice.

[ 20 : 18 ]    come to Jesus. We are the only ones who can shout the warning and it is urgent that everyone hears.

The judgment of God turns the expectation of the world upside down. The proud wicked imagine that they are all right.

They have made themselves great and nothing can touch them. The self-exaltation of the wicked shall however be cut off. As Mary, most blessed of women, sang for us, God has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones. The great reversal. Those who make themselves great, God brings them down.

And of the victims of injustice, Mary sang, God has exalted those of humble estate. He has filled the hungry with good things.

[ 21 : 26 ]    This great reversal, this work of justice is our hope and our song of thanksgiving. The justice of God is putting all things right.

The justice of God will be established by the goodness of God. God alone is the just judge. He is our hope and our shelter.

He is the hope and shelter for all. God's justice is the warning we shout out to everyone.

The judge is coming. His justice is true. Find refuge in the cross of Christ and you will find that reversal lifts you up into the presence of God.

God is good all the time and all the time God is good. May his good justice comfort us and bring hope to birth within us.

[ 22 : 33 ]    Let's pray together. God our Father we cry out to you have mercy upon us. We dare not come before you and pretend that we do not deserve your judgment upon us.

Our only hope is Jesus. Fix us upon his cross. Put in our hearts and our mouths the words of the psalmist that we would shout in warning to all around us.

That we would sing of thanks giving for your justice and your being just. Fix our eyes on you and our hope in Jesus.

We pray for your glory. Amen.