

## The Faith That Moves us to Trust God's Justice

***I had someone close to me abused at a young age – and it has deeply harmed us both. For many years I have wrestled with running after revenge versus resting in God's justice.***

***I can tell you that God has done much healing in my life and my friend's life. It still hurts and has been hard.***

***Steven is a believer in N. India who has to pay money to local gang of radical Hindus every month to protect his business and his family. Steven is a part of an Acts 29 church planting movement in India – and he knows first hand what it is to be hopelessly oppressed and abusively threatened with no end in sight.***

***Steven now walks other believers through present oppression. He is not removed from the oppression – but he has hope.***

There are some of you in this room that have been deeply harmed by those who had power or position over you. There are others who have shared in this hurt even though it didn't directly happen to you. Today, God comes to give hope – real hope in the middle of your hurt, your anguish. He has heard you and he cares. Today – in His word, He comes to you and I and the whole body of Christ with a powerful promise full of strong hope. Here is our main truth:

**When we have been deeply harmed – resting in God's justice is our only hope for wholeness.**

*(deeply harmed or abused, oppressed, or exploited / wholeness or healing, complete restoration of your soul)*

01. When deeply harmed by another, we are called to rest **in God's complete justice.**

02. Often, we run after revenge when we or someone we care about is deeply harmed.

03. **How do we rest in God's perfect and complete justice?**

01. When **deeply harmed by another, we are called to rest in God's complete justice.**

- **God sees the oppressor's actions – and promises judgment.**

James 5:1-6 (ESV) 1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.

This is a declaration of judgment against unbelievers who have deeply harmed others through their power and position – in this case achieved by wealth. Wealth in our culture is just about everyone – for us this is more about those who have harmed those through power and position.

2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days.

**-They have hoarded wealth for self – to gain power and position.**

4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

**-They have used their power and position to exploit others.**

5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

**-They have exploited others to satisfy their own selfish and obese desires.**

6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

**-Their power and position has abused, exploited, oppressed, and even murdered some.**

One more thought was added. ***"He did not resist you."*** Literally this means – he could not or did not resist you. It is even translated this way in most other bible translations. *He could not or did not resist you means – the man or woman was living in such a fragile condition that if he resisted – he would have lost his job, his place in the community, his life – or she would have lost her marriage, her ability to feed her kids, etc.*

- **God will bring perfect and complete justice to all.**

James 5:7 (ESV) Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.

- At Christ's return – the oppressor and the oppressed will receive perfect and complete justice.

1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 (ESV) 5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering — 6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, *(Rom 1:16 ... of the gospel, it is the power of salvation to all who believe)*

- **The unrighteous – oppressor** will be declared guilty by their works and will be physically and spiritually punished forever. *(9-physically suffering / 9-spiritually punished away from God)*

10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

- **The righteous – who were oppressed** – will be declared innocent by Christ's work and will be fully accepted and restored by Christ.

**The oppressed and abuse find healing and wholeness when we rest in God's justice.**

- 1) *The guilty (by their works) will be completely judged and punished. (More importantly ...)*
- 2) *The innocent (by Christ's work) will be completely accepted and restored.*

**For many years of my life – I went back and forth between stuffing the hurt and running to revenge. When we don't rest in God's justice – we only have two options – stuff or run and eventually both lead to revenge.**

02. Often, we run after revenge when we or someone we care about is deeply harmed.

- **Revenge only brings emptiness to all.** *(Proverbs 6:32-35)* adultery>loss>revenge>destruction
  - Revenge is birthed by a loss of dignity or name.
  - Revenge seeks to reclaim or redeem our dignity or name by taking another's.
  - Revenge only leads to both parties losing dignity or name.

*You are seeking to be whole again and somehow hurting another or wanting them to hurt promises a measure of healing to us – that it never gives!*

**PHOTO – pickaxed car** - A man sought to get his ex-girlfriend back by public shaming her with revenge porn. She then pickaxed his favorite car. Both lost.

**When John Matar stepped outside his Chicago home on his birthday recently**, he found two tons of manure piled eight feet high on his front lawn. The present, compliments of his brother in California, was the latest in an outlandish gift-giving REVENGE war that erupted between the two when John sent his sibling one of those “insulting” birthday cards. He got 50 back. The 2 tons of manure happened because John had sent his brother a month worth of his babies diapers – fully loaded with a note that said – since you can't be here to see our new son we thought we would send a piece of him to you. Over the years, gifts between the two have also included a full-grown elephant and two busloads of choirboys. Last year John received a pet rock that tipped the scale at 4,000 pounds. He responded with 10 tons of pebbles and a note telling his brother that the pet rock had babies. Both lose.

**Tokyo police recently arrested a man who was upset over being denied entrance to graduate school 14 years ago.** Since that day he has averaged about 10 phone calls a night—between the hours of 8 p.m. and 2 a.m.—to the former professor whom he blames for his lost opportunity. Those 14 years of annoying phone calls totaled up to over 50,000 calls. The man who made the calls – has not been able to keep a job. And the one who received them – has been living in constant worry for his life for 14 years. Both lost.

*Proverbs 20:22 (ESV) Do not say, “I will repay evil”; wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.*

*You cannot deliver yourself – redeem your name, your dignity – all you do is harm yourself and others.*

***Revenge is to a wounded soul what saltwater is to a man dying of thirst. When you are dying of thirst on a raft – saltwater seems like an option – but all it does is kill. Our kidneys make urine of all the waste in our bodies and it makes it at a salt concentration of 2%. Sea water is approx. 3% salt. So if you drank a liter of salt water it would take a 1.5 liters of water in your own body to make the urine to remove the waste in your body. That means sea water just sucks more water from you – and hastens your death by dehydration. Revenge is like that – it hastens the emptiness and brings more death to all.***

*Romans 12:19 (ESV) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

- **The desire for justice comes from God.**

**Justice is from God and is a part of everyone's soul.** We all want it when something awful happens to us or even to someone we feel was vulnerable – small child, disabled, or woman. But just wanting someone to get just punishment is not perfect and complete justice. It also includes you finding healing that brings wholeness back to your soul. That is how God wants to redeem your name – but he has even more!

**Revenge is the perversion of justice** – because it only seeks to redeem your name and doing so just hurts everyone's name the oppressor, you, and God. It does not satisfy or make whole.

**Justice seeks to redeem your name – and God's name.**

**Justice is to a wounded soul like fresh water is to that many dying of thirst.** Fresh water rehydrates & heals a body that has had many of its cells destroyed by dehydration. Justice brings God's presence to heal-HOW?

### 03. How do we rest in God's perfect and complete justice?

- **Ongoing confession of our desire revenge.**

- Lord, I confess I desire revenge. Help me believe it is futile and harms all names -even Yours.

*If you are someone you care about has been deeply harmed – you will live here if you want to see real healing – wholeness in your soul. I confess – this is still where I regularly have to go bc I do get tempted to run to revenge. I run here not just bc I am tempted to run to revenge – but because I want to be whole.*

- **Ongoing repentance that turns us to perfectly just Jesus.**

When I seek revenge – what am I saying about the cross? *(Steven – shared this.)*

- In running after revenge, I am saying God you did not exact enough justice on Jesus.

**I am saying the cross is not enough to forgive my oppressor or to judge him one day.**

*For he or she will receive one or another in perfect and complete justice. He will receive forgiveness bc he/she rests on Christ's work and God's justice on Jesus. So is God's justice on Jesus enough for what was done to you? Revenge says NO! Or, if he/she rejects Jesus – the wrath poured out on Jesus will be equally poured out on your oppressor. Revenge says – that is not enough.*

- In running after revenge, I am saying God you are not perfectly and completely JUST.

*If the cross falls short I am saying – God you fall short.*

**REPENT of defaming God's name – and turn to Him who is perfectly and completely just – the cross does prove this.**

- **Living out the kingdom of God now.**

James 5:7 (ESV) Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

As you wait for perfect and complete justice to come for you and the oppressor ...

- Walk in ongoing love and forgiveness toward your enemy. *(Takes time - set boundaries!)*

Matthew 5:44 (ESV) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Luke 23:34 (ESV) And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

*Steven says – and I absolutely agree – the beginning of healing comes at ongoing confession and repentance – but you begin to taste healing – you begin to drink the fresh water of God's spirit that will bring relief, healing, wholeness to your soul – when we begin to give love and forgiveness to our oppressor. Boundaries but love, boundaries but forgiveness. From God's love and forgiveness to us – we begin to give.*

As we, the body of Christ, wait for perfect and complete justice to come for the oppressed ...

- **Speak out for the oppressed.**

*(We speak love and truth – emphasis on truth to sinners. We speak out against bullies as Jesus did.)*

*EX. We stand on God's truth for what is marriage, Yet we are louder in our love and seek to build bridges not walls to those in the gay and lesbian life.*

*Sex slaves – we speak out against with passion. Orphans – we speak out with passion to defend. The abused woman – we speak out against abusers and defend the abused woman.*

- **Defend and care for the vulnerable being harmed.**

*Orphan and widow care, LIFT (disability ministry), SHARING SHED – caring for those in crises.*

**When we don't live out the kingdom now – we spread a message of hopelessness to those who have been harmed. We defame the name of God and help spread the lie – He and His body do not care.**

*Church – we must not be silent to bullies, but we must do so while we offer love and forgiveness.*

*Crazy – but this is Jesus. “Father forgive them.” Please – let God quiet your heart before you rant on Twitter or at work or anywhere else. Let's defend the abused and let's move toward the hurting with real actions – not just words.*

**We bring the hope of healing and wholeness in Christ - to those who have been harmed when we live out the kingdom of God now.**

*Steven says there are many hurting in his area and by reaching out to those who are hurting – orphan, widow – he has seen the hope of the body of Christ rise. One simple act of justice gives hope in God's perfect justice.*

**When we have been deeply harmed – resting in God's justice is our only hope for wholeness.**