



FEAR

LOVE

ANGER

HOPE

REVENGE

JOY

JUSTICE

PEACE

CONDEMNATION

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Justice: Identificational Repentance and The Cross

WARM UP: Have you ever had to clean up somebody else's mess? Describe how you felt. Why did you do it?

READ: Romans 2:12-16, Micah 6:8, Ezra 9:3-11:15

FOCUS: We are agents of Biblical justice when we walk in identificational repentance.

OBSERVE (10 minutes)

FROM WHERE JUSTICE COMES

- The source that allows you to develop a heart for true justice is God's Word.
- The very idea of justice points us to a God who is the standard for that justice. We must note this because not everyone rallying behind the idea of justice right now has God as their motivating source.
- Romans 2 tells us that all men and women have God's law written on their hearts, whether or not they choose to obey it.
- Searching for true, lasting justice without an acknowledgment of God is ideologically problematic for at least two reasons. It leads to:
 - philosophical inconsistencies
 - a lack of historic longevity in providing permanent solutions to societal injustices.
- Because God does exist, we must look to him for the standard of exacting justice.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

- To even be moved to engage in ongoing acts of justice requires an understanding of the Biblical concept of identificational repentance.
- This reminds us of the importance of where we have been so that, in Christ, we can get where we need to go. The posture that allows you to enter into God's heart for Biblical justice is identificational repentance.
- When you look at the Scriptures, whether you feel innocent or not in regards to injustice, God says that he looks at us not only individually, but also as a nation. In our nation it is clear that many ungodly injustices abound.
- Just because we have friends, family members or co-workers of a different ethnicity doesn't mean that we're untouched by the sin that surrounds us.
- We need to allow the Holy Spirit to do surgery, even understanding how our family history has affected our hearts.
- Ezra is our Biblical example of identificational repentance.
- The power of identificational repentance is that you make sure whatever was passed down through word, sentiment or deed stops with you.

TO WHOM WE MUST GO

- The person that allows you to enter into God's solution for Biblical justice is Jesus Christ.
- To have a heart of Biblical justice, and truly understand identificational repentance, you can look to Christ at the cross.
 - It is here that both injustice and justice meet.
 - There was justice in the fact that there was a price that was paid for the sin of humanity who broke the holy laws of God.
 - There was injustice in the fact that Christ, the only sinless one, died for the sins committed by other men.
 - He can therefore say that justice must be served while also comforting those who suffer injustice.
- The Kingdom of God is a now **and** not yet Kingdom - it has come through the first advent (coming) of Jesus Christ, but won't be fully realized until his return.
 - We should focus our hope for justice in the present and coming Kingdom of God
 - To put your hope in anything else is unbiblical and will lead to both disillusionment and disappointment.
- Jesus commanded us to do good works, including fighting for Biblical justice, preaching the gospel and making disciples until his return.
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."*
 - We serve a God of great grace. He gives us in Christ and the cross what we don't deserve - an opportunity for forgiveness and redemption. We are called to do that for one another, no matter where we've found ourselves during this turbulent time.

REFLECT AND DISCUSS (30 min)

- Reflect on Ezra 9:3-15. This is a picture of identificational repentance. Discuss how Ezra felt about the faithlessness of the people and what he did as a result.
- Reflect on 2 Cor 7:8-11. Discuss what 'godly grief' and 'worldly grief' are. Discuss how they are a part of identificational repentance before God.
- Reflect on Christ on the cross. How does this act of divine love display and exemplify divine justice.

PRAY & TAKE ACTION

- According to Ezra, to engage in Biblical Identificational repentance we must:
 - Identify the Sin
 - Acknowledge how the sin has affected our families and land.
 - Renounce the sin as an offense to God
 - Commit to *actively* turning away from the sin to see the healing of our land

'Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.' - Acts 3:19-21 esv

- **Isaiah 1:16-17**

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

- **Romans 2:12-16**

For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

- **Proverbs 14:34**

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

- **Micah 6:8**

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

- **Proverbs 15:1**

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

- **Proverbs 15:4**

A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

- **Proverbs 15:2**

The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.

- **Proverbs 25:15**

With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.

Ezra 9:3-11; 15

As soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled. Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered around me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice. And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God, saying: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt. And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today. But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant and to give us a secure hold within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery. For we are slaves. Yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem. "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments, which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land that you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land impure with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations that have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. O Lord, the God of Israel, you are just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is today.

Scripture continued...

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Resources

- [Mere Christianity](#) by C.S. Lewis
- [The Reason for God](#) by Timothy Keller
- [Why We Can't Wait](#) by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- [Holy Post- Race In America](#) video by Phil Vischer
- [The Segregation Myth: Richard Rothstein Debunks an American Lie](#) video by NOW THIS