

Speaking to the soul



Justice

**A corrupt witness mocks at justice,
and the mouth of the wicked gulps down evil.**

. Proverbs 19:28

Justice is a persistent theme throughout the Bible, because it is one of the characteristics of God. He loves justice. This is beautifully described in Deuteronomy 32:4: “He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and

fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is!” It is because of God’s love of justice that he gave his people a very clear framework of rules. The first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, gave the Israelites the law that would guide every aspect of their lives. There were rules about the way in which they worshipped but also about their relationships with one another and rules of hygiene. God is interested in every part of life and so the rules were comprehensive.

The Bible is clear that justice is fragile and needs to be carefully looked after. It can easily be perverted. The prophets showed particular concern about the evil of market traders tampering with their scales. By adjusting the scales in their favour, they were able to defraud their customers - and the Lord hated it. The prophet Amos observed that they couldn’t wait for the Sabbath to be over so that they could get back to cheating the helpless. “You measure out grain with dishonest measures and cheat the buyer with dishonest scales. And you mix the grain you sell with chaff swept from the floor” (Amos 8:5-6). There was no end to their deviousness and the prophet said that the result of their unjust actions was that God was not willing to hear their prayers. He detested their worship because it simply didn’t ring true.

Nothing has changed. God still loves justice and so we have the responsibility to fight for justice whenever it is under attack. Injustice happens in our own country, but laws have been developed over the centuries to ensure that many forms of exploitation are now illegal. However, we trade internationally and so we need to be aware of the exploitation that is still rife in many parts of the world. We

may enjoy buying cheap products but when they are produced through the abuse of vulnerable workers, we can be sure that God is deeply unhappy. Justice is not an optional extra for Christians but a fundamental part of our obedience to Christ.

QUESTION

In what ways are you working for justice?

PRAYER

God of justice, I worship you. Help me to stand up for those who are unjustly treated in this country and throughout the world. Amen

