

## Life is not Fair

Can't you just hear it in the background? In the opening verses of the Gospel reading, Jesus has gone about visiting towns and villages after He had sent the apostles out on their first mission trip without Him. The people whom Jesus refers to as 'children' seem to be saying, "We did what we were supposed to do, but people aren't doing what they are supposed to do." You might even hear a "It's not fair" comment or two from this group of people. This leads us to a general observation that at many times in our lifetimes, life does not seem fair - the good guy does not always win, the sheriff doesn't always catch the bad guy and people don't always get what they deserve (or more aptly, they don't get what we think they deserve). This general conclusion about the fairness of life then leads some to conclude that because life is not fair and that God has done nothing to correct this unfairness, then there must not be a God. Or at least then God is not the kind of being that Christians have put forth.

I agree that, at times, life does seem to be unfair. The 'good' people often get the short end of the stick, they are the ones who seem to suffer the most and be taken advantage of and those who are the 'wicked' ones get off scott-free and just go about doing whatever they want to whomever they want. But to conclude that there is no God because of this unfairness goes down a wrong line of thought. If there is no God, then there are no rules and anything goes and there is then no definition of what is fair or not. Or, if there is a definition of it, then it can fluctuate according to who has the power at the time. There would be no sense of any kind of universal fairness that would be consistent over time and space.

If we do say that there is a fairness in life, or that there should be a fairness, then we are acknowledging there is someone who determines what is fair. I actually think that life's unfairness shows us that there is a God. If we have a concept that there should be some level of things being fair, then within that concept there should be a part that establishes that what is fair for one person is fair for any other person regardless of where they are or in what time period they are living. The entity which establishes these 'rules of fairness' would have to be above creation and not influenced by its whims and wishes. We call this entity "God." The question then becomes what kind of God do we expect and want. However, if we think that life is only about being fair, then God becomes the ultimate 'referee' to make sure that all the rules are followed and no one gets away with anything. Implied in this is that we still have some control over God and what God can and cannot do.

But being created beings, we cannot put ourselves above the Creator, above the One who made us. Jesus reminded us of this when He told us that the student cannot be greater than the teacher and the slave cannot be greater than the master. The slave or student must do what the master or teacher, respectively, wants done. The slave and student must give up control to the master or teacher. Paul has reminded us of this in his various letters, especially in the letter to the Romans. In the past several weeks, we heard those portions of this letter where Paul talks about being a slave to something and that it would be better to be a slave to God than a slave to sin. Being a slave to God takes us to eternal life with God while remaining a slave to sin only leads us to ultimate death, a total separation from God and losing all life and awareness once our physical bodies have expired.

It has been said that God is something that humanity has created, a concept that was made up to help make sense of the world. However, once we accept that the world cannot exist without a Creator, then we must accept that we cannot fully know that Creator. I am not well-versed in statistics and probabilities, but it seems to me that the probability of life evolving the way that has is rather low. I once read something from a statistician who commented that the low probability of life evolving to the point that it has should be proof enough to show the existence of God. What humanity has done over the centuries has been to try to understand this God, to know this God and to ascribe attributes to God, all from a human, a created perspective. This would be like trying to describe a string that is 3000 miles long and we examine only one small part of that string. We cannot possibly know all the places that this string passes by when we only examine a small part of that string and the environment which it is in. We need to take a journey along that string to see where the string goes to 'know' the string. It is through Jesus that we get to 'know' the string that is God and all that God can and wants to do for us.

Before Jesus speaks those most assuring verses about light burdens and easy yokes, He does have some rather harsh words for those who reject Him in the verse which were not included in today's Gospel reading. Despite seeing what Jesus can do and the conclusions that can be drawn from seeing those miracles, people in the towns have still not listened to Jesus calling for people to repent and turn back to God. By rejecting Jesus, and thus rejecting God, the people bring about a judgement upon themselves which would be harsher than that given to Sodom and Gomorrah. These are cautionary words for us. We must look at what has been done for us, see God in the midst of all that, despite when life seems unfair; and heed the call to repent of our ways that lead us away from God and

return to doing those things that God wants us to do. Jesus is telling us, that while it seems like life is not fair, when we look at the whole picture, the picture from God's perspective, then life is fair. Fairness may or may not be realized in this lifetime, but when the time is right, when God knows it to be best, then God's fairness will prevail and judgement will occur. Until that time, we are to do what we can to know God better, to continue to follow God's ways. We need to learn to let God have control of what we do, not the other way around. We need to learn to not tell God what is fair and what is not fair.

When we get to those last, comforting verses, we hear that while the burden is light and the yoke easy, there are still things that we need to be doing. We do still carry a burden and have a yoke around us. However, unlike the yokes and burdens placed on us by others, Jesus' yoke and burden are easy and light. We still must do what Jesus wants us to do, go where Jesus leads us. Like the apostles whom Jesus had just sent out to do the work of the laborers of the harvest, we too are sent out to accomplish what Jesus calls us to do. May we always be willing to accept Jesus' yoke, taking up that burden and proclaim the coming of the Kingdom.

YouTube links:

Gospel and Sermon: <https://youtu.be/uC7OD2KhCWI>

Service: <https://youtu.be/IL4Jc8MyRw8>