

God Is Just
Allen Power
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Let's start by facing two FACTS: Life is Not Fair; But God is Just

- We hear stories of INJUSTICE and OPPRESSION where people are mistreated and martyred for the faith. But this morning I want to bring this lesson to our own doorsteps.
- Has there ever been a time in your life when it just seemed you didn't get a fair shake? Anybody willing to give us an example? How did God come through for you?

Here are some examples...

- You've devoted decades of your life to a company only to be laid off (Life Is Not Fair; But God Is Just)
- You've devoted years of your life to a spouse only to be betrayed and deserted (LINF;BGIJ)
- You've done your best work for a client; they stiff you for payment; and to make matters worse, they form a new business and move ahead as if nothing ever happened (LINF;BGIJ)
- You worked out; you ate right; you did all the right things to take care of your physical body; and you STILL got cancer. (LINF;BGIJ)
- You sacrificed and worked hard to do a great job and a person you know is a slacker got the promotion because of office politics. (LINF;BGIJ)
- You do business with integrity and excellent service, and an unscrupulous competitor is able to steal your clients and hurt your business. (LINF;BGIJ)

Life is Not Fair; But God is Just

- This is one of the most difficult concepts we as believers have to wrestle with. If God is in control why does he allow INJUSTICE to occur and people to be afflicted and oppressed?
- I wish I could tell you that there was a "magic formula" that guaranteed that you and would never suffer injustice and unfairness...there just isn't.
- The good news we CAN COUNT ON is that God has a TRACK RECORD of delivering His people ULTIMATELY. And we can TRUST Him to do the same for us. Meanwhile He will NEVER LEAVE OR FORSAKE us while we face INJUSTICE.
- Let's see what the Psalmist David has to say about this concept. Turn to Psalm 9.

Psalm 9 (New International Version)

Psalm 9

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Death of the Son." A psalm of David.

- David alternates from PRAISE to PETITION (REQUEST) in the verses of this SONG (Psalm).
- We're going to read it in SECTIONS and look at what he's saying in each part.

¹ ^[a]I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonders.

² I will be glad and rejoice in you;
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

³ My enemies turn back;
they stumble and perish before you.

⁴ For you have upheld my right and my cause;
you have sat on your throne, judging righteously.

⁵ You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

⁶ Endless ruin has overtaken the enemy,
you have uprooted their cities;
even the memory of them has perished.

- What is David saying in these first six verses?
 - Verses 1-6: David begins this Psalm with a DOXOLOGY of praise for what God has already done. Isn't that a good STARTING PLACE for all of us in our trials?

⁷ The LORD reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.

⁸ He will judge the world in righteousness;
he will govern the peoples with justice.

⁹ The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.

¹⁰ Those who know your name will trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

- What is David saying in verses 7-10?
 - Verses 7-10: He's saying I REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE GOD!
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¹¹ Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.

¹² For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted.

¹³ O LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,

¹⁴ that I may declare your praises
in the gates of the Daughter of Zion
and there rejoice in your salvation.

- What is David saying in 11-14?
 - Verses 11-14: I Praise you for what you've done and I ask you to DO IT AGAIN!
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¹⁵ The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.

¹⁶ The LORD is known by his justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.
Higgaion. ^[b] Selah

¹⁷ The wicked return to the grave, ^[c]
all the nations that forget God.

¹⁸ But the needy will not always be forgotten,
nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish.

- What is he saying in 15-18?
 - Verses 15-18: I remember how you treat the BAD GUYS and how you SUPPORT the oppressed
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¹⁹ Arise, O LORD, let not man triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.

²⁰ Strike them with terror, O LORD;
let the nations know they are but men.
Selah

- What is David saying in 19-20?
 - Verses 19-20: I REQUEST that you GIVE THE WICKED WHAT IS COMING TO THEM!

What Does It Mean For us to **TRUST God** when facing injustice?

Take your circumstances to God in prayer (Psalm 9:13-14)

Remember when it seemed all was lost & He brought you through (Psalm 9:1-6; 11)

Understand the CHARACTER of God (Psalm 9:7-10)

Stand on the promises of His word (Psalm 9:10)

Thank Him IN ADVANCE knowing he will MAKE THINGS RIGHT (Psalm 9:1-2; 14)

- Let's look at another Old Testament story of how God's people TRUSTED in the face of tough odds.
- In 2 Chronicles chapter 20 we hear the story of Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah.

Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. He was a bold follower of God and did a lot of good things. Unfortunately he also made some mistakes. But in Chapter 20 of 2 Chronicles he gives us a great example of TRUSTING GOD in times of great trouble...when it seems the “deck is stacked against you.”

In verse 2 some men came to Jehoshaphat and said “you are about to be attacked on all sides by a vast army.” Basically, look out because you don't stand a chance against this huge army that is coming to overtake your people!

Jehoshaphat was ALARMED (verse 3) and he “resolved to inquire of the Lord. He told all of his people to fast and they all came together to pray for deliverance. And Jehoshaphat stood up in front of all the people and prayed a FERVENT prayer:

1. He REMINDS God of what they know about him
 - a. Aren't you the God in heaven?
 - b. Don't you rule over all the nations?
 - c. Didn't you drive out all the inhabitants of this land and give it to YOUR PEOPLE?
 - d. Haven't we always believed that if CALAMITY came on us we would STAND IN YOUR PRESENCE and CRY OUT TO YOU IN DISTRESS?

- e. Didn't you promise to HEAR US and SAVE US?
2. He lays out the problem
 - a. These armies from three areas are coming after us
 - b. You didn't allow us to destroy them when we got here and now there are planning to destroy us!
 - c. We did THE RIGHT THING and this is the PAYBACK we get!
 - d. Our little army is PUNY compared to THEM
 - e. We have NO IDEA WHAT TO DO
 - f. But OUR EYES ARE ON YOU!
3. And then he and all the people STOOD THERE (Verse 13) and WAITED FOR THE ANSWER!
4. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon JAHAZIEL
 - a. He says "Look King...I got a message from God and here is what it says:"
 - b. First: DON'T BE AFRAID!
 - c. Second: The battle is not YOURS it's THE LORD'S!
 - d. Third: Don't just stand here...go march against them.
 - e. Fourth: Here is specifically where to find them.
 - f. Fifth: You won't have to fight them...just WATCH WHAT GOD IS GOING TO DO.
 - g. And by the way, did I tell you DON'T BE AFRAID...GOD WILL BE WITH YOU!
5. Then what happened? They all fell on the ground! Not passed out...they were praising God.
6. So the next day they marched out just as God had told them to do.
7. When they got to the battle site what do you think they did? Sharpen their swords? Dig some fox holes? NOPE. THEY HAD A PRAISE AND WORSHIP SERVICE!
8. Imagine what those fighting men thought when King J. decided to bring out the PRAISE TEAM!
 - a. Verse 21: ²¹ After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his ^[d] holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying:
 "Give thanks to the LORD,
 for his love endures forever."
9. The army must have been going out of their minds: "King J. have you lost it?"
 "These people are coming to get us and you want to sing some praise choruses?"
10. While they were singing their little hearts out GOD STEPPED IN.

Verse 22: ²² As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.
²³ The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

²⁴ When the men of Judah came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped. ²⁵

²⁷ Then, led by Jehoshaphat, all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Jerusalem, for the LORD had given them cause to rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ They entered Jerusalem and went to the temple of the LORD with harps and lutes and trumpets.

²⁹ The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰ And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.

How did Jehoshaphat show **TRUST in God?** (using our acrostic):

Took the circumstances to God in prayer (2 Chron. 20:3; 6-12)

Remembered when it seemed all was lost & He brought them through (2 Chron. 20:7)

Understood the CHARACTER of God (2 Chron. 20:6)

Stood on the promises of His word (2 Chron. 20:9-10)

Thanked Him IN ADVANCE knowing he would MAKE THINGS RIGHT (2 Chron. 20:21)

- Why do you think Jehoshaphat and his people had to go through this?
- Life is Unfair; But God is Just
- How do we know that?
- Back to Psalm 9

What Does It Mean That God is **JUST**?

Judgment belongs to God (Psalm 9:7-8)

Ultimately God will right all wrongs (Psalm 9:19-20)

Sin will result in penalty (Psalm 9:3-6; 15-17)

The oppressed will not be abandoned (Psalm 9:9-10; 12; 18)

So what's the takeaway for us?

- The truth is: we may not see justice this side of Heaven
- But God has promised He'll set things right and He will never leave or forsake us
- We have to go back and use these two little acrostics:
 - J.U.S.T. (see above) and
 - T.R.U.S.T. (see above)
- And though it's hard...and might seem to make as much sense as have a PRAISE AND WORSHIP SERVICE IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE...it boils down to what Mark Robnett said a few weeks ago:

“Do I really believe the Bible is true and that God's promises are directed toward me personally?”

Put another way: No matter how unfair life is, DO I BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISES OR NOT?

That's a perfect transition to next week's lesson from Psalms 105 and 106:
“God Is Faithful”