

The picture still vivid in my mind 56 years after the event. A punishment that cemented in my heart the reality of injustice. Me and four classmates washing paint brushes at the bubblers. Henry mucking about, making lots of noise. Infants Mistress storming out of her classroom with a feather duster. The stinging wack on the back of the legs. Punishment without fair trial. Injustice deepened because Henry wore long pants. His the only legs not exposed to the sting of fiercely swinging bamboo on skin. A trivial experience of injustice. But a life lesson. I lived in an unjust world. King David also lived in an unjust world. A man after God's own heart. Chosen by God as King of Israel. Now on the run from his ruthless son Absalom. Publicly humiliated. His life in danger. Injustice moving King David to pour out his heart to God in **Psalms 3-7**. Today's Psalm in the context of David's enemies attacking him with false accusations. Cush, the Benjaminite mentioned in the heading of the Psalm part of this attack. Belonging to the same tribe as the disgraced King Saul. Sworn enemies of David. In the face of injustice, David cries out to God for justice. *'Arise, LORD, in your anger; rise up against the rage of my enemies. Awake, my God; decree justice.'* **v6** Brothers and sisters, you also live in an unjust world. What injustices are you experiencing? What past injustices are you holding onto? What injustices have you inflicted on others? Our struggle with injustice brings internal conflict. We cry out for someone to notice our experience of injustice. To deliver justice. We want to see the unjust punished and righteousness prevail. We struggle with the natural tendency of the human heart: payback, revenge. Dishing out our own version of justice. Teaching a lesson to those who dare treat us unjustly. We need to hear God's word. Spoken through his servant David. To hear David's cry for justice. To learn from his response to the profound injustice he experiences. There seems no end, no answer to matters of injustice. Is David's cry for justice futile? No. Because of the character of God. God is the powerful Saviour in whom David takes refuge from devouring enemies. *'LORD my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me, or they will tear me apart like a lion and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.'* **v1-2** Throughout the Psalm, David addresses God as LORD. The mighty King who rules over an unjust world. The judge of all who administers perfect justice. Vindicating the righteous. Punishing the wicked. *'Let the assembled peoples gather around you, while you sit enthroned over them on high. Let the LORD judge the peoples. Vindicate me, LORD, according to my righteousness,*

according to my integrity, O Most High.’ **v7-8** ‘God is a righteous judge, a God who displays his wrath every day.’ **v11** Sisters and brothers, David’s cry for justice is not empty. He knows the God of justice. Our picture of the God of justice even clearer. We know Jesus Christ; the perfect judge God has appointed. That there is a fixed day on which perfect justice will be delivered. As forgiven sinners we know the justice of God towards us. Satisfied by the death of Jesus in our place for our evil. We look forward to that day when every injustice will be dealt with, every wrong righted. **Acts 17:31**, ‘For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.’ With the confidence of knowing the righteous judge, David cries out for justice. Desiring the experience of justice in the present. But content to rest in the certainty of delayed justice. As David vividly expresses in **v14-16**, perpetrators of injustice don’t escape the consequences. Evil turns in on itself. The wicked get what they deserve. Justice will prevail ‘Whoever is pregnant with evil conceives trouble and gives birth to disillusionment. Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit they have made. The trouble they cause recoils on them; their violence comes down on their own heads.’ Brothers and sisters, are we the righteous or the unrighteous in this Psalm? Victims of injustice or perpetrators of injustice. An uncomfortable question. I have suffered through the unjust actions of others. I have caused suffering by my unjust actions. What about you? David’s words of **v3-5** are important. He denies false allegations. He also admits the rightness of personal judgement for the perpetrator of injustice. ‘LORD my God, if I have done this and there is guilt on my hands— if I have repaid my ally with evil or without cause have robbed my foe— then let my enemy pursue and overtake me; let him trample my life to the ground and make me sleep in the dust.’ We rightly cry for justice. Cry out for mercy too before the righteous judge. For true justice includes deserved punishment for us as perpetrators of injustice. Heed the words of **Acts 17:30**, in preparation for the day of perfect justice. ‘In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.’ Find your salvation, your rescue, your shield in the Lord Jesus, who innocent though he was took the punishment for our sin so that God’s perfect justice is satisfied and mercy is poured out on us. Sisters and brothers, what injustices are you suffering? I know for some they are profound injustices, deeply wounding and life changing. I know that for some the justice you seek may not be evident until the last day. David knows justice will be done. His God, our God, is the God of justice. Know in

the depths of your heart that God will respond to your experiences of injustice with his perfect justice and mercy. Stand firm against the temptation to seek revenge. As Christians we stand before the judge of all clothed in his righteousness. Forgiven for our own unjust actions. For that reason, our response to injustice is to be the confidence of David. The absolute trust in the Father's purposes shown by Jesus in the injustice of the Cross. Obedience to Paul's exhortation in **Romans 12:19-21**. Mindful of Paul's personal story. A perpetrator of great injustice before his conversion. A victim of many injustices as an Apostle of Christ. *'Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."* *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'* Brothers and sisters, we are to love our enemies because that is exactly what we have received from God. Love in the death of Jesus while we were his enemies. Leaving ultimate justice to God is the surest foundation for true justice for he knows everyone's mind and heart. His justice is perfect. Ours is not. Sometimes the damage done by injustice is so overwhelming and lasting, God's command to love our enemy seems impossible and cruel. Christ dwells in us to empower us to live into the seemingly impossible. The fellowship of believers is God's gift to us. Fellow Christians walking alongside us, sharing our burdens. Encouraging us to faith and obedience alongside the pain of injustice. David's cry for justice is not satisfied immediately. But his faith in God and his right standing before God moves him to thanksgiving in the face of injustice. *'I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High.'* **v17** Join him today in that same spirit of thanksgiving.