

The Gathering Church

Dan's message 7/19/26

Know God As He Is – God Is Just – Wk6

God is Omniscient
God is Just
Justice for All
To Do Justice
Justice Demands Judgement
Mercy Withholds Judgement
Grace is Undeserved

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." AW Tozar

What comes to your mind when you think about the word: Just or Justice?

If I said a Judge was just in his decision?

What If I said, "Justice was served"?

Or I said, "that was an injustice"?

Words like fairness, right, good, consequences, judgement come to mind. The image we get in our head is a judge sitting in the **seat of justice** making a **judgement** about what is to be done.

Justice is what is done by a jury and a judge in a case as they determine the facts and conclude what should be done about it. The hope is that "**Justice**" wins out.

But we have to ask ourselves: Justice according to what? How do we determine Justice. How do we determine what is right and what is fair. What is wrong and unjust.

Every day, in almost every school, students and teacher say the Pledge of Allegiance - "...One nation, under God: Indivisible with liberty and justice for all"

This is the "*promise of equality and fairness under the laws of the United States of America.*"

It means that every individual; regardless of wealth, race, background, or status; deserves *fair treatment and equal protection* within our legal system

But what does it mean to say that God is Just? Is he bound by any laws outside himself?

When we think about justice in reference to whom God is, we need to use our understanding of justice as a starting place and not an ending one, and understand God as being just.

Remember scripture tells us *God's ways are beyond our ways and His thoughts are beyond our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).*

If we are not careful, we will think God thinks like us and acts like us and we humanize him.

Illustration: Two men arrive at the Pearly Gates of Heaven.

St. Peter calls the first man forward. He is dressed to the nines, carrying a well-worn Bible.

"Tell me," St. Peter says, "what did you do during your life?"

The man smiles. "I faithfully served as a pastor for over fifty years."

"Wonderful," says St. Peter. "Here's your robe and your shepherd's staff."

Next comes a scruffy fellow with messy hair, ripped jeans, and tennis shoes.

"And what did you do?" St. Peter asks.

The man shrugs. "I drove a school bus."

St. Peter beams. "Excellent! Here's your royal silk robe, a gold staff, and a jeweled crown."

The pastor can't believe it.

"Wait a minute! I devoted fifty years to preaching God's Word. He drove a school bus! Why does he get the deluxe package?"

St. Peter smiles and says,

"Up here, we reward those who accomplished much. When you preached, people checked their phones and slept most of the time. When he drove that bus ... everyone prayed."

Although that is funny. Eternal justice isn't going to look like that.

One of the Names God gives himself is **Jehovah Tsidkenu** – "The LORD Our Righteousness" or "The Lord Our Justice." The Hebrew word connected to this name is **tsedeq** which is "righteousness or justice". He is more than one who acts righteously or with justice. God is the source of righteousness and justice. He is the standard bearer of how we understand Justice.

Consider Jeremiah's (Jer. 23:5-6) prophecy about the coming Kingdom pointing to Jesus.

5 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. 6 "In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.' (Jehovah Tsidkenu)

1) **God Is Just**

When we talk about God as Just or the Lord of Justice, or the Justifier, we need to remember that

- God doesn't abide by certain laws outside of himself.
- He doesn't act justly, like an earthly judge.
- He doesn't feel torn between mercy and judgement like most judges and jurors do, **He is just.**
- He has all knowledge, (God is **Omniscient**). He knows every fact, every motive and intention of every heart on the earth. (Psalm 139:1-4).

1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. 3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

- He is **Perfectly holy**. Righteous in every thought or action.
- He is **Immutable**. His character never changes. "He is the same yesterday today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8).
- And because of this, He is **Perfectly Just**. He cannot make an unjust decision.

Human judges judge by exploring and investigating and trying their best to interpret laws and administer justice. But sometimes they get it wrong. The innocent man is convicted, and the guilty goes free.

- God is just and when he judges, he does it perfectly.
- He has perfect knowledge of all truth.
- Instead of **discovering** the truth. God simply **declares** the truth He has always perfectly known.
- There is no deliberation with God. The verdict is in, all the time because He is just.

We should stand in AWE and reverence, when we begin to understand how quickly He knows our motivations and intent of our hearts. We cannot hide from His justice.

2) God DOES Justice

God does not turn a blind eye to the injustice in His creation. He is bringing about Justice because that is who he is.

Moses declares this when he says the ways of God are just ..

*"The Rock! His work is perfect, For **all His ways are just**; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He."* Deuteronomy 32:4

The psalmist says...

*"**Righteousness and justice** are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You." Psalms 89:14*

3) God JUSTIFIES Sinners

Romans 3:23-26 (NASB)

*23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, **so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.***

God could not look past our sin because He is just. But we were justified by the blood of Jesus who was the propitiation of our Sin.

Anybody thankful that God has passed over the sins we have committed and through the blood of Jesus has become your Justifier. God is just but through Jesus he has given us justification.

Romans 3:23-25 (Message)

*Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. **Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself; A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where He always wanted us to be.** And He did it by means of Jesus Christ, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured.*

We are Justified through Faith

God is perfectly just. He cannot ignore sin. Yet through Christ, He provides a way to declare sinners righteous without compromising His justice.

God remains "**just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**"

Speeding Ticket Example:

Imagine you are driving 90 mph in a 55-mph zone.

You get pulled over. There is no question of guilt. You know you were speeding. The officer knows you were speeding. The radar confirms you were speeding.

Question: "What does justice require?"

Justice: The officer writes the ticket. You get a fine and points go on your license. Your insurance rates go up. The law has been upheld. Justice has given you what you deserved.

Now suppose something different happens.

The officer says, "I'm going to let you off with a warning."

You deserved the ticket, the fine and the points but you are let off the hook.

What have you been given? Mercy

Mercy withholds what is deserved.

Notice something important. The officer did not declare you innocent. Instead He chose not to give you the penalty you deserved.

Now imagine an even more unbelievable situation.

The officer says, "Not only am I not giving you a ticket, but I'm going to pay for your defensive driving course, pay your insurance increase, and even give you a gas card for your trip home."

This is more than mercy. You have received gifts you never earned.

Grace gives what is not deserved.

That's what God did for us. We deserved death because of our sin. Jesus not only didn't give us what we deserved. He went a step further and gave us salvation and eternal life.

- **Justice** — I receive what I deserve.
- **Mercy** — I do not receive what I deserve.
- **Grace** — I receive what I do not deserve.

And when we say someone is Justified, it is the pulling together of those three concepts. This is the Gospel message. It is the Good news. We have justification by faith. We put our faith in Christ, and we don't get what we deserve but we get better than we deserve.

Anybody follow Dave Rasey? If someone asks him how he is doing, what does he say: "Better than I deserve." That is a great statement for every believer who has been justified by faith.

One More example (since school is around the corner here): You're a student and I am teacher:

Imagine report card time. Some of you love it and some of you hate that time of year as a student.

You are going to get a grade on that report card that you deserved; determined by your ability to complete the work in the class and do well on tests.

Every student receives grades that accurately reflect their learning. And let's say one kid plagiarizes a paper and another cheats on a test and they both get caught. Justice demands that they get what their actions deserve. A zero on a test and that will be reflected on their final grade.

Now let's say the teacher is merciful. And wants to curve their tests so that the class average is a little better. Each of the students doesn't get what they deserved. They actually deserve a more accurate grade, but the teacher shows **mercy**.

Now imagine this ... There is only one perfect student in this class who receives a 100 percent and everyone else in the class has failed. And the perfect student volunteers to take everyone's flunking grades on himself and then gives everyone his perfect transcript.

That is **grace**, (getting what I don't deserve) grounded in justice. The perfect student was able to do that because of his position.

This the gospel. And it's what Jesus did for us. It's in this progression:

1. **God is Just** (*His character*)
2. **God's justice demands judgment** (*Rétribution*)
3. **Christ satisfies that judgment** (*The cross*)
4. **God shows mercy by withholding the condemnation we deserve.**
5. **God shows grace by giving us Christ's righteousness and eternal life.**

God is Just, but He also the justifier.

4) God RESTORES relationship

The goal of God's justice is not to condemn sinners, but to restore His creation and to bring about justification and reconciliation.

God is relational and His desire is that all might be saved. *"God so loved **the world** that **He gave his only son**, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16)

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous (just) to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Consider the thief on the cross as we consider this topic of Justice and God's heart of Restoration...

Were the two criminals justly treated? Yes, they were paying for the penalty of their crimes and the thief even in his remarks to the other thief acknowledges it.

Notice what he says:

"And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." (Luke 23:41-43)

3 Confessions of the thief.

1. **I am guilty.**
2. **My punishment is deserved.**
3. **Jesus is innocent.**

He is not arguing for mercy or asking for the system to treat him more fairly. **He is agreeing with guilty verdict.**

This is really the beginning of repentance. God is just, and when we sin, it affects our relationship with him, because He is Holy. Distance is created between us and Him.

But if we confess and admit our sins

"... He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

Notice how everything changes with the words of the criminal

The next sentence is not about justice; it is about faith.

42 *"And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!'"*

The thief admits "He deserves judgment." Jesus the "The lamb of God" is hanging beside him and he has faith to entrust himself to Jesus as His savior.

Jesus responds **43** "And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.""

The thief is **not receiving what he deserves.**

He is receiving what Christ has purchased.

We call this Justification. By his faith in Jesus as his Savior he is being justified. Brought back into the relationship with God.

It's incredible. What an amazing God we serve.

And we too like the thief, need to continue to repent and present our sins before Him, so that we too can find mercy and grace.

5) God's people are **to DO Justice** (Micah 6:8)

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

What is a "Justice of the Peace". He is put in place by the jurisdiction of the land to hand the small civil suits and to be a hand in bringing peace and justice for the country he serves.

In a similar way we have been called to **People of Peace that DO JUSTICE, that LOVE KINDNESS and WALK HUMBLY with our GOD.**

To emulate the justice of our Savior and be people that release his justice, his grace and his mercy in our relational world. For the grace and love and forgiveness you have been given, now release it in a world that needs a lot of it.

6) One day God will COMPLETE Justice (Revelation 21–22)

***21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, **4** and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." **5** And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."*

Gods story starts with **His dwelling with man** in the garden in Genesis 1–2 and ends with **God dwelling with man** in Revelation 21–22

WARNING: Revelation 22:12–14.

*"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. **13** "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." **14** Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.*