

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 7 February 2021

Sermon Title : Is God Fair?

Speaker : Rev Peter Koh

Text : Ezekiel 18:21-32

INTRODUCTION

We live in a fallen world as mankind has chosen to rebel against God. As a result, many things do not go according to God's original design. We may sometimes wonder if God is fair or if life is fair, and we complain a lot especially if things do not go our way or bad things happen to us. We may question why others seem more fortunate while we live in poverty or why those who are faithful to God still suffer while the wicked seem to prosper.

The Israelites too felt that God was not fair. They even had a proverb which says that "when parents have eaten sour grapes, the children's teeth are set on edge". (v.2) They felt that they were being unfairly punished for the sins of their fathers and blamed the disasters they faced on their forefathers. They complained that God was unjust, but twice, God responded by questioning them if it was not their ways that were unjust. (vv.25, 29) Each of them had to take responsibility for their own sins and it is the soul who sins who will die. (v.4)

We often blame others including God for our failures

Some examples of our complaints include:

- if only I wasn't born into this family, I would be better off
- If I hadn't listened to him, I wouldn't be in this predicament
- It's not my fault I can't find my way, they shifted the building

We blame others at work, in school or even our families for our own mistakes. We often find a scapegoat for the disasters that befall us.

A. God's desire is for the wicked to repent (vv.21-23)

- The door to repentance and restoration is open to any wicked man
 - God assures the wicked that when they turn and change their ways, they will surely live.
- God does not delight in the death of the wicked
 - How about us? When someone has harmed you, are you able to rejoice if he repents and is saved or would you complain that God is not fair? If we are

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

honest, we are often happy to see the punishment of the wicked. We look forward to the day we can see retribution for the wicked deeds done by someone. We feel the wicked deserve the punishment for the evil they have done.

Contrast our attitude to that of Jesus'. When the thief on the cross repented, Jesus assured him that he would be in paradise with Him that day. Do we have the heart of God towards sinners – forgiving, loving, full of grace and mercy?

B. God promised judgment for the righteous who turned away (v.24)

If a believer turns away from God, he may lose his salvation. Don't take God for granted and think that just because you have accepted Jesus as Saviour but not Lord, you can continue to sin. Not everyone who calls Jesus "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 7:21)

- God will judge all mankind for their deeds
 - We are responsible for our own actions, words and thoughts.
- God does not delight in sin

We delight in sin because sin is pleasurable – e.g. sin of gluttony and gaming which sometimes leads to online gambling. We become addicted to these activities and drift away from God.

C. Call to action (vv.30-32)

- God's heart desires for all mankind to be saved. He wants us to return to Him. He wants to give us a new heart and a new spirit so that we can live a holy life, acceptable and pleasing in His sight.

Summary:

1. A fair invitation is given to the wicked to turn away from their wickedness (vv.21, 27)

God invites the wicked to change their ways, to come back to Him and He will accept them and make them His children.
2. A fair warning is given to the righteous not to turn away from righteousness (vv.24-26)

Even fighting for social or racial justice (e.g. Woke) when carried too far may cause us to not listen to reasoning or base our perspectives upon God's moral laws and values. While it is not wrong to fight for social and racial justice, there is a need to exercise discernment in how we fight for this. If we push too far, we may cross the line of sinning. Examine whether what you are fighting for is based on facts or on feelings, evidence or personal preferences.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

3. A fair judgment:

Turn from wickedness (vv.26-28)

Turn from transgressions (disobedience) (vv.29-30)

4. Turn to acquire a new heart and a new spirit (vv.31-32)

When we surrender to God, He will give us new hearts that are sensitive and compassionate, able to love and accept the wicked who have repented as our brothers or sisters in Christ. He will give us a new spirit to help us see things the way God sees and understand how He functions in our lives.

Is God fair? God is not fair. If He is fair, we will not be able to stand before God; we will be judged. Jesus died for us and gave us a second chance. **God is not fair – but He is just.** Sometimes, things happen in our lives that we do not understand and we say that God is not fair. God is not fair because of His love but He will always be just. If you sin, God will punish. But if you confess and repent, God will forgive you. God is a just God but His fairness may not be perceived as fairness to us. God's fairness is beyond human comprehension.

CONCLUSION

God is recalling us because of a “faulty” part in us due to our sin. If we respond to God's invitation and return to Him, we will be made whole again. He will give us a new heart and a new spirit to help us. We should be grateful that God is not always fair because of His love, calling all sinners to repentance, allowing the wicked including you and I to be forgiven so we may not perish. Let us not take our salvation for granted but align ourselves back to God because He is always just.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Ezekiel 18:21-32 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, ‘This is the Word of the Lord.’

All to respond, “Thanks be to God.” Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now.”

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b.
 - (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon “Is God Fair?”?
 - (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. If God is fair, we will not be able to stand before God; we will be judged. How does knowing this impact:
- (i) the posture you should have towards God?
 - (ii) your response when in seemingly unfair situations?
 - (iii) your attitude towards sharing the gospel with sinners/wicked people?
- 2b. Why must our just God punish a “righteous” person who has turned from righteousness the same way He would punish a wicked person?
- 2c. What does God’s fair invitation to the wicked and warning to the righteous tell you about God’s heart for man?
- 3a. Each of us is to take responsibility for our own sins and it is the one who sins who will die. (Ezekiel 18:4) Have you blamed God or others at work, in school or even your families for your own mistakes or sins?
- 3b. What is one area in your life that you need God to give you a new heart to love even the wicked and a new spirit to see things the way God sees and understand how He functions in your life?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you achieve 3b in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your personal testimony of how the Holy Spirit helped you trust God and find joy in an 'unfair' situation.

OR

Give thanks to God for His love that enables you to stand before Him instead of be judged for your sins.

5. With a prayer partner, take time to pray for the concerns in 3a, 3b and 3c. Commit to encourage each other to continue to grow in Christlikeness especially in seemingly 'unfair' situations.

As a group, pray for the Holy Spirit to convict every member to have the boldness to acknowledge, confess and repent of areas you need to turn from so as not take your salvation for granted but align yourselves back to God because He is always just.

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