

For Broadcast: 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## IT ISN'T FAIR

### *Round the Table discussion*

**Richard:** I was watching the news the other day and seeing people getting really angry about closed borders, and some industries getting back to work and others not. There was a strong feeling of injustice and that it's not fair. So what do you do when you feel like you're missing out, but have no power to do anything about it? This is Messages of Hope with Richard, Celia and Noel.

I was watching the news the other day and seeing these people getting really angry about the restrictions, that they can't actually cross the border. And even anger because they're having to close their jobs down and this real sense of injustice being imposed on them and a frustration that they just can't deal with this and they want things to change, but they're not. And so there's this real sense of anger caused from this injustice.

**Celia:** It feels like it's bubbling, doesn't it? Even myself, life hasn't changed hugely for me, but I know when it first started and we were not meant to actually travel outside of our regions or anything, and I remember at Easter time that really, we get together as a family and we go off to the shack and I love that time of the year. And okay, we did the right thing. We thought, right, we'll stay home. And there was a family not far from where I live that on that first Thursday, before Easter, they packed up their trailer, had all their camping gear on there and they drove off. And I can remember feeling flabbergasted. I actually wanted to chase the car and bang on it, like this is me, bang on that car and say-

**Richard:** So it wasn't where they were going on a holiday, it was more-

**Celia:** No, it was the fact that they were going and I wasn't. And I had given up that.

**Noel:** So it wasn't fair. Is that the idea?

**Celia:** It wasn't fair. It was that it was that real sense of that's not fair because I've done the right thing and so should you.

**Noel:** Right okay.

**Celia:** Because I'm missing out and you should miss out too.

**Richard:** So where does that sense of unfairness come from? What is it?

**Noel:** Well, I think it's probably related to the idea that, as Celia was saying, we've got an idea that we're doing the right thing and people are doing the wrong thing.

**Celia:** Mm-hmm. Is that black and whiteness of me?

**Noel:** Well, yeah. It's a fairly simple way of looking at the world, isn't it? Kids run with rules around their games and if you transgress the rule of the game, you're in trouble because it's not fair. If you serve outside the square, it's not fair. If you get a bigger piece of chocolate, it's not fair.

**Celia:** And kids have that real sense of what is fair, isn't it? Don't you know, right from a little age, that's not fair.

**Richard:** Yeah, it seems to come out of it, doesn't that? There's this underlying thing that the sense of justice, or it has to be fair.

**Celia:** Have we gone back to being like that childness? Do you know what I mean? You think that maybe you progress past that, and what's right and wrong and what's fair and unfair, but it seems like at the moment, we've almost come back to that sense.

**Noel:** Yeah. Well, I think you're probably right. The principle of fairness and unfairness govern so much of our anger and our angry responses to things. It's a bit like an iceberg. We see the top tip of it, and suddenly an event like this pandemic brings out all the stuff that's underneath the surface. And perhaps you're right. Perhaps we're all just a little bit childish in the way we think about it, a bit too black and white.

**Celia:** And maybe it's bringing up dormant feelings, or things that have been feeling unfair for quite some time and then this is just, as you're saying, the tip of it bubbling over.

**Noel:** So if the event actually reveals this huge nine tenths of the iceberg that's hidden, what do we do with the anger? Where do we go with it? What helps?

**Richard:** You're listening to Messages of Hope with Richard, Celia and Noel.

**Noel:** So we're talking about where that anger comes from when we feel that we're unfairly treated, and you just described what happened.

**Celia:** It caught me by surprise.

**Noel:** The anger caught you by surprise?

**Celia:** Yes.

**Noel:** So what did you do? Where did you go with it?

**Celia:** I vented. I told a number of people that I was not happy. So I did, and for me, when I feel that I guess it's really important that I have that opportunity to validate my feelings. The fact that yes, I felt unfair. I felt angry. I felt that wasn't what should have happened.

**Richard:** But did that change anything for you?

**Celia:** It probably gave me a little bit of perspective, was that actually I don't know the story behind where they were going or what they were doing. Or they might well have just gone to a block not far away and camped out overnight, who knows. But being able to express it, for me, took a bit of the heat out of it. I needed to be heard.

**Richard:** Vent, like you're doing, and sharing that with others is a very helpful way. I think it helps diffuse at least and get out of your head. I think sometimes when I get a real sense of unfairness, it gets really angry inside of me.

**Celia:** So what do you do?

**Richard:** I don't know where to place it. Well, I need to place it somewhere for me. So it's either share it, yeah, with someone near who's willing to listen. Or yeah, even just letting go of it a little bit somehow.

**Celia:** So if you had to, give me an example of something that you've felt is unfair or unjust or whatever.

**Richard:** Well, in my past life with umpiring football and being dropped, there's that sense of feeling like it's unfair, like how come they got a really good game and I didn't, and that real deep sense-

**Celia:** What have you done wrong? What did I do wrong?

**Richard:** Yeah. What is it about me? And you get really bitter towards the other person as well sometimes. And you get that real sense of this anger that, why not me? Why shouldn't I have that? Yeah, but be able to share that and hear other people's stories as well, so just my own.

**Celia:** So other people who've been dropped or haven't made a team or something. That helps you?

**Richard:** Yeah, that's right. And normalizing it a bit in a way and saying even, I remember growing up and the Australian cricket team, as great as it was, but every member in that team had been dropped for something, but yet had formed this great team. So I think what I viewed as being fair or not fair, it's kind of like, well, actually, no, this is part of something, a part of life. And it's part of our story and routine. And just to think that everything's going to be right and rosy, and we're all going to get the grand final at the end of the day, it just actually-

**Celia:** It's not realistic.

**Richard:** -doesn't make logical sense. Yeah.

**Noel:** So what you're saying is what helps you is that there's actually a bigger picture.

**Richard:** There is a bigger picture, yeah. And there's something, and I suppose or that's where I go and just let go of what I think, and it's out of my control. And personally, I give it to God. And I think it's a good thing to put your anger somewhere out of the unfairness and your sense of unfairness, in the hands of God. It's one thing, I think, to share with someone else, but you kind of filter that a bit because you reflect a little bit back on yourself, but we're actually knowing that you can just vent completely.

**Noel:** It's the one secure, absolutely secure relationship where you don't have to have any pretence of having it all together. God is a very safe place to unravel.

**Richard:** This is Messages of Hope and we're talking about fairness. When we feel hard done by, it's easy to get stuck in that moment, arguing about who's right and who's wrong doesn't go anywhere positive. So how do we move past the hurt of feeling unfairly treated?

**Noel:** I think it is having an understanding of a far bigger picture that this life is not all there is, that what we experience for no matter how long we live is just the very smallest beginnings of a whole eternity of existence that we have. So what happens in the short span of how it is compared to the vast eternity that we have puts things in a different perspective.

**Celia:** And we get very caught up in the fact that what is happening here and now is the be all and end all sometimes, don't we? It's a bit like when my kids were little, sometimes I would take them out on their own and have just time with them, and I might've bought them a treat or a donut or something, and come back and the other two would say, "Well, that's not fair." And I'm saying, "Well, actually it's okay because I have times with each of you that aren't fair for the other child, and do you want me to stop all of those?"

**Richard:** So you don't have a favourite?

**Celia:** I don't have a favourite. I love them completely, but I love them differently because they're different kids and they need to know that.

**Noel:** That's very helpful. The other thing that's helped me enormously is that there's a centre point that I keep coming back to in my life. And the reality that the God who loves me doesn't stay off at a distance and watch, he's not a spectator to my life. He actually has come into this world, and in Jesus, he suffered the most incredible injustice. There was nothing just fair or right about Jesus's betrayal and crucifixion and death. It was cowardly, it was wrong at every level. And yet, he used that to actually bring freedom and justice to the world, forgiveness to the world if we would have it. So it's just taught me that what happens now is not the end of the story. That if God uses that event of the cross to do something as remarkable as he has for the world, then he can do that for any of us at any point.

**Celia:** And the hope for me is exactly what you're saying, is that being able to look back on my life and see it in perspective now, I can see where in those moments where I've just felt like that's a really horrible time of my life. I can look back and know that actually the pathway that I've taken because of that incident is exactly where I'm meant to be now. But I don't see that until I look back. And that gives me hope now. That gives me hope when I feel crappy or angry or any of that, that exactly what you said, this isn't the end of it all. There is more yet to come.

**Noel:** We have a retired surgeon friend who said the most useful piece in his doctor's kit was the retrospectoscope.

**Celia:** Don't we all need one of those?

**Noel:** We need a retrospectoscope. And eternity gives us that retrospectoscope, not just for us, but for the whole world because we have to face the fact that not everyone's circumstances change, that circumstances don't suddenly get better overnight. So the way in which we live with hope is not through the change of circumstances, but a hope even that transcends the circumstance. The life that we live now is just a beginning of a whole eternity.

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