

Daily Devotional #5 – God’s Righteousness/Justice

Did you know that the Bible speaks of God’s righteousness and justice using the same term? To be just is to be righteous and to be righteous is to be just. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, *“The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.”*

So, what does it mean when we speak of God as righteous and just?

Very simply, it describes God as One who always does what is right and good. But how does He determine what is right and good? He is the standard of what is right and good. Isaiah 45:19 says, *“I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek me in vain.’ I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.”* We do not determine what is right and wrong and then have God follow that standard. No! God determines what is right and wrong and always does what is right and good. How do we know what God views as right and wrong? Our conscience warns us about something being wrong to a certain extent, but even the conscience can be misinformed and/or seared over. Therefore, the ultimate way to determine what God sees as right and wrong are His Scriptures.

Since God is righteous and just, He must reward those who do good and must punish those who do evil. Even though we know that is the right thing to do, we do not always see that in our society. Many times, violent criminals who are guilty of horrible crimes do not get what they deserve. Some businesses reward people who use evil means such as lying, cheating, or other deceptions to get them what they want. God, however, is righteous and just at all times. He never ceases to do what is right.

What does God’s righteousness and justice mean for you?

The fact that God is righteous and just is either great news or also terrifying news for us. It is great news to those who do good and live a life of obedience to God. Those who are perfect have no need to fear. It is terrifying news, however, for those who have sinned. Anyone who has sinned against God must be punished. There is no way around the fact that sin must be and will be punished by God. The question needs to be asked, do you live a life of perfect obedience to God or have you sinned against Him? The Bible is clear that *“all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”* (Rom. 3:23) This means we should be terrified to know that punishment awaits us. This punishment is deserved and the righteous response to sin. It would not be just of God to not punish crimes committed against Him. So, we now come to a very important question – How can sinners enter into Heaven and not violate the righteousness and justice of God?

The answer to this question is: Jesus. In fact, Jesus came to resolve this seeming dilemma. The only way for sinners to not experience the judgment of God for their sins is for someone else to pay for their crimes by experiencing their death sentence in their place. This is what Jesus did when He died on the cross. He paid the penalty for sins. He also gave sinners who believe His righteousness so that God who is the just Judge, can declare them “innocent!” There is no other way to be declared innocent before God. Faith in the finished work of Jesus causes you be thankful that God is just and righteous rather than terrified. God is no longer your enemy when you place your trust and faith in Christ. Believers were declared “guilty” and awaiting the punishment for their crimes. But now, they have been declared “innocent” in Christ! If you died today, would the Judge declare you “innocent” or “guilty”?