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Justice!

Hatred, aggression, conflict, personal attacks, oppression, war are standard fare. Where is the justice? How are Christians to respond? What are we to do in the face of injustice?

Let's back up a step, or two. We begin with *justice*, specifically God's justice. God is holy or pure, and He is always right, or righteous, and so brings about justice. Psalm 89 tells us "righteousness and justice are the foundation of [His] throne" (14). God is pleased with and rewards good and hates and punishes evil. God has no favorites, He is impartial in His judgments—He is just.

We know from Scripture that while evil, sin, injustice, even grave injustice are done by many, God is the Judge, and His final judgment will be just. As believers, God's justice for our sin was satisfied by Christ taking our sins on Himself, paying the penalty due us, so that we might be pardoned and become the righteousness of God in Christ.

But what do we do about the injustice around us, in our lives, where we live, in the world?

At times in the history of the church the organized church and governments overlapped. Some Christians then used the force of the state to bring about justice, or what they saw as justice. While Christians are to evaluate all things, and make choices in line with God's word, seek justice for people and in our society, the church is not a political or governmental entity.

Isaiah chapter 42 opens with one of God's promises about the Messiah, about Christ.

"Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations."

Only Christ can and will bring about true, complete justice. This promise in Isaiah speaks about the time when Christ will rule on earth. But Jesus is the source and giver of justice in every age and moment. No political view or party, no government, no organization can bring about true, complete justice.



That brings us back to the basic question, “What are we to do in the face of injustice?” God tells us through the prophet Micah, that He

“has told you, mortal one, 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” (6:8)

We are not to be unconcerned, look the other way or try to isolate ourselves and ours from the world and its injustice.

Our response begins with the reality of being those who have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and then being peacemakers by sharing the gospel relying on God using that to bring others to Himself.

God tells us what is good, what is required of us is that we

- Do justice. A simple but demanding statement. We are to mirror God being just: we are, as the prophet Amos wrote succinctly, to “hate evil, love good” (4:15). This encompasses each and every area of our life. We are to know what is good and love it by pursuing it, living it out. We are to know what is evil and hate it, by leaving no room for it in any area of our life. We cannot divide our lives into different segments with different values and practices, such as one successful business man evidenced when he told me, “Church is church and business and business.” We are salt and light in our world when we live justly.
- Love kindness. The word *kindness* Micah used here is one of the most beautiful words in the Old Testament language. It cannot be summed up in one English word. For many instances it can be best translated as *lovingkindness*. We are to be kind to others as God has been and is kind to us, to display love in action by being considerate, generous, patient. And we are to *love* it! When we are kind to others just out of duty or obligation we are not loving kindness.
- Walk humbly with our God. In short, we are to remember that God is God, and we are not. We are to live our life of faith driven not only by the fact that He is immeasurably greater than we are, but that He has been and is immeasurably loving, gracious and merciful to us. And so we then rely on Him, His wisdom and strength rather than our own. We accept and follow His plans and time table rather than our own. And, getting back to the basic question of what we are to do in the face of injustice, living humbly with God means living knowing Christ is the just judge who will administer it perfectly in His kingdom and in the final judgment.