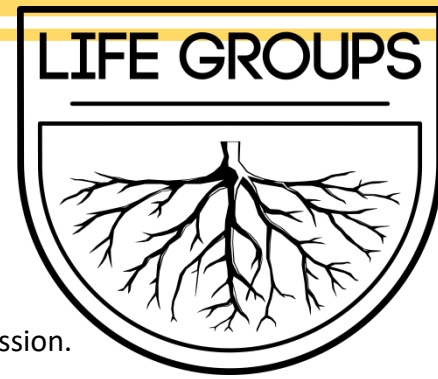


Genesis/God Righteous and Just/Chapter 18:15-33



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION: Have you or would you like to serve on a jury? Why or why not?

This section of Genesis reveals to Abraham, and to us today, that God is Righteous and Just in his judgements. God has blessed us with the amazing gift of being able to hold his Word, the Bible, in our hands. The Bible teaches us how to know God correctly and think correctly about God. However, Abraham did not have scripture to hold onto. We have learned of God righteous judgments in previous events like the flood and the Tower of Babel. By the time we get to this passage it is a further unfolding of our knowledge of God's righteousness and justice. Abraham did not have the same benefit. He is living and learning about God's righteous and just character in real time. After eating a covenant meal with Abraham and establishing his place at the Lord's table as a friend of God, the Lord then walks with Abraham and reveals a deeper understanding of God's righteousness and justice. He helps Abraham think correctly about a just and righteous God so that Abraham can teach his children, household, and future generations to follow the path of God in righteousness and justice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What insight, lesson, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? How was your experience with the Life Tool's this past week?**

- 2. Verses 17-19 shows that it will be a struggle for Abraham to reconcile God's righteous and just character with his current understanding of God. This is true of us as well. Why do we struggle to reconcile a loving God with his righteousness and justice?**

One of the very first things we learn about God is that he is a God of Love. As we grow in our faith and knowledge of the Lord, we begin to learn that he is also a righteous and just God that pours out wrath on our sin. We have a hard time reconciling these attributes in our mind and often see them as conflicting.

The problem is that our understanding of Love and sin is severely distorted. We think that sin is not really that bad, and definitely not bad enough to deserve wrath. We think that God's love would be the same thing as our love that has been distorted by our sin.

3. Can God be the God of Love without righteousness, justice, and wrath?

God's attributes of Love, Righteousness, and Justice are not in conflict, but actually in perfect harmony. If you remove any attribute of God, he is not longer perfect, no longer Holy, and no longer God. Without righteousness, justice, and wrath, God's love cannot exist.

God's righteousness and justice demands his wrath be poured out sin. His love does not negate this wrath or dismiss sin. What makes his love so great is that he pours out his wrath on himself on the cross for any that believe in him. His wrath is not negated, but he takes our place as the object that wrath is poured out on.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Imagine that your neighbor is on trial for brutally murdering your brother. The Judge finds your neighbor guilty, but at the sentencing people petition the judge to go light on the punishment. He's a father of 4 small children, upstanding citizen, has elderly parents that depend on him for support. The judge decided to respond with love and compassion and only sentences your neighbor to community service and he walks free. That judge is not righteous or just. That judge has failed to be a judge at all. His actions fail at love as well. Your brother's life has been devalued to worthless, justice was not served and your family sees the neighbor everyday as he lives freely next door. That judge has also set a precedent that is the anti-thesis of love. The devaluing and murdering of human life is not a serious offense. Not only is your neighbor able to murder again, but others in your community now feel the freedom to murder without risk of punishment. This will end in murder of more people.

Righteous and Just execution of wrath is an act of Love. It is an act of love for God to punish sin, it is an act of Love to save by taking that wrath on himself.

4. Our world today is obsessed with a "social justice" movement. What determines what is righteous and just in our world?

Righteousness is living in conformity to God's will.

Justice is making right decisions based on God's will.

The Bible, God's Word, is given to us so that we can know God correctly and know his will for our lives and world. Therefore, it is the only authority that can determine what is righteous and just. Yet the world rejects this truth. They reject the idea that God determines what is righteous and just. They believe society has the authority to determine what is right and just, hence the term, "SOCIAL JUSTICE".

Dr. Voddie Baucham Jr., in his book *Faultlines*, addresses how social justice is in conflict with biblical justice and is actually destructive to the church, the kingdom, and our faith.

“However, we must be certain that we pursue justice on God’s terms... And here is the key: People are ignoring these (biblical) principles because the standard of justice upon which their pleas are built does not come from the God of the Scriptures. While that may be fine for others, those of us who claim to know Christ are held to a different standard.”

Baucham Jr., Voddie. *Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe* (p. 45). Salem Books. Kindle Edition.

Psalm 33:4–5 (NIV)

4 For the word of the LORD is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.

5 The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.

Proverbs 21:3 (NIV)

3 To do what is right and just
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

5. God wanted Abraham to understand his righteousness and justice because Abraham would be responsible for leading and teaching his children and household. To what extent are we as Christians responsible for doing the same thing?

This question is designed to help people understand that our responsibility as Christians is to lead in righteousness and justice in our homes, community, and government. Many Christians take a no conflict approach in regards to unrighteousness and sinfulness of our society and world. They believe its better to remain silent instead of speaking up for righteousness. Even worse, some Christians embrace the worlds sinful standards of righteousness that completely turn their back on God’s Word! When Christians remain silent about the unrighteousness and injustice of our world they be compliant in sinning against God.

This is why issues like abortion, same sex marriage, transgender, critical race theory, and slavery are important. God’s word determines what is right and just and we are commanded to teach our children to walk in righteousness and justice, and call the world to be righteous and just as well. God’s righteous judgement will pour out wrath, if we do not speak out we are condemning the world.

6. Read vs 25. Abraham's struggle to understand God is on full display when he asks, “Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” Abraham’s heart was right, but what was wrong about his thinking?

Abrahams heart was right, but his thinking was wrong! He knew the people of these cities personally. he had rescued them from slavery when he defeated the kings from the east. He wanted to save them again thinking there were at least some who didn’t deserve God’s Wrath.

Abraham had the heart to save the lost and intercede for them. However, his thinking was wrong in that there were people that were righteous apart from God. We often feel or think the same way. We think that people are good people and in return don't deserve wrath.

Romans 3:9–18 (NIV)

9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. **10** As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one;

11 there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.

12 All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.”

13 “Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit.”

“The poison of vipers is on their lips.”

14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 ruin and misery mark their ways,

17 and the way of peace they do not know.”

18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Abraham's heart was right to desire to see people saved from the wrath of God. He was wrong in thinking it could happen by their own works. Only the Gospel can save.

7. Abraham intercedes boldly for those far from God. What does this teach us about how we view people far from God?

We should have the same heart as Abraham, paired with the right thinking of the Gospel. There is no one too far from God's grace. No matter how evil, hard hearted, or stubborn they are, God can save them through the power of the Gospel.

8. The “I Pray For America” campaign is a focus for our church in the month of July. How does the narrative of God's just judgement on the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah affect how we should pray for our nation?

Abraham interceded for a people that were not his that were far from God. However, their sin had reached its fulness and God's righteous judgement was going to wipe them from the face of the earth.

We should be interceding for our great nation, that God would awaken us to faith and bring us to repentance before our sinfulness reaches its fulness. Pray for God to bless America with faith to follow him.

Conclusion

God is righteous and just and requires the same of his people. We do not get to determine what is right or just, but we do have the Word of God to direct us in living our lives. As God's patience holds back his wrath, we have the responsibility to call the world to repentance, stand for righteousness, and do justly according to God's Word alone.

PRAYER

Lord help us understand that your love is full in your righteousness and justice. Teach us to be bold in a world that is lost and rejects your truth. Give us a heart for your enemies to be saved from your wrath through the Gospel. Give us the strength to walk in obedience to your word.

