

Recovering Justice
Psalm 72:1-4, 2 Samuel 11:1-5
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As Christians living in this messy and broken world, we need a biblical approach towards justice that is grounded in the gospel.

Recovering Justice (4 Questions)

1. Does justice matter?

Different cultures have different notions of justice. Our ideals of justice are often shaped by our culture and experiences rather than the Word of God. In the Bible, justice is ultimately about restoration - making things "the way things are meant to be".

In Psalm 72:1a, we see the king praying to God for the ability to do justice the way God intended it to be done. There is a realisation that there is a difference between God's idea of justice and others'. The only way to truly understand justice is by looking to God. God is *the* God of justice. Yet as Christians, we often think of justice as something we offer to people, and righteousness as something we offer to God. We think of justice as secondary. However, in the Bible justice and righteousness are almost one and the same. Justice matters because God in His righteousness IS the God of justice. If we love God, then justice is something we must also love and actively pursue. Justice must become more and more connected to the life of righteousness we are pursuing.

2. Is justice my problem?

Our inability & lack of passion for justice can become a source of shame for us. It is often out of this shame that we wonder if justice is our problem. It is clear from the Old Testament that God intended every Israelite to be involved in justice. Thus the Law includes how to administer justice. Psalm 72, while recorded by king Solomon, is a prayer by king David (Ps. 72:20). To David, the king's main duty is to judge and administer justice (1 Kings 7:7a). Because the God of Israel is a God of justice, the king of Israel must also be a king of justice. The king of Israel must be filled with God's Spirit of justice to reach the standard of God's justice. Justice is a kingly responsibility and requires kingly authority.

3) What does justice look like?

2 Aspects of God's Justice (Psalm 146:7-9, 72:2,4):

#1 Positive Aspect:

- Providing for the needy
- Delivering the oppressed
- Protecting the vulnerable

- Restoring the rejected

#2 Negative Aspect:

- Fights for the downtrodden
- Brings the oppressor to ruin

Whether you are more familiar with living out one of the two aspects of justice, we must grow in both. Justice is not one-dimensional. We must be humble and patient in encouraging one another towards justice.

4. Where does injustice come from?

The way that we deal with injustice is shaped by where we believe injustice comes from. David's injustice started in his sinful and coveting heart (2 Sam. 11:2-4a). The root of injustice is our wayward passions and sinful desires (James 4:1-2a). When we cannot have the things we covet, we do injustice. The source of injustice is the sinful heart. The problem of injustice is the problem of the heart.

Jesus comes to us as both the God of justice and the King of Justice. He was anointed with the Spirit of justice and embraced the kingly responsibility of doing justice by living out both aspects of it (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus' earthly life was one of justice - returning things to the way they are meant to be. All of us are guilty of injustice. Yet Jesus took our place on the cross to show us mercy. It is through His punishment and death we deserve that leads us to repentance. This changes our hearts and through Jesus' resurrection, we are given the same Spirit of justice that is in Him, that we may have the kingly responsibility, authority, and ability to carry out justice. The Holy Spirit equips us to lift up the downtrodden and tear down the oppressor. With the Spirit of justice, we can live a religion that is pure and undefiled before God: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world (James 1:27).