

JUST OR UNJUST LIFE?
A Resource for Reflection

Rev. Serop Megerditchian
Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church
Aleppo, Syria

Usually young people ask, “Why do I exist?” And when there are some tragedies around, the people will ask several challenging questions:

“Is there really a caring and loving God?”

“Why is life so unfair?” or, “Where is the justice?”

These questions take on many different forms: “Why do bad things happen to people?” “How can there be a just and loving God with so much evil, tragedy and suffering in the world?”

One of the surveys that I conducted, where I asked the youth and adults in our society, if you asked God one question, and you knew He would give you an answer, what would you ask?

The number one answer was “Why are there pain, suffering and injustice in the world?”

If we go back through history, we see that the same question was asked in different ages. For instance

- a. Around 2600 years ago, the prophet Habakkuk asked God the same question, “Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails.”(1.3-4)
- b. Around 1600 years ago, St. Augustine asked similar questions, “If there is no God, why is there so much good? If there is a God, why is there so much evil?”
- c. Around 100 years ago and until today, the Armenian people are asking, “Why did the Armenian Genocide happen in 1915, where more than one and a half million (1.500.000) people were killed and the rest deported from their homeland by the Ottomans?”

In order to answer the last question, we should realize that we should not blame God, but the human beings who do the killings and continue to show hateful and destructive behaviors in different forms. God of love wants people to live in harmony. But if a human being acts inhumanely, why blame God?

As Christians we are called,

1. To respond with faith that God is the God of love and justice. “The Lord is righteous, He loves justice” (Psalm 11.7).
2. To trust Him every day and always do His will by speaking the truth. “Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God” (1 John 3.10).
3. To seek justice and be with the hopeless and marginalized ones. “Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right.” (Psalm 106.3).

If we, as Christians, will not condemn the unjust and unfair attitudes of people killing the innocents, then who will speak the truth and seek justice?

This year the Armenians worldwide are commemorating the 95th anniversary of the 20th century’s first genocide. Yet, the Armenian genocide is not condemned or publically recognized by many of the most influential countries of the world.

As Christians, we can ask why life is unjust. But if we don’t act justly, then the unjust people will continue doing unjust acts to other human beings; and life will remain unfair. Prophet Isaiah encourages us, “learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow” (Is.1.17).

May God of love and justice give us strength and hope to speak His truth, justice and righteousness. Amen.

Discussion Questions

What do you know about the Armenian Genocide of 1915? Can you name other genocides that have occurred in recent history? How can such atrocities happen? How should individuals, communities, and governments respond to such atrocities? How can we prevent atrocities?

What are some of your thoughts on the questions raised in this reflection? Why do bad things happen to people? Why are there pain, suffering and injustice in the world? How can there be a just and loving God with so much evil, tragedy and suffering in the world?

How do you respond when you are confronted with an injustice?

What tools or resources are available to you to help you speak the truth and seek justice for the marginalized and oppressed?

Rev. Serop reminds us to respond with faith that God is the God of love and justice, to trust God every day and always do God’s will by speaking the truth, and to seek justice and be with the hopeless and marginalized ones.

What else does God call us to do when we are treated unfairly or confronted with injustices?