

LOVE

Without Hypocrisy

(in the book of Romans)

58 – Vengeance – Injustice

LAST WEEK, WE SAW ...

- **JUSTICE** is a good concept with many dimensions.
 - ✓ JUSTICE ✓ VINDICATION ✓ PUNISHMENT
 - ✓ JUDGING ✓ VENGEANCE ✓ REVENGE/AVENGE
- Even though people often distort it .
 - ✓ VINDICTIVE
 - ✓ VENGEFUL

(as they do other good things)

- **GOD** is actively involved in administering all aspects of justice.

- **HUMAN INVOLVEMENT IN JUSTICE** is required by God.
 - God requires **DESIGNATED AUTHORITIES** to be actively involved in administering justice.
 - The general concept of "justice."
 - The "punishment" aspect of it.
 - God requires **INDIVIDUALS** to be actively involved in promoting justice.
 - The general concept of "justice."
 - ★★ – But NOT the "punishment" aspect of it. ★★

KEY ISSUE: **"ONLY IN THE WAY INDICATED IN SCRIPTURE"**

(Otherwise, it is injustice!)

The further we are from Scripture, the more corrupt our "justice" will be.

AUTHORITIES HAVE THE OBLIGATION TO JUDGE IN THE WAY GOD REQUIRES, and will themselves be judged for how they do it.

PROBLEM: Our nation has ceased to fulfil this obligation.

EXAMPLE

Atheists (and the like) have redefined and distorted many concepts, with the goal of removing God from the affairs of life.

RESULT? Our nation's laws are increasingly hostile to God's laws. (Those who have done this will be judged by God.)

REDEFINING CONCEPTS SO AS TO EXCLUDE GOD – EXAMPLES:

NOT SO!

We need to be "secular" * and keep GOD out of things!

"Secular" has been redefined as so as to exclude "God"; the concept originally referred to "things pertaining to this present world," and did not deny God's role in such matters!

We need separation of "church"* and "state"!

"Church" has been redefined to include "God"; the concept originally referred to "church denominations" – such as Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, etc. – not God!

AN IMPORTANT CONCEPT, WHEN DEALING WITH JUSTICE:

BOTH AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS DESIGNATED AUTHORITIES

We must deal with
our own sins...



OR WE MAY END UP
LIKE THESE PEOPLE:

[If you] rely on the Law, and boast about God, and know his will, and approve of what is best because you have been instructed in the Law; and if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light to those in darkness, an instructor of ignorant people, and a teacher of infants because you have the full content of knowledge and truth in the Law—

Romans 2:17b-20 (ISV)

THEY ENDED UP SERVING
THE DEVIL, NOT GOD!

... as you teach others, do you fail to teach yourself?
As you preach against stealing, do you steal? As you forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? As you abhor idols, do you rob temples?
As you boast about the Law, do you dishonor God by breaking the Law?
As it is written, "God's name is being blasphemed among the gentiles because of you."

Romans 2:21-24 (ISV)

Romans 12:19 focuses on:
INDIVIDUALS
AND THE ISSUE OF PUNISHMENT

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Romans 12:19-20 (NIV)

❖ What does this mean?

❖ What does it not mean?

It does **NOT** mean we remain silent about God's coming judgment and the punishment of sinners.

- **YES** – Individuals have authority (and a duty) to proclaim God's judgment... but not to carry out the punishment.

EXAMPLE: But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Romans 2:5 (NIV)

It does **NOT** mean that people cannot punish as God's designated authorities.

- **YES** – Individuals as God's designated authorities have a duty to punish those who do wrong.

– Only in the way designated by Scripture.

– Examples: Parents, church, state.

EXAMPLE: The [governing] authorities are established by God for that very purpose, to punish those who do wrong.

Romans 13:4b (NLT)

It does **NOT** mean that people cannot ask God's designated authorities to provide justice.

- **YES – Individuals can ask God's designated authorities to provide justice and to punish those who do wrong.**

EXAMPLE:

If I am guilty and have done something wrong for which I deserve the death penalty, I don't reject the idea of dying.
But if their accusations are untrue, no one can hand me over to them as a favor. I appeal my case to the emperor!"

Acts 25:11 (GW)

PROBLEM:

Designated authorities are **NOT PERFECT!**

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO THIS FACT?

Designated authorities are NOT PERFECT!

- This does NOT mean we are to *avoid* the pursuit of justice through them.
- Scripture contains many examples of people seeking justice from God's designated authorities, *even though the authorities were imperfect* (and sometimes quite corrupt).

WRONG ATTITUDE:

I'll just ignore them and let GOD do it!

EXAMPLE OF RIGHT ATTITUDE (APOSTLE PAUL):

I appeal to the emperor!

WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

- **Option #1:** Appeal to a *higher* designated authority.
- **Option #2:** (*especially if Option #1 fails*) Entrust the matter to God, "turn the other cheek," etc.
- **NOT an Option:** Take the matter into our own hands.

AS THE APOSTLE PAUL DID:

I appeal to the emperor!

THIS IS WHERE OUR THEME VERSE FOCUSES.

When human authority fails, OPTION #2 IS OUR OPTION

✓ The right option. ✓ The only option.

NOT an Option:

Taking the matter into our own hands.

Option #2:

Entrusting the matter to God, "turning the other cheek," etc.

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Romans 12:19-20 (NIV)

This is why we find verses such as these...

OUR OBLIGATION:

Love your enemies. Be kind to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who insult you. If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other cheek as well. If someone takes your coat, don't stop him from taking your shirt.

Luke 6:27b-29 (GW)

JESUS' EXAMPLE:

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

"He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth."

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 2:20b-23 (NIV)

Your Mission...

RESPONDING WITH GOOD:

PROMOTE JUSTICE IN THE WORLD.

RESPONDING TO EVIL:

BUT WHEN HUMAN JUSTICE FAILS TO EXIST...

COMMIT YOUR SITUATION TO THE GOD OF JUSTICE

Credits

SCRIPTURE

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Your Mission...

**"Do not take revenge, my friends,
but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written:
'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."
Romans 12:19**

REVENGE, AVENGE, PAYING BACK

This concept is more frequently used of "paying back" for wrongdoing (punishment); but it can also be used in reference to "paying back" for good (reward).

SOME BASIC COMMENTS RELATED TO THIS CONCEPT

Pertaining to God.

- God owes nobody a reward or "pay back" for anything they might have done - Romans 11:35.
- On the other hand, we owe God everything; we can *never* succeed in paying him back for all the good he has enabled us to experience - 1 Thessalonians 3:9 (an example: unable to express all the thankfulness he deserves to receive).

Pertaining to People.

- *Designated authorities* in the church have an obligation to "pay back" (punish) those who do wrong - 2 Corinthians 10:6 (the apostles and those working with him); 2 Corinthians 7:11 (the Corinthian church).

- *Designated authorities* in government have an obligation to "pay back" (punish) those who do wrong (or to praise those who do right) - 1 Peter 2:14 (governors).
- Individuals as *individuals* can pursue justice through designated authorities - Luke 18:3, 5 (an illustration); but are not to take matters into their own hands - Romans 12:19.

MORE ABOUT THE FUTURE "PAYBACK" THAT WILL COME FROM GOD

It's *his* job, not *ours*.

- When injustice prevails, it's not *our* job to pay back those who wrong us; it's *God's* job - Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30.

Pertaining to the righteous.

- Those who do kind things for others, without expecting a reward, will be "paid back" at the resurrection - Luke 14:12-14 (an example).
- God's people can ask God to avenge for evil done to them - Revelation 6:10; Luke 18:7.
- One of the ways God will bring justice to his people: by "paying back" those who wrong them - Luke 18:7-8; God's people will praise him when this occurs, because his judgments against the wicked are true and righteous - Revelation 19:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:6.

Pertaining to the wicked.

- The day of "pay backs" will come - Luke 21:20-22; this will occur when Jesus returns - 2 Thessalonians 1:8.
- This "paying back" in judgment will include all who choose to live in sexual sin - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6.