



The Vanity of Injustice in this Life - Ecclesiastes 8:14

14 There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

“That’s not fair!” If you were a parent at any time in your life, you are familiar with that phrase. Children have an innate sense of justice and a keen sense of what is fair, at least so far as it goes to make sure that no one else gets more or better than themselves. Lest we think that in adulthood, we are somehow so mature that we do not succumb any longer to the inner desire for justice, think again.

There is a real temptation to break, or if at least bend, God’s law to our advantage when we see the wicked receiving temporal benefits from their own less than morally upright behavior. Yet, we know that ultimately God is a righteous judge. The acts of humanity in this life might go unseen here and now, but they have not been missed from the Lord’s perspective.

Yes, it may appear that there are times when the righteous, who are attempting to reverently do as God desires, receive what the wicked deserve, while the wicked are seemingly blessed with that which the righteous would have expected as blessings from God for them. Still, we are to keep in mind that this apparent injustice is but for the moment and not the ultimate reality. God is not fooled, nor should we be.

The impact of sin in this fallen world distorts not only the apparent results of our actions, but also how we perceive and interpret those results. Unlike a more Eastern concept like karma, there is no one-to-one correspondence between particular sins and particular punishment. Likewise, good deeds in this world cannot always be directly connected to particular blessings from God through others. This means that in this life the scales of justice will remain unbalanced. Our culture rails justifiably against this reality, but lacks any realistic mechanism to rectify all injustice in this life.

God is just and knows all. This is both a comfort to the righteous, those whose trust is in Christ, and a threat to the unrighteous, those whose trust is in themselves. May we keep our focus on the long-term benefits of the cross of Christ.

Thoughts for Reflection

How does having a long-term focus on the cross alter how you see blessings and challenges today?