

Is There No Justice?  
Isaiah 53:8  
6<sup>th</sup> Wednesday in Lent  
March 20, 2013

“Is there no justice in the world?” How often have we said that? We hear stories of criminals who are obviously guilty, but get off on some technicality and go free only to stalk more victims. So often the innocent suffer because of the apathy of society.

The tragic epitome of the evil of apathy is the millions of innocent babies who have been, and continue to be, murdered by abortion. They are like silent lambs led to the slaughter <sup>(Is 53:7)</sup>. Those infants are unable to open their mouths to speak <sup>(Is 53:7)</sup>. And so few people actually speak in their defense that we condemn those children to slaughter by our silence. Is there no justice?

We have all heard stories about victims of crime who may scream for help, but their cries are ignored by people who don't want to become involved. The disparity between rich and poor grows wider every year. In the business world, those who bend the rules and step on the people beneath them often seem to come out on top. Quite often, it look like nice guys do finish last. Is there no justice?

What about those innocent people who went to work one morning as usual. The problem is they worked in the Oklahoma City Federal Building or the Twin Towers. Is there no justice?

So why doesn't God do something about these kinds of things? Why doesn't God come down from heaven and punish the wicked like he did at Sodom and Gomorrah <sup>(Gen 18-19)</sup>. Why doesn't God carry out his justice now?

Some people find this question so hard to comprehend they go so far as to claim, “There must not be a God” or “God must not be good” or “God must not care about us.” Others propose that God is an impotent wimp, not powerful enough to stop evil. That's the answer given by Rabbi Harold Kushner in his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.

The scary thing is, if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that we could be part of the problem of injustice, rather than part of the solution. We may be the ones who go unpunished when we speed on the highway or cheat on our taxes. We may be the ones who turn a deaf ear to those who are asking for our help. We may be the ones who step on others as we rush to climb the ladder of success.

The truth is, if God were to completely eliminate all injustice, we would have to go. But that's not what God is doing, is it? God is patiently enduring the sinfulness of humanity because, as Paul tells us in his first letter to Timothy, *God our Savior . . . wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth* <sup>(1 Tim 2:3-4 NIV)</sup>.

So, for now, but we don't know for how long, God continues to let the world go on. He is postponing the Day of Judgment so that more can be brought to faith in Christ. For now, God tolerates man's inhumanity to man and allows time for people to turn from their, and our, unjust ways. But don't be deceived, Judgment Day will come. From that day on, injustice will be no more; each person will be either in heaven with our Lord, or in hell with Satan.

Yet, even though God has tolerated sin all the way from Adam and Eve to today, God has not sat silently by while the world has suffered injustice. God has, in fact, done something. God has done something amazing, something wonderful. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer the greatest injustice the world has ever seen. In a paradox the sinful world cannot comprehend, God used the injustice that Jesus suffered to justify sinners.

Listen as Isaiah prophesies about the Savior's character: *I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting* (Is 50:5-6 NIV). Again: *He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth* (Is 53:9 NIV). And the reward for this kind of obedience and upright living: *He was oppressed and afflicted ... he was led like a lamb to the slaughter* (Is 53:7 NIV).

We have all heard someone say, "I hope he gets what he deserves," but Jesus never got what he deserved. When Jesus was praying in Gethsemane, a mob with swords and clubs was on its way to arrest him. Jesus had never forced anyone to follow him, but they would force Jesus to follow them. Jesus could have called 12 legions of angels to defend him, but he told Peter to put away his sword. Jesus surrendered to fulfill his Father's will.

Jesus was also denied due process of law. He suffered through hurried, makeshift trials before the high priest and the Jewish council, before Pilate, before Herod, and then back to Pilate. Not only were Jesus's trials unjust, they were illegal. These trials were not held in accordance with Jewish law.

- § Jesus was tried at night so it could be done before the Passover began. Jewish law required trials to be held before sundown.
- § Jesus' trial was held in a private home instead of a court of law. Jewish law required trials to be public.
- § The false testimony of the false witnesses against Jesus did not agree. Jewish law required two eyewitnesses, in full agreement, for a conviction of a capital crime.

If that isn't enough injustice, read Luke 23:1-22 and you will find that, between Pilate and Herod, Jesus was acquitted a total of five times.

The trials of Jesus Christ were a travesty; a total miscarriage of justice. Yet the greatest injustice of all was that the only perfect person to ever walk this earth suffered and died for the sins of others. Jesus suffered the penalty of all the injustices that we have ever committed. Isaiah says: *He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all* (Is 53:5-6 NIV). The apostle Paul writes: *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God* (2 Cor 5:21 NIV).

In this way, God carried out his own form of justice. Through the suffering of Jesus, God brought about the justification of sinful humanity. God justified you and me. That means that God used the sacrifice of Jesus to balance the scales of justice which had been so heavily tipped against us. God uses the righteousness of Christ to cover our sins, including our sins of injustice.

The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23), but in God's economy of grace, it was Jesus who endured the death that we deserve. He was cut off from the land of the living so that we may have everlasting life in his name. His condemnation is our pardon; his judgment is our acquittal.

Isaiah 53:8 tells us: *By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants.* At the time of Christ's death, perhaps no one imagined that he would have any future, or any future followers. Christ's enemies thought that he would be quickly forgotten. They figured his disciples would disband. Who would want to risk suffering the same kind of unjust fate as Jesus?

But Christ rose from the dead. His disciples rejoiced and spread the word. Pentecost came, and on one day three thousand were baptized and received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-41). The number of those baptized into Christ's death and resurrection has been growing ever since. Today Jesus has millions of descendants – people who are born again by water and the Spirit – given new life in God.

So now, when we confront injustice, there's no reason to despair. God has done something about it. We take our refuge in the equity of God's justice that condemned the innocent Christ for all our sins so that we might be justified – declared righteous (Is 53:11) – and be his descendants, heirs of life eternal. What gracious justice our Lord provides!