

big  
questions

is God  
**JUST?**

**Onahi Idikwu** grapples with  
the theology of suffering.



If you are like me, reading that question, 'is God just?' may have elicited a whole host of emotions within you. Maybe it is bewildering as you feel the weight of the injustices prevalent in our world, and you wonder where God is in it all. Perhaps this question brings up feelings of deep disappointment, frustration, or grief as you think of times in your own life when it seems God has not been fair in his dealings with you. Or perhaps you have a quiet assurance that one day God will make all things right, and you can answer that question with a resounding 'yes'.

No matter your position, my prayer is as we explore this topic together, may the Holy Spirit be the one to hold us as we grieve areas of our lives that may feel unfair and which we may not understand. Yet, in it all, may the Holy Spirit convince us of God's goodness, justice, and love. I encourage you, particularly if this is an area you struggle with, to pause for a moment and open your hands and heart to the Lord now in humble willingness to receive what he has for you.

*Father God, thank you that you know all our individual stories and you are so tender with us. As we journey together, would you bring us to a place where we can recognise and celebrate that*

*we have a God who is fully kind in your justice and fully just in your kindness. Amen*

So, what does it mean to be just? According to *dictionary.com*, to be just is to act in a way that is guided by truth, reason, justice, and fairness. However, how often is this contrary to our day-to-day experiences? We are all aware of the injustice in our world. You may have even witnessed them in your workplace.

Perhaps it's a longing for more to be done to protect that refugee family you notice is covered in bed bug bites from unsuitable accommodation. Or maybe it's the sadness you feel as you watch people turn their noses up as they pass a homeless man waiting to get an X-ray, some even going as far as to remark on how bad he smells. Or maybe it's anger as you hear of yet another child being trafficked and forced into labour? Something within us longs to see those who perpetuate injustice be held accountable. When we do not see this immediately, it can lead us to wonder if God cares about those who are poor and vulnerable.

The biblical narrative is overwhelmingly clear about the grief it causes God when his people are mistreated. For example, Proverbs 14:31

says, *'Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God'*.

The Lord sees the broken-hearted and is close.<sup>1</sup> This is only further confirmed when we look at the life of Jesus. We see that he is not a God who is far removed from human sorrow or suffering, but rather one who wept with those who wept and restored health to those he met who were poor and marginalised. Still, Jesus did not stop at restoring wholeness within their physical bodies, but he invited them into a restored relationship with God the Father, through himself. This is significant because, if we are honest, we may be quick to demand that God enact his judgment against those who perpetuate injustice but forget that we have all sinned and fallen short.<sup>2</sup>

God cannot turn a blind eye to our sin. That would undermine his justice. Instead, Jesus came as the sinless Lamb of God and took the punishment we deserved. Imagine us exchanging our filthy clothes for Jesus's spotless ones. So now, when God looks at us,



he no longer sees us soaked in our sin but rather sees us dressed in the righteousness of Jesus. What great news that is!

So, whilst we still live in a world fractured by sin and continue to experience the painful consequences of injustice, we can be encouraged that the God who hears our prayers feels that pain, too, and is present in our suffering. The Spirit of God groans with us, and one day, God will wipe away every tear from our eyes and make all things new, a place where there will be no more mourning, crying or pain.<sup>3</sup>

What a glorious eternity we can look forward to.

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1. Psalm 34:18
2. Romans 3:23
3. Revelation 21:1-5