

INTRO

- Is there a particular social justice cause that you are passionate about?

READ

Rom 3:21-26

REFLECT & RESPOND

In this passage, there are 3 categories of thought to explore as we continue to reflect on the cross.

1. GOD'S JUSTICE

Nowadays, we are very aware of social & systemic injustices and evil in our world. Outrage to evil & injustice is a fitting human response. In fact, our human outrage helps us understand God's outrage, or wrath, towards sin and evil.

Perhaps we envision God's wrath as an angry, volatile, vindictive, explosion of emotion and retribution. Yet, the wrath of God, similar to our outrage, is the necessary and fitting expression of his care & love for us, his displeasure towards all that stands against his redemptive purpose, and his action in setting right what is wrong.

Qu: how does it make you feel to talk about God's wrath? What comes to mind? Does it make sense that God's wrath is an expression of his love?

2. GOD'S MERCY

What happens when the evil, injustice & sin in the world isn't just out there, but in us? What happens when we're the objects of God's wrath? Last week, we explored what sin is and how the reality and gravity of our sin is confirmed by the awful crucifixion of Jesus. As humans made in God's image, we need justice, but also mercy.

As the earliest Christians came to retrospectively understand what was happening at the cross, they came to boast and glory in the cross as God's wisdom, power and Good News for all.

Through various metaphors in Scripture, they help us understand what exactly God was accomplishing through the cross, and that has traditionally been grouped under 2 categories to explain God's accomplishment on our behalf:

- 1. Atonement for sin** (*atone = make amends*)
- 2. Deliverance from sin** (we'll explore this in the next message in the series)

For example, Jesus atoning for our sin looks like:

- **Substitution & Sacrifice:** Jesus death was viewed as an atoning sacrifice, the perfect sin offering, reversing the guilt and estrangement of sin once and for all! (1 John 2:2).
- **Rescue & Redemption:** Jesus death was seen as a Passover sacrifice, the ultimate exodus story from sin's slavery and oppression (1 Cor 5:7).
- **Restored Relationship:** Jesus' death was understood as the sacrifice ratifying a new covenant relationship between God and his people (Jer 31:33-34; Heb 9:15).

Qu: which of these examples do you find most helpful in understanding Jesus atoning work?

3. OUR RESPONSE

When we read in Rom 3:25-26 that God is both Just & our Justifier, we see the cross brings together both God's justice and mercy. In a word, God's **love**. All this is given as a gracious gift and we receive that by trusting and resting in Jesus' atoning work for us.

Qu: How does Jesus' love for you demonstrated by his death impact your heart? How might Jesus want you to live out his love in your world?

RESPOND & PRAY

- Take a moment to pray in response to Jesus' atoning work for you
- Pray this would be genuine good news to your own heart and stir a passion for others too