

Biblical Justice

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Preacher: Ken Joy

[0 : 00] I feel like actually now that I see that, I feel like I talk about anger a lot up here, don't I? Yikes, that's not good. Okay, so let's get right into it.

Things that anger me. People that don't follow the rules of the road. Have you ever seen those people that are super kind and they let other people out, but neglect the fact that they're not following the rules of the road and you're going to hit them?

Like, that's nice of you, but follow the rules of the road. I have plenty of road rage incidents, which we could share another day. Bad calls in sports.

I have a reputation that I bring up every time I have a bad reputation in softball. I am working to fix it, but even this year it showed up again.

Watching people turn into outcasts or be left out of something. It just gets my goat. I can't, I have a hard time with it.

[1 : 05] Private mortgage insurance. Amen, brother, right? Like, how is it the economy collapses in 2008?

The government decides that banks are too big to fail, and the solution is let's make people pay extra insurance. Now, I did look it up.

Private mortgage insurance existed before 2008. But, I don't know, it wasn't part of my life or anybody I knew until then. And make those people pay for the mistakes that the banks made that we bailed them out for.

Gets my goat. When things aren't done the right way, meaning the way they should be. I like to think of it this way.

I like to think of it as, oh, Ken Joy, it's because you're just super sensitive to issues of justice. Right? Goodness, preparing for this sermon made me say, oh, maybe I'm a little self-righteous.

[2 : 06] But, let's save that for another day. So, let's assume that I'm right and I'm just super sensitive about justice. Okay? All right. So, here's a quick look.

One of the worst calls in sports history after a Grammarly ad. Can you see this? Yes. Okay. All right.

Armando Galarraga. Baseball is a nine-inning game. You need to get 27 outs. Armando Galarraga, in 83 pitches, 82 pitches, throws 26 outs.

It's a perfect game. It's two outs in the bottom of the ninth. Last out. Ground ball, the first base. He goes and covers. Got him. Perfect game.

Oh, wait a minute. What? Did you see the out? The out just called him safe. Look at him. What? Dejection? What is happening right now? I don't know how this guy's keeping his cool.

[3 : 09] I'd be losing my mind right now. Here comes the coach. All right. This guy's going to set things straight. Here comes some justice. Let him know what's up.

Jim Joyce is the umpire's name, by the way. Watch this. Watch this. Ball. Foot. Bag.

The guy's out by a whole step. It's a perfect game. It's the last play of the game. Ball.

Step. He's out by. That's four feet. Five feet. Five feet. Five feet. Cabrera knows it. What?

Oh, Jim Joyce. It's just not right, is it?

[4 : 07] This is baseball goodness. David, no better. I think we've got stats on this stuff since like 1880. I don't know how many hundreds of thousands or maybe millions of games that is.

162 games a year for each team. It's only ever happened a perfect game 20 times in all those millions of games. It just happened again, but not really.

Right? Oh, what an injustice. All right. Here we go. Now for the sermon. Okay. Okay.

So I'm picking up where we left off last week. So Ken, Pastor Ken, he's got a sermon that he's got to cover all this information. Now, a little jab at Ken.

He did take 50 minutes to do it. But he told you I'd do that. But he had a lot to cover. But as he was giving his sermon last week, and I had no idea what to preach on, part of Acts 6 stuck out to me that I wanted to dive into a little further.

[5 : 13] And I think it's because of my sensitivity to justice. Or self-righteousness, right? In those days, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

To me, that's the injustice, right? That's what's going on here. That's what's being dealt with. People are treating people differently because of maybe it's their language.

Maybe it's maybe Hebraic Jews. Like the only difference I really know is that Hebraic Jews were Jewish and Hellenistic Jews were Greek. Maybe there's other components of that culture that made it obvious.

I don't know if the discrimination was intentional or prejudice or whatever you want to call it. I don't know that it was intentional, but I know that it existed, right?

Clearly it existed. It was a problem that they had to deal with. So that to me is what got me thinking about justice again.

[6 : 22] And then my brain, during the sermon last week, my brain went to that passage in James where a guy comes in and sits down and, oh, what do they do?

They make room. Do you remember the passage? They make room for the guy who's wealthy, right? Here, sit up here. And then whereas a poor person, they wouldn't make room for the poor person, right?

It's that kind of, to me, it's that kind of injustice that gets my goat a lot. So I decided to take the week, or part of it anyways, and look into justice and see if I could find some sense of what biblical justice actually is.

Sorry. So, what is justice? I'm actually going to stop talking for 30 seconds and let you think about that.

Please do. What is justice in your brain? What is your personal answer to what is justice? Make yourself do it.

[7 : 35] What is justice? What comes to your mind first? And then maybe second. Second. All right.

I'm going to assume you've had enough time. So in my Bible, in the back of it, it has a dictionary or a concordance. They both seem to go together. It will define a word, and then it will give you passages that go with that term.

So what I did was, in my Bible, I looked up just, and I looked up justice. Okay. And from my Bible, some of the definitions that I had in the back, to make right.

All right. I like that. When I think of Galarraga, how do you make that right? Or PMI or road rage or whatever it is.

Part of justice is trying to make something right. It's fairness, correctness, equity. Those are from my Bible. The Oxford Language Dictionary says, Based on or behaving according to what is morally right and fair.

[8 : 50] And Chachi PT. I don't know if you have used it at all yet, but I asked it to write me a sermon on biblical justice. It was really weak and wishy-washy.

I did like the outline, though, but it had no conviction, obviously. But it made a great outline. I also like the definition. The fair and impartial treatment of all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.

It's funny. When I generally think of justice, I think of justice being imposed upon somebody. Was that the first definition that came to your brain? Like, it needs some justice.

I don't know. Maybe vengeance. Vengeance is part of my definition of justice, I guess. Although it probably shouldn't be. So here's what I did. To those of you in the church email, I emailed you this morning.

And essentially what I emailed you is this. Okay? So this is my Bible's concordance of every passage. Every passage that uses the words just or justice.

[10 : 06] All right? So we've got pages and pages of just and justice in the Bible. You have it emailed to you.

The reason, if you don't have it, because I don't have your email, obviously, sorry. But to me, it helps me to know that you understand where I'm getting my information from.

Okay? So this is what I did to build a sermon. I went to a concordance. I found every passage I could find on justice. I printed them all out, read them.

And then from all of that, I filtered down into what I think are four decent slides on what is justice.

Okay? So that's where this comes from.

If you want all the context, enjoy reading. You've got it. Or see me after the sermon. I'll give you my email. So that's where this comes from.

[11 : 04] Okay? Old Testament, New Testament. It's all the passages that I can find. Okay. So here is a slide. Now, this is not well done. This took hours and hours and hours.

And it did not come together until the last minute, sadly. I just, I don't know why it just didn't. So follow a stream of thought here. Me saying, okay, if I were to define justice based on those six pages of passages, how would I define justice?

Well, here we go. These are words right from those passages. Does not follow the crowd in doing wrong. Does not show favoritism to the poor or wealthy.

And that passage that I asked Ian to read this morning, the first passage I find on justice, it says, don't show favor to the poor. I was like, that doesn't seem natural to me, to show favor to the poor. And then later on in the passage, it says, you know, don't show favor. I think wealthy was the actual word that that Exodus 23 passage used. But it doesn't matter.

[12 : 13] Wherever your inclination is, if your inclination is to favor the poor or to favor the wealthy, either one's a problem. Right? To favor the Jew or to favor the Hebraic Jew or the Hellenistic Jew.

Right? Like, it doesn't matter which one you favor. Favoritism is the problem. It does not oppress foreigners. I thought about, can I star these things or put little check marks every time it says it over and over and over again?

I tried not to do that, but I felt like I should because it just kept coming up again and again. Ready? Here are the core of the people who seem to experience injustice, mostly in the Old Testament. The fatherless, widows, foreigners. Orphans are the fatherless. I feel like there's one more. But stick with me, okay? So justice relates to these groups that have been oppressed. Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless. Justice provides for the fatherless, the foreigner, and widows.

[13 : 24] A wise and discerning heart. That's like a definition of justice from one of the passages. In fact, that one that I took that, that's from Solomon asking God to be able to administer justice.

I think he must have been young when he became king. So when he asks for wisdom, he knows he lacks it. And you guys probably know the story. God rewards him not only with wisdom, and he's known for that wisdom and his discerning heart, but God rewards him in many other ways as well. A wise and discerning heart. Its consequences need to be accepted. I couldn't believe how many times the Jews accepted things, accepted ways in which they were punished, right?

God brought justice to the Jews in a way of negative consequences. And time and time again, I saw the Jews saying, it's just.

God is just. Defend the weak and the fatherless. Uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy.

[14 : 36] Always does what is right. Does not show partiality to the wicked. Cares about the poor. Speaks for those that cannot speak for themselves.

Defends. I like that one too. I write like, you ever heard like, I've heard sometimes in society that we need to stand up or be the voice for people who have no voice, right? Like it's kind of cliché, but there it is, right?

Speak for those that cannot speak for themselves. Defends the rights of the poor and the needy. Does not rob. That came up a couple of times. Does no wrong or violence to foreigners, the fatherless, widows, or the innocent.

Does not extort or commit robbery. Does not oppress. So that's me coming up with a definition of justice based on the passages that I showed you.

Can you see this stuff in there? This is from my Bible, ChatGPT, dictionary. So the danger is, or part of the danger in life is, you know, what do you use to define justice?

[15 : 56] Right? Justice is a word that gets used a lot right now in 2023 with a lot of different definitions to what it is. These are from passages in the Bible.

I can see a lot of relation. Okay. So, we're going to say we have a basic idea of what justice is. Okay? Now, I want you to see this.

God is just. I think it's common for us to accept that God is love. You hear that a lot, right? God is holy.

God is just. And every time in these passages, I found it referred to God as just. I looked for how did it define God being just.

He shows no partiality. God takes no bribes. He administers justice for the fatherless and widows. [16:57] He loves strangers, giving them food and clothing. This is not me making up these words. I'm taking them from the passages. His works are perfect. All his ways are just.

A faithful God who does no wrong. Upright and just is he. The Lord loves righteousness and justice. The earth is full of his unfailing love.

You've probably even heard that passage before. Righteousness and justice are the foundations of your throne. The Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy.

He guards the course of the just. The Lord is a God of justice. He corrects us in justice. He will see that his chosen ones get justice.

God is just. He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to those who are troubled. Just and true are his ways. He loves justice and hates robbery and wrongdoing.

[18:06] How are we related to justice? I look for essentially the action words in which we are called to bring about justice. Now this was to the Jews at the time but I'm going to go with it anyways.

Appoint judges and officials that judge people fairly. You need to follow justice and justice alone. Love the stranger.

I command you to do this. Defend. Uphold. Rescue. Deliver. Speak up. Learn to do right. Take up the cause.

Administer true justice. Show mercy and compassion. Do not oppress. Take up the cause. Plead the case of.

Is this Micah 6, 8? What does the Lord require of you? To act justly. To love mercy. And to walk humbly with your God.

[19:15] Why justice? I didn't plan on this slide but I felt like it kept coming up. Why justice? He tells the Jews quite often.

Because you were foreigners. Because you were slaves. Because you were strangers. So that you may live and possess the land.

I was surprised actually at how much God. Punished the Jews with the land of Israel. Because of their lack of justice.

I didn't. I don't know why. I just hadn't connected it. It was them not listening to his commands about being just. That you may live and possess the land.

God redeemed you from your slavery so that you may be blessed. Oh, sorry. Those are two separate things. Why? Because God redeemed you from your slavery. Why?

[20:20] So that you may be blessed. I should have used bullets. I just, I'm telling you. I just took too long. God commands it. Success is in store for the upright.

It brings joy to the righteous and terror to evildoers. I will reward my people and God requires it. I also like this passage.

Woe to those who don't uphold justice. And lastly, this is not necessarily from those passages, but I kind of see it connecting to some of his answers to the Jews.

It's because we're all made in the image of God. Right? Each one of us. No matter where we are, if we're Hebraic or Hellenistic, we're all made in the image of God.

Something I didn't assume I was going to find, but I thought needed mentioning. Accept justice in your own life. I've referenced this once already, but I'm going to say it again.

[21:23] 2 Chronicles 12, 6. The leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, the Lord is just. This is after being punished. Right?

How do you accept that? Don't you, isn't it so much easier to just write it off or find some other reason why you've been punished? Like, accept it. God is just.

Jeremiah 31. For I am with you, says the Lord, to save you, though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you. Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you, but I will correct you in justice and will not let you go altogether unpunished.

Right? I kind of like this theme of accepting justice when it's just. Accepting we're wrong when we know we're the ones doing the wronging. Luke 23, 40.

I kind of thought this was neat too. But the other criminal rebuked him. Don't you fear God? He said, this is the, they're on the cross. He said, since you are under the same sentence, we are punished justly for we are getting what our deeds deserve.

[22 : 38] But this man has done nothing wrong. We need to accept justice in our own lives. God will bring about justice and quickly.

That's a direct quote. I used to, I don't know, when Jonathan Bossie used to talk about Christ coming soon, that's what the passage says.

2,000 years, right? That's hard to accept as soon, isn't it? But, he does. He's way smarter than I am, so I will too. Quickly, I assume this means when Jesus returns.

We need to be patient. God will bring, those are also from the passages. God will bring about justice for his chosen ones. Revelation 21, 4.

To me, these speak to the justice that's coming when we get to heaven. Look, God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them.

[23 : 47] They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

I look forward to a day when that justice exists. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and the dust will be the serpent's food.

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountains, says the Lord. God's justice is coming. We will experience justice.

And then this is a lesson that I don't always like. It doesn't fit with my idea of myself as a warrior, or not a warrior, of someone who believes in making sure everything's just, okay?

And crying when I don't get the call that I want, or when I get cut off, or a person is trying to be nice and they're not obeying the rules of the road.

[24 : 58] Guess what, Ken? You can deal with injustice in your own life. I think this is an important part that comes with the lesson on the passages on justice. 1 Peter 2.

For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering, because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

And I think that's a lesson for us to do the same, right, when we experience injustice. Where I lack maybe this is wisdom, is knowing when to do that and when not to do that.

[26 : 12] When do I accept the injustice that exists in this world and when do I not? For me, the answer is probably accept it more often because you whine about a lot of stuff. Right?

I don't know. You know, go back to this passage. In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Is it for me to tell those Hellenistic Jews to suck it up? Suck it up, guys. Come on.

Jesus did this. He dealt with injustice. You can do it too. That's probably not for me to say, right? I can interpret that for my life.

Probably not for their lives. To me, the interesting part of where this complaint goes or where this pointing out of injustice goes is to look at what the church does to respond to it.

[27 : 20] So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Right? We don't have to deal with this stuff. Come on.

We got to go preach the Word. What's this minor garbage of people fighting over who's getting food? Right? What an annoyance. But look at the gravity or seriousness with which they addressed what I'm going to call the injustice.

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. I'm not sure I'm getting that phone call. Right? Full of the Spirit and wisdom.

That's the requirement for dealing with injustice. We will turn this responsibility over to them and give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word. This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen. Look at Stephen. A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. That's a qualification for dealing with this stuff.

[28 : 27] That's how you deal with injustice. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them. Is the church taking this lightly?

Are they passing it off as something that just needs to be dealt with? Are they leaving it untouched or unaddressed? Look at how they're responding.

And look at the result. So the Word of God spread. They addressed it. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Does the church need to take a stand on issues of injustice in our day? No, this could get fun. I'm not going there, though. My parents told me.

Judy told me. They were going to see a movie this weekend. I think it's called The Sound of Freedom. It's big in our circles. I haven't done enough research into it to know what it's all about, but I believe it's human trafficking.

[29 : 39] What I see Christians talk about a lot of times is modern-day slavery. I should probably know more about this issue than I do. Maybe if I go and see the movie, I'll learn. I don't know.

It looks to me, the way I read about it, not just the movie, but human trafficking and Christian magazines and things like that, Christians have taken this as an injustice that they need to address. For me, I like, I teach social studies. I love the Supreme Court. I love studying the Supreme Court. I love, I just love their decisions.

I wait for them in May. I look forward to them every year. I'm glad I'm not the one making them, but I do enjoy them. I love the way they interpret the Constitution. You know, affirmative action was on the docket this year, and it's been allowed for years now.

I don't remember how many, but to me, the best argument against it always was, how do you create equality by using a system that intentionally undermines equality?

[30 : 56] Right? But then when I think of justice, I realize, well, where's that part of justice that has compassion and makes things right?

If people have been oppressed for hundreds of years, maybe you take a few and try to make them right. I don't know what the Supreme Court should have ruled.

I actually didn't even look at the case. Five, four, six, three. I didn't, I don't know why I didn't. I just didn't. Do you know what it was? Six, three? Yeah. Some on the Supreme Court would agree with it.

Some would disagree with it. I don't know. I'm not the person to make that call. I'm glad that the Amy Coney Barrett's and John Roberts of the world exist. I'm sure they have more wisdom than I do.

But I would ask this question. Who are the poor, the fatherless, the widows, the foreigners, the outcasts, the oppressed, and the innocent?

[31 : 58] Who, I would say, in Shapley, Newfield, Sanford, Springville, Acton, Cornish, wherever we're from, where is our call to justice?

Who are we? Whose cause are we needing to take up? That's something I think we should be asking ourselves.

To close out, I'm never good at this, actually. I'll go back to Galarraga. Galarraga. Is there any way for Major League Baseball to make that right?

How do you think him and Jim Joyce are doing? Turns out that very night, I don't, this is like probably conviction for me, I don't know how he did it, but Galarraga called Joyce and literally told him, hey, nobody's perfect.

What? That's your answer? Nobody's perfect? That's what he said to the ump. I can't even imagine having, I would probably still hate Jim Joyce today.

[33 : 15] I don't know how he did it. America didn't respond the same way. Baseball, baseball never did anything about it. That's not true.

At the time, baseball was using video to find out if a home run had stayed fair or foul. This is the moment in the history of the game where people said, we can right a wrong.

The video clearly shows that he was, that he was out. That was a perfect game. It's clear. So, Major League Baseball ends up introducing instant replay for calls on bases and now all kinds of other stuff and every other sport does too.

I don't know if it's actually fixed anything but that was the, that was the cause for justice. Jim Joyce and Galarraga, they ended up writing a book together called, called, oh, Nobody's Perfect.

That was the name of it. So, these guys, geez, the more I say stuff like this, I think, wow, how mature they are. All right, I'm gonna, I'm, basically, my, my ask of you is to, to maybe skim, if you want context, I know those past, I know those slides are full, but if you want context on, on God being just or what justice is, you've got six pages of passages from the Bible you can read and get your own.

[34 : 48] But, I would just ask that you heed the call and think about justice in your own life. All right, thank you. That's it for me. And, Josh.