

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

1 Timothy 1:2 ...Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Injustice”

Introduction: Daily Justice

We base our lives on the idea that justice is dominant in our society. We all know injustice exists but we convince ourselves that it can't be greater than justice – at least not here in the United States.

On a daily basis, we assume that justice, fairness and obedience to the law prevail. When we drive our cars, we assume that the person coming at us at 75 miles per hour will stay in his right lane. We put our lives in the hands of total strangers every day based on the assumption that they will obey the law. (Self-preservation on their part has something to do with this too.)

Just Leaders

When it comes to our leaders, we demand an even greater degree of justice. These are the people who have had access to the best schools since they were children. They have been cultivated, even bred in some cases, to be the best. They should be peerless examples of virtue.

That is why the public becomes so angry when our leaders twist what is just. When it is revealed that a well-known leader uses family connections to get even richer through government contracts or to avoid going in harms way during a military conflict, it is natural to become angry. Our leaders should be leading us on

the path of righteousness, not enriching themselves on an uneven playing field. We want to scream, “Injustice!” when leaders take advantage of their positions.

Injustice for Jesus

Jesus’ trial is a case study in injustice. Everyone present has an agenda but justice is not on any of them. The High Priest, Caiaphas, is a *pragmatist* who wants Jesus to die to prevent what he fears is a potential rebellion. He wants to avert conflict with Rome and does it by killing an innocent man.

His fellow priests are *political fanatics*. They would like to see Jesus dead simply out of envy. They want to win a popularity contest with Jesus and are able to do it (at least temporarily) by killing him.

The Governor, Pilate, is a *philosopher* who thinks about truth in the abstract instead of applying it to the real world situation that is going on before his eyes. He enjoys thinking about the nature of truth rather than making a decision and an innocent man dies because of it.

King Herod is a *hedonist*. He only seeks entertainment. If Jesus can provide that, he can stay. If he refuses to entertain, he can go. When Herod is disappointed that Jesus won’t entertain him, he returns him to Pilate, implying he doesn’t care if Jesus lives or dies.

Where is the concern for justice among these leaders of men? It is not there. They are too caught up in what interests them as individuals to see the big picture. One can’t help but wonder if our leaders today would do any better than these people.

Injustice for Jesus, Injustice for Us

Jesus' trial was unjust but that injustice leads to another injustice. Justice holds that we should be punished for our sins. We should be punished for all the things we do that are not up to God's standards – all those careless words we utter about other people that are designed to make them look bad, all the times we put ourselves before those who are more needy.

Injustice toward Jesus leads to injustice toward us. As Christians, we talk a lot about forgiveness. We talk about it so much that we forget that forgiveness is based on injustice. When you forgive someone, you don't demand what is fair. Instead, you let him off the hook.

Automotive Injustice

I remember a time when I was about ten years and I jumped out of my parent's car as soon as it had stopped in the parking lot. I swung the huge door of our '76 Impala open and hit the car next to us chipping some of its paint. The owner of the car, an older gentleman, was walking out of the store at that moment and saw me do it.

My dad's hot temper flared up and he started yelling at me. I think the older gentleman felt sorry for me because he said, "Aw that's alright. It's an old car anyway. He doesn't have to worry about it." I still remember my dad turning to me and saying, "You got lucky. He is nice guy."

After all these years I still remember that incident. That man forgave me. Justice would be that I would pay to have the paint restored on his door. But he did what was unjust. He forgave me.

God's Grace over Justice

The central idea of Christianity is that God's grace triumphs over his justice. God's Old Testament people have a hard time accepting this. They want justice over grace. They think that God's grace somehow weakens his justice.

But God remains just. He completes the punishment of sin as required but instead punishing us, he punishes himself by dying on the cross. So injustice toward Christ, leads to injustice toward us. We are not punished (which would be just) and Christ is punished (which is unjust). All of this produces the ultimate fusion of grace and justice.

Conclusion

We all know Jesus' trial was sham. We all know justice in this world is imperfect. O.J. Simpson gets set free. Stephen Avery gets set free the first time (but thankfully not the second time). Our courts are run with some idealism, some realism and some good, ol' fashioned politics just like they were in Jesus' day.

The great news is that we can appeal to a higher court. Heaven's Judge has declared us not guilty – even though we are. It is a great injustice but one we should thank God for every day.

May that peace which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.