

“If you come upon your enemy’s ox or donkey that has strayed away, take it back to its owner. If you see that the donkey of someone who hates you has collapsed under its load, do not walk by. Instead, stop and help.” Exodus 23:4-5 NLT

lectio // Genesis 23:1-19

God continues to build on the theme of justice. In these passages, they sound a lot like proverbs or axioms to live by. God is clearly telling the Israelites to be a people, a culture to have justice at its core and to build a nation or a life on those principles. God asks them to put justice ABOVE their own needs. Whether it’s making a quick buck by taking advantage of the poor or enacting revenge and making a little money off an enemy that you already hate, God says DON’T do it. Don’t do it because it is NOT quite the advantage you think it is and that he sees all and counts those injustices against you for doing wrong. We’ve got a whole list of excuses why we should not behave justly, like they deserve it, no one cares, no one will notice and worst of all - I DESERVE it. God is the only one good enough and strong enough to handle revenge or injustice. As humans we are not built to handle it on our own. God’s warning is that when we step in and justify our unjust actions, he is not only against the act, he opposes the person behaving unjustly. How do we put justice as a priority over our own protective, defensive or even selfish ways? Has God changed his mind on justice because of the work Christ has done? Are we now free to behave unjustly and claim grace as a covering for our sin?

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Dad,

I knew you loved both justice and mercy, but this theme goes so far back with the Israelites. This has never (and will never) change in you. How do I behave justly in today’s selfish, entitled culture? How do we practice acts of justice in a “power to fight power” exchange where there has been such a history of injustice and violence against the innocent, the vulnerable and the poor? As an individual I can not act selfish, take advantage or revenge, but how do single acts of justice effect the power structures above us. We need you to restore justice and raise up men and women who value the truth!

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root