

## Justice Begins with Judgement

### Isaiah 1:21-31

When you look into your neighborhood, your community, or the world what leads you to say, 'that is not right'? Our passage is not about injustice outside of us, but inside the church.

*Our injustice.* We are called to love and do what is just and right (Micah 6:8), but our passage laments the presence of injustice among God's people (v. 21). When injustice is present in the church, we fail to embody the truth and beauty of the Gospel (v. 22). Injustice is marked by self-interest that neglects the needs of the orphan and widow (i.e., the weak, the vulnerable, the poor, the marginalized) (v. 23).<sup>[1]</sup>

*God's judgement.* God identifies himself as the Lord, the LORD of hosts, and the Mighty One of Israel establishing that he is the all-powerful One who will judge injustice (v. 24). Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne (Ps. 33:5) and he must judge every sin. However, instead of destruction, God promises purification and restoration (vv. 25-26). How can God both be just and merciful to his people?

The cross is where God's justice and mercy meet. God redeems his people with justice and righteousness (v. 27). His justice was satisfied when Jesus was judged in our place. The righteous demands of his law are fulfilled, not by us, but by the righteous life of Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

*Our response to God's judgement.* People respond to Jesus with rejection or repentance. Those who reject Jesus will be judged (v. 26). In the day of their judgement, their idols will fail them (vv. 29-30), and their own work is the cause of their destruction (v. 31).<sup>[2]</sup> But that is not the end of those in Christ. Those who repent are redeemed (v. 26), God is just to forgive their sins (1 John 1:9), and God restores his people to embody justice and righteousness (v. 26).

Jesus came to us who were weak, needy, and undeserving. His death satisfied God's justice and his life perfectly fulfilled the law's demand to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. With our hearts gripped by grace, we are called to follow King Jesus and pursue justice and righteousness in our spheres of influence. As we do so, what is true, right, and beautiful is restored among God's people and Christ's kingdom is built throughout the world.

### Questions for Individuals, Families, and Community Groups

- 1) When you look into your neighborhood, your community, or the world what leads you to say, 'that is not right'?
- 2) Our passage is not about injustice outside of us, but injustice among God's people. How do you need to repent of self-interest that has led you to neglect the weak and vulnerable? How do you need to receive afresh, through repentance and faith, the grace of Christ? Remind each other that God's justice was satisfied at the cross and the righteous demands of law fulfilled by Christ.
- 3) Motivated by grace, how is your heart stirred to pursue justice and righteousness in your sphere of influence?

[1] Motyer, Alec, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 49. [2] *Ibid.*, 51-52.