

In the Barn!

Barneys Newsletter



No. 12 – June 13th



Responding to Injustice

by **Elise Brake**

How do Christians respond to the injustice in our world? This is a question I have been asking myself a lot recently, this past week especially. In the news and in our social media feeds we see protests, people coming together to express grief and anger over the injustice in our systems and institutions and cultural narratives. There is a lot of rhetoric about not remaining silent, about learning from and listening to the oppressed, about speaking out and taking action. So how do we approach the injustice we see in our world through the lens of the gospel?

First, we must recognise that our

God is a God of justice. Throughout the Bible, God is described as just, both in his character and in his ways, as seen in Deut 2:4: ‘The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.’ Inherent in his nature as a just God is the reality that he cannot allow sin to go unpunished; he abhors sin, because it is contrary to his nature. Part of God’s judgement for sin is that we live with the indiscriminate pain and suffering that are the consequences of the Fall (Genesis 3). And we face the ultimate consequence for our sin, as Romans 6:23 make clear: ‘for the wages of sin is death’.

However, we also see it promised throughout the Bible that God will bring evil to judgement, in

Your Links to Barneys

www.barneysingleburn.com/livestream

www.facebook.com/Stbarnabasingleburn/

Email: office@barneysingleburn.com



Shine a Light on the Truth

by Kath Hansen

on the truth in our hearts; we can see more clearly the truth about our daily concerns and interactions. We can see our weaknesses; and through seeing them clearly, understand our strength is through God. We can't fix ourselves. We can't be strong on our own.

This is true of the things that cause big upheavals in our lives, and on the little weaknesses, and worries that drag us down, nearly imperceptibly, as we trundle through each day.

We can all point to moments when God made an impact on a big decision we've made. It might be the moment we came to him and turned away from old destructive habits. It might be a decision about career or marriage. Have you considered how God makes a difference in the little everyday decisions we make?

Jesus said "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

We are set free for eternity by this biggest truth of all. By being open to this truth, we are also set free from bondage in little, everyday ways. The light Jesus shines on the biggest truth of all, filters down and shines

I have a Christian friend outside Barneys whom I unload to in all circumstances, negative and positive. He is, literally, my sanity check; I know he will pull me up if I go too far in the wrong direction. I can be vulnerable in front of him, and he can be honest with me. His honesty gives me strength.

Lately I'd been whingeing to him a lot. I pointed this out in yet another whingey email and his response gave me pause for thought: When are you going to get to that day in the cycle, when you have enough of whingeing, shake yourself and pick yourself up, this is a normal process for you.

That truth was a revelation to me. Until he pointed that out, I had no

idea my moods went around in a circle. Isolation has exacerbated the highs and lows. I'd been struggling with isolation, and the last time I picked myself up, I expected I would stay there. Instead, within days, I crashed again. I felt like a failure. Everyone seemed to be managing better than me. I began to feel distant from God.

I only got that truth about my perspective through admitting weakness to someone I trust. It changed my approach, because I could see what was happening and thought about how to change it.

The next time I felt my mood start to tumble, I could see it from outside, and take stock of why it was happening. I realised I had overestimated my capacity to work, and underestimated the level of collaboration needed. My circumstances haven't changed; only my perspective. By realising I am less in control, I now have more control.

Additionally, I'd been missing my Christian family. Despite this, I had turned down one opportunity to meet on a pretty flimsy basis, and was even then, seriously considering turning down another. I saw that I needed to prioritise God more, and put work second. As soon as I started to do that; more opportunities emerged to see my brothers and sisters, planned; and chance encounters.

While all this was transpiring, I read the beatitudes, for a completely frivolous reason. I read the term "poor in spirit" and did not know what it meant. It did not seem to refer to the holy spirit. I asked Joe, and in a rambling message admitted I'd been feeling distant from God. He pointed me to a verse about being humble and contrite in spirit. Suddenly, I understood. I no longer felt distant from God. I was never distant from God. I was exactly where he needed me to be, to see the truth of where I was; and how I needed to change my perspective to move closer to Him and rely on Him more.

God works in our lives, and our decisions, even when we can't see it. He shines a light on the truth in a myriad of ways. If He wants us to see something in His Word, He will make sure we do. He works through our trusted Christian brothers and sisters, to present truths to us. Be honest with Him, be honest with trusted friends. We only gain God's strength through being weak. We only gain His truth through being honest. God works in the big moments in our lives, where we make memorable changes. He works in the little, incremental changes that we barely remember. Both are equally important. Wherever you are right now, God is shining a light on your truth. Whatever truth He shines it on, big or small, it is changing your life; whether you see it happening or not.

Responding to Injustice

a way that displays his own righteousness (which literally means ‘to be right - morally, justifiably’). Psalm 9 expresses this profound truth: ‘But the Lord sits enthroned forever; He has established His throne for judgment. He judges the world with righteousness; He executes judgment on the nations with fairness’ (v.8-9). Note the tense used here: the Lord sits enthroned forever (present), He has established His throne for judgment (past), He ‘judges the world’ and

‘executes judgement on the nations’ (present tense). God is already working out his judgement and ruling justly over the world. So when we look out at the world and see injustice, we can trust that our God of justice is active, judging over the nations and ruling with righteousness.

Furthermore, the Bible tells us how God brings about justice: through his son Jesus. We read in Romans 3 that, though we have all fallen short of God’s glory (v.23) through Jesus

we are ‘justified freely (i.e. declared right before God) by his grace’. Jesus died in our place, taking the punishment that we deserved, to redeem us before God, which means taking the cost of our sin on himself (v.24). Why did he do this? ‘He did this to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus’ (v.26). In Jesus, God shows that he is just and that he justifies, proving the solution for our sin by saving us through his death. Christians do not have to fear God’s final judgement, because in Christ we ‘have passed from death to life’ (John 5:24).

So how should we respond to the injustice in our world? First, we trust that God is the one who works out justice in Christ, and that he will bring evil to judgement. We pray for the salvation of the oppressed, not only from their present suffering, but much more so, for their justification in Jesus. And we live lives that reflect God’s just and righteous character: ‘Mankind, He has told you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfully, and to walk humbly with your God.’

Find-A-Word

All	Injustice	Movement	Shining
America	Insurrection	Much	States
Church	Jump	NewCreation	Theology
COVID	Light	Perspective	United
Ecclesiastes	Lighthouse	Politics	Very
Excited	Looting	Resurrection	Virus
Exposition	Meaningless	Riots	Wiltshire
Incarnation	Missing	Shine	You

N O T J S T A T E S A I M X N
 E O M N G C S M D A L N E C O
 W C I P E N H U H N L J A L I
 I U C T E M I U R W I U N I T
 N D N L C R E N R I G S I G C
 C E A E E E S V I C V T N H E
 A T C Z W S R P O H H I G T R
 R I I S F C I R E M S C L H R
 N C R H E Y R A U C G E E O U
 A X E I U Q B E S S T C S U S
 T E M N O F M A A T N I S S E
 I J A E Y C H Y R T E I V E R
 O Y G O L O E H T G I S Q E S
 N N O I T I S O P X E O L M R
 Z I M U S C I T I L O P N Y B