

The Doctrine of Personal Injustice¹

Topics		
Joseph	David	Paul
Concluding points		
Charts, Maps and Doctrines		

Preface: All believers will be the victims of injustice. In fact, the same is true of unbelievers. We live in the devil's world; so injustice is a natural occurrence.

1. Our Lord gave us the principles in the Sermon on the mount: Matt. 5:38–48: **You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist evil. But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. And to him desiring to sue you, and to take away your tunic, let him have your coat also. And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father in Heaven. For He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax-collectors do so? Therefore be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.** Jesus Christ was making several points in this sermon, which we will cover below:
 - a. First of all, the Law had been distorted by the pharisees apparently to allow vigilantism. I don't know how often people act as vigilantes and quote this verse and kill off their enemies. My exposure to this is primarily from old westerns where some self righteous guy quotes "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth": before killing someone. In any case, we are not called upon to right the wrongs committed against us.
 - b. In our litigious society, some people look for ways to steal money from you legally. These are people who might be honest in many other ways, but if there is a legal way to put your money into their pocket, they will do it. Our society has been brainwashed to think that, if one suffers an accident, then someone else should pay for that accident, and more, even if that someone is only remotely connected to their accident. For a lawyer, this is his primary job—are you someone he can sue and do you have the assets to pay if sued. Rarely will a lawyer sue someone if there is no payday for him. However, Jesus tells us, if someone sues you, then give them more than what they are suing you for. Do not make an issue out of money.
 - c. When someone asks you to borrow something, then you lend it to them. Again, do not make an issue out of money or things. Obviously, this must be tempered by other Scriptures. For instance, the man who does not provide for his own is worse than an infidel; therefore, if you and your family is barely squeaking by, then don't lend money that you cannot afford to lend. The same principle applies to giving. All believers should give from their blessings (of they may find themselves without some monetary blessings). However, you should not give to the point where it affects your family negatively.
 - d. Nowhere in the Bible does it say "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." This was a quotation which apparently was popular at that time. The Bible does tell us to **Love your neighbor** (Lev. 19:18). That does not make the inverse of that statement true (i.e., *hate your enemy*). Recall then, there was a great deal of animosity between the Jews and the Romans—and this was not always the fault of the

¹ Dude!

Romans. You are to treat your enemies with respect, deference, and, yes, even love. As Jesus explains, anyone can love their friends. The lowest of the low love their friends. A believer should be able to function on a higher plane, so to speak.

2. The first example of injustice is Joseph.
 - a. At the end of Gen. 37, Joseph's jealous brothers threw him into a pit and sold him into slavery to the Midianites (who were, in turn, going to sell him to the Ishmaelites, who in turn took him to Egypt).
 - b. Now, had this great injustice happened to us, we might be looking for some butt to kick. Not Joseph. In Egypt, he prospered, and he went from being a royal slave to the man in charge of an Egyptian officer's home and possessions. Joseph, instead of looking to escape at his first opportunity, moved to a position where he ran the household and signed the checks. God prospered him.
 - c. So, God tested Joseph further. Joseph faced the wife of Potipher (his Egyptian master), who tried to seduce him; and when Joseph was not seduced, she accused him of attempted rape. Potipher put Joseph in jail.
 - d. Eventually, God removed Joseph from jail and promoted him to the second highest position in Egypt. This even placed him above his former master. Joseph used this position to deliver the people of Egypt and to deliver his own family from famine (including the brothers who betrayed him).
 - e. When their father Jacob died, his brothers feared that Joseph might be ready to exact revenge on them. They suspected that Joseph was just biding his time, contemplating his sweet revenge. However, this was not in Joseph's character. Joseph's response bears quoting: *And Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid. Should I act in the place of God? But as for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save a great many people alive (Gen. 50:19–20).* Joseph's brothers plotted evil against him. However, God meant it for good. In order to be raised to the position of second to pharaoh, Joseph had to get there in God's manner and in God's time.
 - f. Therefore, don't worry when someone plots against you and don't worry if they succeed. God has it all worked out.
3. The illustration of David:
 - a. Saul became inordinately concerned about David and his popularity. Even though Saul was king, he acted on several occasions without the guidance of Samuel. When God, through Samuel, told Saul that the kingdom was being given to another man, Saul did everything he could to kill David.
 - b. Now, even though Saul put David on the run, he never came close to killing David. As we have studied on several occasions, God delivered David time and time again.
 - c. What God was doing was preparing David to lead Israel. David was not spiritually mature enough to be king over Israel during the second half of the book of 1 Samuel. What God did is prepare David spiritually, and the result was blessing for his nation and for the surrounding nations as well.
4. The illustration of Paul:
 - a. We will not draw from each and every experience of Paul; however, he summarizes many of them in 2Co 11:24–31: *Five times from the Jews I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the deep. I have been in travels often; in dangers from waters; in dangers from robbers; in dangers from my race; in dangers from the heathen; in dangers in the city; in dangers in the wilderness; in dangers on the sea; in dangers among false brothers. I have been in hardship and toil; often in watchings; in hunger and thirst; often in fastings; in cold and nakedness; besides the things outside conspiring against me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is caused to stumble, and I do not burn? If it is right to boast, I will boast of the things of my weakness. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I do not lie.*
 - b. Imagine if Paul had spent his life running around seeking revenge against all of those who had done him wrong. He would have had no time for missionary work; he would have had no time to write these epistles, which have been the foundation of our faith and doctrine.
 - c. And, even worse than all of these things, God allowed Satan to harm Paul's vision. We don't know exactly what the problem was, but we know it was painful (2Cor. 12:7–8).
5. Concluding points:
 - a. All people, believers and unbelievers, suffer from injustices.

- b. Believers face the additional attacks sponsored or inspired by demons.
- c. As a believer, you will often face injustice from the hand of other believers.
- d. Recall first that we are in a spiritual war.
- e. We are not called to right the wrongs committed against us. This is not a part of our job description.
- f. In order to get a believer to waste his time, Satan will see the he suffers injustice and wait for him to spend time trying to right that wrong or to get revenge.
- g. We can be assured that God will take care of righting all injustices: Nahum 1:2: **God is jealous, and Jehovah revenges; Jehovah revenges and is a possessor of wrath. Jehovah takes vengeance against His foes, and He keeps wrath against His enemies.**
- h. The principle can be found in Rom 12:17–19: **Repay no one evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as far as is in you, being in peace with all men. not avenging yourselves, beloved, but giving place to wrath; for it stands written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him. If he thirsts, give him drink. For in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** See also Deut. 32:35 Psalm 94:1 Prov. 25:21–22.
- i. We belong to a God of justice; we can rest assured that He will correct those who have committed wrongs against us.
- j. Even more importantly, God uses these wrongs committed against us to guide us. If you have ever lost a job because of injustice and then found yourself with a better job; or if you have had to move because of some injustice committed against you, and you suddenly find yourself in a better place; if there has ever been a change in your life due to an injustice, then you can probably testify that the end result was for the better. God uses a great many things to guide us from point A to point B. Injustices done to us by others is just one of the methods God uses here.