

The Power to Change, Part 8

Injustice, or a Price to be Paid?

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Preamble

Hi, I am John from Willows, and thank you for joining me for today's devotion on this Tuesday, the 21st of July, 2026. A full PDF including study resources is available from our web site, willows.org.za/devotions. This is part eight of a series called 'The Power to Change'. Part one was on 24 March, if you want to look for it on our web site.

Introduction

This devotion series concentrates on the changes that we should undergo as a result of our new life in Christ. The true *power* to change, however, is not ours, because even our righteous deeds are as filthy rags before The Lord¹. Instead, we depend on God and He helps us as we submit to His Will.

Today's devotion is titled "Injustice, or a Price to be Paid?" and we will be looking at the tension between verses such as these: In Isaiah 1:17 we read "seek justice", yet 1 Peter 4:19 says "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."

For the immediate context of 1 Peter 4:19, start at verse 12, but the essence of the suffering spoken of here is that which we endure because of the Gospel. The Bible and its Gospel are not merely a self-improvement plan, or more crudely, fire insurance. No, it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes². At the same time, we are engaged in the biggest war there is — the fight for souls. Satan is real, and is committed to doing everything he can in order to oppose God. When we are engaged in God's work, we *will* face opposition — that is a guarantee³ — and it will be fierce. One of the most effective ways to limit our influence is to keep us divided, and that brings us to the core of today's devotion: when do we demand justice and when do we submit to suffering?

Before we continue, however, let us pray.

Dear Father God, thank You that You have given us Your Word and Your Spirit to guide us continually, and the example of Jesus to follow. Help us now to hear what You are saying to us, God.

Amen.

¹ See Isaiah 64:6.

² See Romans 1:16.

³ See John 15:18–21.

Devotion

I asked “when do we demand justice and when do we submit to suffering?” but that is not actually a good way of putting it, as it implies not only one or the other, but also that the one is contrary to the other, if not its opposite. Yet that is not the case. You see, what we do should be done with eternity in mind, which immediately puts things into their proper perspective. As a simple example, when a child is unhappy about being told to go to bed, from their perspective the parent is being unreasonable by disallowing them to enjoy, say, a TV programme. Reality, however, is far bigger than that child’s reasoning, as the parent knows that unless the child goes to bed soon, the following day at school will be a very unpleasant time indeed. The eternal perspective is put well in 2 Corinthians 4:17–18, which reads

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

When we study The Bible a pattern emerges in this regard, and it is that while we do have the right to expect justice (and we *will* get it), it is in the light of both eternity and our surrender to God.

An image that we repeatedly find of Christians is that of a bond-servant. This comes from Exodus 21, where instead of being set free in the seventh year, a slave could decide to become a bond-servant, willingly laying down his right to freedom in order to continue serving his master⁴. That came not only with responsibilities, but also with rights, and from those, benefits. As Christians, God demands from us surrender to Him, and in the New Testament we frequently see Christians referred to as exactly this kind of willing servant—serving out of love, bound to their master for ever.

With that in mind, it becomes clear that we can no longer look at our lives from the limited perspective of our time on earth. Neither can we do so when we look at the lives of others. The Gospel is clear: the good news is that people can be saved from Hell and instead spend their eternity with The Lord. While Jesus has paid the price, we need to repent and believe⁵.

Conclusion

This eternal perspective means that with the knowledge that our life is eternally secure, what happens to us in our current bodies is actually of no lasting concern. This is clear when we read 1 Corinthians 15:50–58 in conjunction with both 1 Peter 4:19 and 2 Corinthians 4:17–18. Jesus put it even stronger in Matthew 10:28–33. Verse 28 reads “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” We need not fear Man, nor Satan, but only God Himself. And since we are His bond-servants, we need not *fear* Him, but rather be in *awe* of Him and to *respect* Him utterly.

I need to wrap up by saying it clearly: when it relates to eternity, be willing to lay down your so-called rights if it is in God’s Will to do so. When it relates to the here and now,

⁴ See Exodus 21:5–6.

⁵ Many verses, but start with Mark 1:15 and Acts 19:4.

again, be clear about God's Will and know that in general you are not to be a doormat. When we look at Jesus, this summary from Philippians 2:5–11 says it all.

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a bond-servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Galatians 6:9 says “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” That is a promise, but the only true *expectation* that we can have, is that this “due season” might only be in Heaven.

This is a good summary: The question is not whether the end justifies the means; it is rather faithfully doing the will of God and entrusting the outcome to Him.

Let us pray.

Thank You, Jesus, that You have set us the supreme example. Help us to live our lives with eternity in mind, and Your justice as aim, so that we may do Your Will as we submit ourselves to You as true bond-servants.

Amen.

General Bible Resources

[Most of the original language information (including Strong's concordance) is via the Bible Hub site.]

This list is alive in that I update it as I go along — I just don't update all the instances of it, so see my latest devotion has the then-current one. At some point I'll probably put it on the web somewhere and update that, but for now this is it. Also note that I don't check each link for its continued existence... .

There are some points in these resources where you (and I) may think differently. Just don't throw the baby out with the bath water — consider what is said, read widely in The Word, and pray to God that He would keep you from heresy as you continue in your study of His Word. Though I find the following resources useful in many ways, *each* has its points where at the very least I go, ‘Mmm. Not so sure about that. I need to look into that more deeply.’

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3A1&version=ESVUK> is a brilliant collection of Bible translations. I tend to use the ESV-UK version: a solid translation in English.

<https://biblehub.com> is an enormous collection of resources. They have commentaries, concordances, Bible dictionaries, and more. Unless otherwise specified, this is where I get the information on the original languages. They have of late been encouraging people not to use ad blockers.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/> packages of the same resources as biblehub.com, but has a completely different approach. They are also (currently) free.

<https://www.stepbible.org/> is an incredible resource if you want to look at the original language. When you use it on a PC and you hover over certain links you get more information without having to click.

<https://www.thebibleunpacked.net> is a rather unusual set of resources. At its core is a free book exploring core concepts of Christianity, but the book is available in seven editions. The smallest is just four ‘pages’

(each the size of a credit card) while the largest is 2,424 pages of A4 material. The two main areas are 'What to Know' and 'What to Do', which is an excellent balance. You can get an overview of the structure and topics at <https://www.thebibleunpacked.net/whats-inside>.

<https://www.preceptaustin.org/> is an enormous resource of commentaries by Dr. Bruce Hurt, a medical doctor. His work includes copious references, easing further study.

<https://soniclight.com/constable/> is the official site of the Bible commentary of theologian Dr. Thomas Constable, where that material is freely available.

<https://www.gotquestions.org> intends to provide answers to common questions about The Bible. While there is a core doctrinal point (predestination) on which I differ, there are many insightful answers.

These should be sufficient to get you going, but a word of warning: many 'fringe' sites (and some sects) go to great lengths to make their public / introductory material seem completely main-stream, so you really need to be on your guard.