



God Is Just

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9 KJV)

Sometimes we need to be reminded that God is just. When all around we encounter injustice, it is easy to forget this very important and unchangeable attribute of God. It’s by remembering this unchangeable aspect of God’s person that we can find encouragement and strength to face injustice and not become extremely discouraged. We can resist the temptation to become cynical, without hope for true justice in this life.

God is a just judge. By this we understand He will always do the right thing. His judgment is perfect. He has all the facts; nothing is hidden from Him. If we bring an issue before Him, we do not have to worry that some crucial evidence may not be presented or some truth left undiscovered. Though our enemy Satan may lie and accuse us before God or though people may be less than truthful in their testimony about us, God sees through lies and knows all the truth.

Besides having all the facts and the complete story, God will render a just decision in every situation. That’s another concern we can mark off our list. Every decision God makes will be just. God said, “For I, the Lord, love justice . . .” (Isaiah 61:8 NKJV).

Whenever you see injustice, you know God is hating it. It is God’s will that justice rule on earth. In the Book of Micah in the Old Testament, Micah wrote: “He [God] has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8 NKJV). To the extent that men and women follow God’s requirements is the degree that justice will prevail in our world. We should pray God will raise up just and righteous leaders in all nations. In addition, we must be just persons who are raising

the next generation “to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly” with their God.

The word *just* is often translated “righteous” in the modern translations of Scripture. In the New Testament “righteous” indicates a state of being right—most often in relationships—or doing right. *Just* is used sometimes to mean fair or honest. People have accused God of being unfair—even some in Scripture; God, however, is totally fair. He judges and acts with complete information and understanding; our information and understanding are incomplete. We are susceptible to error and prejudice; He is not.

In some cases, we might tend to be unjust due to partiality. In our verse for today, we notice that God will forgive the sins of those who confess them and will cleanse them from their unrighteousness. That’s great when we are the ones doing the confessing and needing the forgiveness. We are glad God will forgive us. If the case happens to be that someone sinned greatly against us, we might be less than willing to forgive them and we might not like the idea that God will forgive them.

In the Book of Jonah, we read how Jonah became angry when God forgave the city of Nineveh their sins and decided not to destroy them when they repented. Jonah had resisted going there to preach to the people of Nineveh (thus, he was swallowed by a great fish until he repented) and even complained to God afterward that he knew God would forgive them! Of course, God forgives everyone who repents. He is just and faithful!

God has spiritual laws. This is one of them. He forgives sin when it is confessed to Him and He places persons who once were out of

right relationship with Him into right relationship with Him. He does it every time without partiality. We might forgive some and not others. God is not like us.

The fact that God can be impartial in His applications of His laws is part of His justness. He will do the right thing every time for every person. He is consistently just. That should be comforting. We don't have to worry what His response will be today in this case or that. It will always be the same and we know what it will be. His Word spells it out for us. He doesn't have moods that will affect whether He will deal justly with us or with anyone else.

God's ability to be perfectly just so far surpasses our ability to comprehend it that we many times must simply exercise our faith and believe. Jesus told a story in Matthew 20 about a landowner who went out at about 6 a.m. one morning to hire workers. He hired several who agreed to work the entire day for one denarius. They went to work. At 9 a.m., 12 noon and 3 p.m., the land owner hired more workers who agreed to work for whatever he thought would be right to give them. At 5 p.m., the landowner found even more workers who agreed to work for whatever he thought right to pay them. At 6 p.m. all the workers came for their pay. The landowner gave each and every one of them one denarius.

If you know the story, you know the ones hired early in the day complained loudly about having worked all day and having received the same as the ones who had worked part of the day—some just an hour. They cried, Unfair! The landowner pointed out they had agreed to work for one denarius. His decision also to pay the others one denarius was rightly his to make. Did that make him unjust or unfair as many thought? The story, however, illustrates the generosity and the prerogative of the landowner—who also was completely just.

God's patience, mercy, kindness, generosity, sovereignty and other attributes will be involved in His decisions and actions. They will affect the overall picture of events but they will not negate His justice. Neither will His justice ever negate His other attributes. All His attributes contribute equally 100 percent to everything He says and does.

God can balance all this and make it work. We sometimes have trouble sorting it out and may call His justice into question. However, He is always just.

Perfect justice will come on the Day of God's Final Judgment. All will be revealed that needs to be revealed about what we have done in this life. Every wrong will finally be made right. Rewards will be given as well as sentences. That will be a day for trembling! The results for ourselves do not have to be a surprise, however. We can repent now and have every sin covered with Jesus' blood before that Day. God's judgment to us will then be a pleasant time of receiving rewards for the good things we have done for Him.

Though we live in a world in which we sometimes face unjust circumstances and unjust people, Scripture tells us God "works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed" (Psalm 103:6 NIV). That means God is continually working in our situations to bring about justice for us if we are being unjustly treated. That is now, and it is ongoing. We can pray and expect Him to help us.

Jesus is "called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge" (Revelation 19:11 KJV). He is unchanging and forever will be the righteous, just, fair, honest and faithful Judge. **SH**

GOD'S WORD FOR TODAY

Teaching Letter 22

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