

Jan 16, 2022



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

Work for justice; pray for mercy

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Father, help us to work for Your justice now where we live, even as we await the day when You will make everything right. We long for that day

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, And govern the nations on earth
(Ps 67:4 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Nov 05, 2017)

Series: Justice, Law, History

UNIT 2: God the Source of Justice

NEXT WEEK

Justice, Judges, & Priests

(Deut 16:18-20; 17:8-13)

Justice and Fairness **Exodus 23:1-12**

Lesson Background and Introduction

One of the most powerful treatments of the nature of God appears in Exodus. It contains a richly layered set of stories exploring the question "What sort of God do we have in our midst?" This story lies behind all of Israel's laws. The scroll of Exodus weaves together stories about divine actions and conversations around them. As it reveals a God who practices a radical commitment to mercy, Exodus does not avoid the challenges that belief in a redeemer God poses. The 600-plus laws in the Old Testament do not address every imaginable circumstance. Even so, they lay out enough specific examples to allow thinking people to figure out how to act in situations not explicitly named. The Law of Moses invites reflection. Those following it ask questions that will shape commitments and attitudes for a lifetime. A remarkable feature of today's church in much of the Western world is its distance from the poorest among us. American Christians, in particular, often seem to live in a bubble. Wealth is taken as proof of God's blessing, which can lead us to blame others for their alleged failures if they do not obtain it. We are slow to acknowledge how decisions of past generations still affect people's lives. And those most vulnerable pay the price for that self-deception. The Law of Moses, while aimed at the people of Israel, offers guiding principles for the church as well. Life together requires practical actions that show love for difficult people. In this way, we can fulfill the law: to love our God, and to love both neighbors and enemies, wherever they are found.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Justice - Am I a person who is swayed when justice is discussed? Or do I seek what the Bible has to say and govern my thinking, attitudes, and actions? Once a false report is in circulation and everyone believes the report, it's easy to jump on the bandwagon. The majority aren't always right. Take a hard, honest look at your associates. Do not be led in the wrong direction: "Bad company corrupts good character" (1 Cor. 15:33). Remember that those who follow God often stand by themselves with God alone on their side.

No Favoritism - Throughout Scripture, God encourages no favoritism toward the rich or the poor. When dispensing justice, the facts of the case should determine the outcome, not a person's finances or social status. Do not show favoritism to someone in a dispute just because they are poor.

God's Laws Are Not Partial - It is easy to show favor to individuals who favor you. But if your hateful neighbor's ox wanders off and you find him, take him back. If that same hateful neighbor's donkey falls under too heavy a load, don't hold back. Help the poor animal and his ungrateful owner.

God's Justice Prevails - Truth is the goal in any and every court case. Never have anything to do with an innocent person's death. Refuse a bribe; it will come back to bite you. Taking bribes deprives a reasonable person of moral sense and perception and causes their speech to be twisted. Moses continued to expound on the law of the Sabbath. Every seventh year the land should rest. No planting or harvesting, the servants and animals should stop working for a year. The congregation should spend their time in spiritual activities on the Sabbath. For example, when the Hebrews were on the way to the Promised Land, God said He would supply no manna on the seventh day and the people were to prepare for Sabbath on the day before by collecting extra. It is always better to follow God's instructions in His Word than the voices of the day.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Fairness in Witness (Exodus 23:1-2)

False witness (1)

False witnessing is to be purged from among the saints (Deut 19:16-19)

False witnessing comes from an evil mind (Matt 15:19-20)

False witnesses must be punished (Prov 19:9)

False witnesses are among those who try to destroy Christianity (Matt 26:59-61)

False witnesses speak things that can never be proven (Acts 25:6-8)

False witnesses cause dissensions (Prov 6:19)

Associations in witness (2)

Wicked associations can lead to assimilation (1 Cor 15:33)

Wicked associations are enemies of God (James 4:4)

Wicked associations entice to sin (Prov 1:10-11)

Wicked associations seek to plan evil (Prov 4:14-16)

Wicked associations can cause others to stray from God (Gal 2:11-13)

Injustice in witness (2)

Injustice is one of the things God detests (Prov 17:15)

Injustice God says is not good (Prov 18:5)

Injustice should be rebuked (Prov 24:23-25)

Injustice causes wickedness to be present (Eccl 3:16-17)

Injustice corrupts (Eccl 7:7)

Fairness in Judgment (Exodus 23:3-9)

Partiality in judgment (3)

Partiality brings God's rebuke (Job 13:10)

Partiality is thinking more highly of oneself than others (Luke 18:11-14)

Partiality is wrong because Christians are one in Jesus (Gal 3:27-28)

Partiality is wrong because Christians are members of one body (1 Cor 12:12)

Partiality is wrong because God shows no distinction (Rom 10:12)

Partiality is wrong because there is none with God (Rom 2:11)

Honesty in judgment (4-6)

Honesty comes from God (Prov 16:11)

Honesty is pleasing to God (1 Chron 29:17)

Honesty is rewarded by God (Luke 16:10-11)

Honesty is summed up by the golden rule (Matt 7:12)

Honesty should be a goal (Acts 24:16)

Righteousness in judgment (7-8)

Righteousness through faith in Jesus (Rom 3:22)

Righteousness through Jesus' obedience (Rom 5:19)

Righteousness that comes from God (Phil 3:7-9)

Righteousness through Jesus becoming our righteousness (1 Cor 1:30)

Righteousness through Jesus bearing our sins (2 Cor 5:21)

Mercy in judgment (9)

Mercy because it is a blessing (Matt 5:7)

Mercy because it is a prerequisite of getting mercy (Matt 18:32-35)

Mercy because God is merciful (Luke 6:36)

Mercy because it is a characteristic of God's chosen people (Col 3:12)

Mercy because mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)

Fairness in Work (Exodus 23:10-12)

Productive in work (10)

Productive so that life flourishes (Ps 92:12-14)

Productive through remaining in Jesus (John 15:5)

Productive through obedience to God (Josh 1:6-8)

Productive through fear of the Lord (Ps 128:1-2)

Sabbath observance (11)

Sabbath should be a rest for land (Lev 25:4)

Sabbath should not be for buying and selling (Neh 10:31)

Sabbath is a rest for man (Heb 4:9)

Sabbath is not to be a judgment for others (Col 2:16-17)

Sabbath has Jesus as Lord of it (Matt 12:8)

Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27)

Rest in work (11)

A rest made possible through receiving God's mercy (1 Peter 2:10)

A rest that is an inheritance from God (Ps 94:13-14)

A rest that is peaceful and secure (Isa 32:18)

A rest that provides relief from troubles (2 Thess 1:7)

A rest that is a blessing for those who die in the Lord (Rev 14:13)

Refreshment in work (12)

Refreshment through repentance (Acts 3:19)

Refreshment through generosity (Prov 11:25)

Refreshment of the spirit (1 Cor 16:18)

Refreshment of the heart (Philem 1:20)

Refreshment from God (Jer 31:25)

Refreshment through fellowship (Rom 15:32)