

Justice & Mercy 11: Our Just King (Isaiah 42) Go4th

This Autumn we've been looking at these two great themes of God's justice and mercy. I hope you've found it useful, inspiring even. As we look at our world, the need for justice is as great as it ever was, something we pray for and act for, just as we also long to bring God's mercy and grace.

Today is the last Sunday before Advent and is known as the Feast of Christ the King. It's particularly meaningful for us in our team as we have a sister church of Christ the King and *they* will be celebrating today as the Catholic Bishop Peter joins them one last time before his retirement. And as we remind ourselves that Jesus is indeed a king, *today we return to the theme of justice one more time to think about our Just King.*

This passage in Isaiah is one of what are known as the Servant Songs – important prophecies of what the Messiah, the promised rescuer, would do. Other famous examples include the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, or the global rescuer of Isaiah 49. And these themes are hinted at here, too, aren't they – like the suffering servant, this promised Saviour, won't shout or cry out in v2, but he will be a light for the Gentiles, i.e. all the non-Jewish nations, in v6.

But what especially we learn here is that the Saviour will bring justice for the nations – in fact just so we don't miss it, it's mentioned 3 times – in v1 'justice to the nations', in v3 'bring forth justice, and v4 'justice on earth'.

And so we end our series where we started it – reminding ourselves that God is just, that justice sits at the heart of his character, and that his chosen king – who we now know to be Jesus – has *justice* as his heart as well.

We don't always think of that about Jesus do we, but we see it when he turns over the tables in the temple, or when he defends the woman accused of adultery. These are *justice* issues, and not just grace and mercy issues.

And that message of justice is as timely as ever – as we look at Hong Kong, or Zimbabwe or Bolivia, or in numerous places around the world, we hear the cry for justice: especially from the poor and oppressed, those for whom this promise of freedom for the captives and release from darkness promised by the Messiah can only be good news.

In just over 2 weeks we will elect some new rulers, a thought which, frankly, most of us have little enthusiasm for. But today, on the Feast of Christ the King, a week before Advent, we remind ourselves that we will shortly be preparing for the arrival of another ruler, not just a politician or even a president, but our just king, the King of Kings.

'In faithfulness he will bring forth justice, he will not falter or be discouraged, till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands – and I pray, our island – will put their hope.' Amen.