

Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

Topic 2 - The Doctrine of God
Lesson 34 - The Attributes of God: Righteousness

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Righteousness and Justice

- God's righteousness is His perfect absolute justice in and toward Himself, His prevention of any violation of the justice of His character, and His revelation of Himself in acts of justice. - MacArthur, pg. 184
- While two terms in English, righteousness and justice are represented by one root word in Hebrew and in Greek.
- The OT and NT terms for "righteousness" carry the sense of conformity to a standard.
- God's righteousness means that God always acts in accordance with what is right and is Himself the final standard of what is right. - Grudem, pg. 204

What is Right?

- God is right
- Deut. 32:4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.
- Genesis 18:25 Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
- God speaks and commands what is right
- Psalm 19:8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
- Isaiah 45:19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain'; I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

What is Right?

- As a result of God's righteousness, it is necessary that He treat people according to what they deserve. Thus it is necessary that God punish sin, for it does not deserve reward; it is wrong and deserves punishment.
- God's punishment of Christ on the cross was to show His righteousness.
- Romans 3:25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
- For God to give appropriate punishment for sin upon Christ proved He is truly righteous and able to forgive us even though we are guilty of that sin.

What is Right?

- Whatever conforms to the moral character of God is right. - Grudem, pg. 204
- God is the final standard of righteousness.
- When Job questioned God about whether He had been righteous in His dealings with him, God answered, “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct *Him*? He who rebukes God, let him answer it.” “Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? (Job 40:2, 8).
- God’s further reply then was not to explain the rightness of His actions, but were rather a statement of His majesty and power!

Justice

- The Bible describes two kinds of justice: Moral Justice and Distributive Justice.
- Moral Justice is God's rectitude (straightness) as the moral Ruler, Lawgiver, and Judge of the world. He imposes law with promises of reward and punishment.
- Psalm 9:4 For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.
- Psalm 99:4 The King's strength also loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

Justice

- Psalm 119:75 I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.
- Isaiah 33:22 (For the Lord is our Judge, The Lord is our Lawgiver, The Lord is our King; He will save us);
- Romans 7:12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Justice

- Distributive Justice is the aspect of God's righteousness in execution of law, in distributing reward and punishment.
- Psalm 7:11 God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.
- Isaiah 3:10 "Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, For they shall eat the fruit of their doings. 11 Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, For the reward of his hands shall be given him.
- Isaiah 11:4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

Justice

- Romans 2:6 who “will render to each one according to his deeds”:
- 2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- 1 Peter 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

Pursue Righteousness

- **Desire:** Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.
- **Faith:** Romans 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”
- **Submission:** Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
- **Fruit:** Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Pursue Righteousness

- 1 Timothy 6:9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.
- 2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
- 2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

Pursue Righteousness

- Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
- James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.
- 1 John 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

Justice

- Justice - a separation of right from wrong.
- Proverbs 21:3 To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.
- Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.
- Matthew 23:23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.