

FAITHFUL LIVING IN FALTERING TIMES | THE LIVES OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA
BROKEN HEARTS; UNBROKEN JUSTICE: THE DEMISE
2 Kings 8:7-15
12.10.23

You can't break God's justice, but you can break his heart

Seven lessons on divine justice to help us trust him to make things right:

JUSTICE DELAYED

#1 IT'S SOMETIMES SLOW: WE CAN TRUST THE PATIENCE GOD EXERCISES (8:7)

Divine justice may take longer than we think it should

Three ways to learn to embrace God's patient timing of justice however slow it may seem:

#1 **Respect his right to be patient:** Be content with the details he conceals entirely — '*...Now Elisha...*' (7a; Cf. 1 Kings 19:15)

#2 **Trust his wisdom in being patient:** Be observant about the details reveals clearly — '*...came to Damascus. Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick...*' (7b)

#3 **Ponder his handiwork while he's being patient:** Stay alert for connections he reveals subtly — '*...the king said to Hazael...inquire of the LORD through him...shall I recover...?...*' (7c-8)

JUSTICE DEMANDED

#2 IT'S NEVER SWAYED: WE CAN TRUST THE IMPARTIALITY GOD UPHOLDS (8:8-9)

Divine justice can't be escaped through fleshly effort or gifts

Three kinds of payments that fail to sway God away from justice:

#1 **Don't rely on big gifts:** Sending offerings to manipulate and making sacrifices to worship are not the same thing — '*...a present...all kinds of goods... forty camels' loads...*' (9a)

#2 **Don't rely on cheap honor:** Acknowledging God's position and yielding to God's position are not the same thing — '*...your son...*' (9b)

#3 **Don't rely on shallow faith:** Believing God has power and believing in God's promise are not the same thing — '*...shall I recover...*' (9c)

JUSTICE DIRECTED

#3 IT'S RARELY SIMPLE: WE CAN TRUST THE PROVIDENCE GOD SHOWS (8:10-11)

Divine justice usually doesn't happen the way we might expect

Three complexities to God's providence:

#1 **Rest in God's insight into the questions you can't help but ask** — '*...And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, "You shall certainly recover,"...*' (10a)

#2 **Remember God's insight into the questions you don't think to ask** — '*...but the Lord has shown me that he shall certainly die."....*' (10b-11a)

#3 **Realize God's insight into the confessions you don't want to make** — '*...And he fixed his gaze and stared at him, until he was embarrassed....*' (11b)

JUSTICE ENDURED

#4 IT'S OFTEN SAD: WE CAN TRUST THE PITY GOD HAS (8:11b-13a)

Divine justice is not something to be flippant about

Two angles from which to view God's pity:

#1 Behold the comfort of God's grief: God takes no pleasure in punishment of his people — '*...And the man of God wept...*' (8:11b)

#2 Beware the commitment of man's evil: Don't underestimate the evil man is committed to do — '*...I know the evil that you will do...set on fire their fortresses...kill their young men...dash in pieces their little ones and rip open their pregnant women...*' (8:12-13a)

JUSTICE DETERMINED

#5 IT'S ALWAYS SURE: WE CAN TRUST THE PROMISES GOD KEEPS (8:13-15)

Divine justice is something you can count on

Three reflexes that can deepen your trust in God to keep his promise to bring justice:

#1 Understand the sovereign awareness God enjoys: God sees to it that his word comes to pass exactly — '*...The LORD has shown me that you are to be king over Syria...*' (13b)

#2 Acknowledge the human agency God allows: God sees to it that his word comes to pass sovereignly — '*...the next day he took the bed cloth and....spread it over his face, till he died...*' (13b)

#3 Honor the sober authority God wields: God sees to it that his word comes to pass exactly — '*...and Hazael become king in his place...*' (13b)

JUSTICE DISPENSED

#6 IT'S CURRENTLY ON SCHEDULE: WE CAN TRUST THE PLAN GOD FOLLOWS (9:1-10:36)

Divine justice is unfolding through a plan which is not yet complete

JUSTICE DEFINED

#7 IT'S ULTIMATELY SINGULAR: WE CAN TRUST THE PERSON THROUGH WHOM JUSTICE COMES (IS 42:1-9; MT 12:13-21; REV 5; 19; 21:11-15; 22:11-16)

Divine justice is ultimately in the hand of Jesus Christ