

The Problem of Justice

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Date: 04 May 2003

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[0 : 00] Heavenly Father, thank you that you loved us. Help us this morning to understand how much you did love us, so that we may respond to you in repentance and faith.

Amen. Well, do you want justice? Of course you want justice. We all want justice, don't we? When someone has done something wrong to us, we want justice. Australian society cares a lot about justice. Our whole legal system is designed for justice.

It doesn't always work, but the intent is there. There are people in this society who commit all manner of crimes. And when that happens, we want justice, don't we?

And for that matter, so does God. I live in New South Wales. We've had a state election campaign recently.

[1 : 13] I believe you've had one in Victoria as well. And with Shoros' death in Texas, every state election campaign has a law and order campaign. Have you noticed that? Every time, there's a law and order campaign.

Now, why is that? Well, politicians aren't stupid. They'll run a law and order campaign because it's what we want to hear. We care about justice. And I'm glad we live in a society that cares about justice.

However, there's a side to justice. If we want justice, then we must also have something else. And that's judgment. We object when someone who has committed a brutal crime gets a lenient sentence, don't we?

You see it on the news all the time about families of victims or victims themselves who object when a person who has been found guilty gets a lenient sentence.

Now, the issue there is not justice. The issue, the justice is that they've been correctly found guilty. The problem there is judgment.

[2 : 24] Making the punishment fit the crime. You see, you can't declare someone guilty and then just let them off scot-free, can you? You can't have justice without judgment.

And you can't have judgment without justice. The two go together. They're like two sides of the one coin. Now, if we want perfect justice and judgment in our society, well, in order for it to be perfect, we must be subject to that justice as well.

I mean, it's absurd to want someone else to be judged and to have justice done on them, yet not on us. We can't say that we want a just society and exclude ourselves.

God cares about justice. And he cares about judgment too. God is perfectly just. And his judgments are perfect as well.

God cares about perfect justice and judgment. He cares that that is done with everyone. With you, with me, with everyone. Our court systems aren't perfect.

[3 : 43] We know that. We even have an appeal process. Like, there's even a court of appeal. Like, built into our justice system is the understanding that it's flawed and mistakes can be made.

God's not like that. God's justice and his judgments, they're not flawed. God is the perfect judge of all of us.

Now, if that's the case, I'd kind of like to know what God's verdict is going to be on me. God's justice and his judgments are perfect.

God's justice and his judgments are perfect. Have you ever wondered what the outcome will be when God judges you? How do you think you'll fare? How will the scales tip?

In your favour or against? Well, one of the great things about God is that he reveals himself to us.

Unfortunately, we don't have to wait for the answer to that question because the judgment's already been made.

[4 : 51] Steve earlier read out a passage from Romans chapter 3 and he describes what happened to him when he first understood what that meant.

That was a process of Steve understanding what God's judgment was on him. I'll read it out and a few verses more.

It comes from Romans chapter 3. There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands and no one who seeks God.

All have turned away. They have together become worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves.

Their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

[5 : 53] Ruin and misery mark their ways and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes. They are harsh words.

And it gives me no pleasure to read them because I'm reading them to myself as much as I'm reading them to you.

God is the perfect judge. His justice and his judgments are perfect. Therefore we've got a problem. If this is the judgment, if this is the justice, we have a massive problem. There is no court of appeal with God.

We have been judged. And we have all been found guilty before him. This is what the Bible calls sin. I asked before, do you want justice?

[6 : 58] Do you want perfect justice? If you do, this is the consequence. This is perfect justice. All that remains is to find out the judgment.

Because as you see, we can't have justice without judgment. And the answer comes a bit later. It was in the Gospel reading. At the end of that reading, at chapter 6, verse 23 of Romans.

It says, For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let's think about a wage for a moment.

A wage is something you earn, right? It rightfully belongs to you. And no one can really take it away from you. We've got a special tax at the moment. It's called the ANSET tax.

Whenever I fly in Australia, I have to pay this tax. And that's there to pay the wages and entitlements that are owed to the employees of ANSET.

[8 : 01] Now, I didn't send ANSET broke. I'm not responsible for that. Yet I pay. I'm quite happy to. That's how much this country cares about workers receiving their wages.

We're prepared to make innocent people pay for it. And in God's eyes, the wages of sin is our eternal death.

That is what rightfully belongs to us. No one can take it away from us. This is God's perfect justness and perfect judgment at work. We all deserve and do die and die eternally.

And it must be this way. Because God is perfectly just and his judgments are right. Do you think God is happy about this?

God created us. He loves us as his own children. Is God happy about this? Of course not. How can he be? How can any judge with any compassion be happy about sending someone to die, even if they deserve it?

[9 : 17] The verse I read from Romans 6 in our Gospel reading, it has one of the best words in the Bible. It's the word, but. The wages of sin is death.

But. The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. See, even though we deserve death. God has a special gift for us.

It is the gift of eternal life. And that gift is what I want to offer you today. This is why I'm here. This is why I'm speaking to you.

To tell you about this gift. That even though we deserve death, we can have eternal life from God. But hang on a minute.

How does that work? How can a perfectly just God just let us off the hook like that? Where's the judgment?

[10 : 17] Where's the justice in that? We deserve death. That is our judgment. How can God remain just and give us life?

How is that possible? It doesn't make sense. Or the answer comes from our first Bible reading. From Hebrews chapter 9. Would you like to turn with me in your Bibles? It's page 976. I just want to pull out a few things from the end, from verses 27 and following.

Of chapter 9. I read from 26. Halfway through. But as it is, Jesus has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.

That's how it works. You see, the impossible was made possible through the appearance of Jesus Christ. He appeared once, 2000 years ago, and for one purpose.

[11 : 38] To do away with sin through the sacrifice of himself. The judgment we face is eternal death. But Jesus died in our place, so we don't have to.

Jesus sacrificed himself in our place. You can see this again in verse 27. Just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time.

Not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly awaiting for him. You see, we all die once, and after that, we will face God's perfect justice and his judgment.

Now we know what the verdict will be. We saw that earlier. The verdict and the judgment is our eternal death. But because Jesus Christ died, because he sacrificed himself, our sins are taken away from us.

Every crime has a punishment. We know that. We object when criminals don't get punished. It's just that Jesus died the death that is our punishment.

[12 : 58] He died, so we don't have to. That's how God can give us the gift of eternal life, while still remaining perfectly just.

The crime must be punished. The crime must be punished. And Jesus Christ willingly bore that punishment, so that we can be freed and have the gift of eternal life.

You see, in the death of Jesus, we see on the one hand, God's perfect justice. And on the other hand, God's perfect judgment.

And both of them are nailed to the cross. On the one hand, God's perfect justice. And on the other hand, God's perfect judgment.

And overarching all is God's love for us. God remains just. God remains just. And his judgment perfect. Jesus Christ died the death that we deserve.

[13 : 57] Precisely because God is perfectly just. And because he loves us. And does not want us to die the eternal death. Now, I read earlier from the Bible, where it says that the wages of sin is death.

And I made the point then that a wage is what we deserve. And, you know, no one really can take it away from us. Well, actually there is one person who can take away our wage.

And that's Jesus. He can take away the wage that we deserve because he paid it. He's the only person who can. He's the only person who can take away our wage. It's a bit like paying the ANSET tax, really.

You see, I didn't send ANSET broke. I'm innocent. Yet I'll happily pay for the sake of others.

In the same way, Jesus Christ, even though he was innocent, willingly paid for what rightly belongs to us. Our eternal death. We've seen how Jesus Christ appeared on earth once.

[15 : 06] And he's coming back again. In verse 28 of that reading says, he's going to appear a second time. And this time, he's bringing salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Jesus is coming back. And this time, he's going to bring salvation, the gift, the free gift of eternal life to all who want it.

Well, I started this morning by asking you a simple question. Do you want justice? If you do, well, then you must have judgment as well.

And for justice to be perfect, we must submit ourselves to that same justice. Except we've got a problem, don't we? Because God has already declared us guilty, and the judgment that we deserve is death.

Yet because of God's love for us and his perfect justice, God's son, Jesus Christ, appeared. And by sacrificing himself in his death on a cross, he took the punishment from us onto himself.

[16 : 21] He paid the wage that rightfully belonged to us. The result of that is salvation, the free gift of eternal life to all who want it.

And that free gift is what I'm offering you today. You have a choice. God's justice is perfect. We have been judged and found guilty.

And the punishment is eternal death. If we do nothing, if you do nothing, you stay in that state. You stay in that state. Guilty and waiting for the wage that is rightfully yours.

If I may say so, that's a bad choice to make. There's a better option. The free gift of eternal life is yours to take if you want it.

Jesus is coming back and he is bringing salvation to those who are waiting for him. If you want the salvation that Jesus brings, then ask him for it and he'll give it freely to you.

[17 : 27] And this morning, I'm going to give you an opportunity right now to receive this salvation.

this gift of eternal life. A free gift. If you want to wait for that salvation that Jesus brings, then I invite you to pray with me now.

I'm going to pray a short prayer. I'm going to thank God that he's perfectly just and his judgments are fair. I'm going to thank God that he's perfectly just. I'm going to thank God that he's perfectly just.

I'm going to thank God that he loves us. And I'm going to ask him to give us the gift of eternal life. If you want that gift, then please pray that prayer with me now.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you that you are perfectly just and your judgments are always true.

[18 : 35] Thank you that you love us and that your love is perfect as well.

Thank you that Jesus died to take the wage that I deserved. Please give me that gift of eternal life.

Amen. Now if you prayed that prayer, God has heard you. He wants to give you that gift.

And if you prayed that, God, that gift is yours. And Jesus will bring salvation to you when he returns.

Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[19 : 47] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. ?" Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.