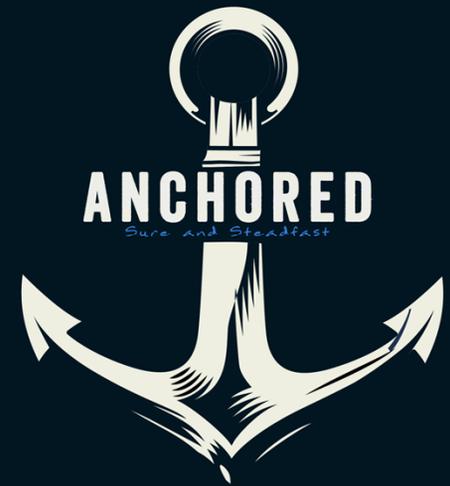


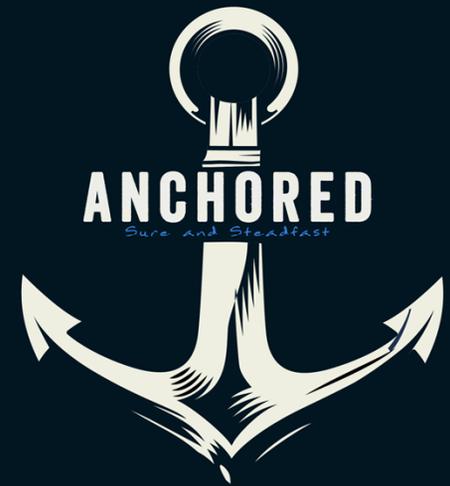
UNIT 2: THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

LESSON 3 – Is God Unfair?



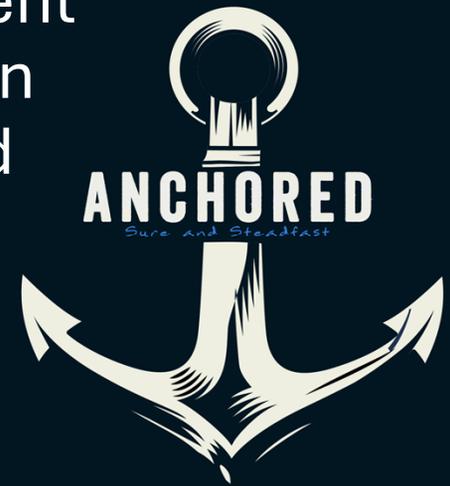
Introduction

- What we want to learn:
 - Human understanding of fairness is limited to our experiences. Understanding that God is just begins with identifying the ways He works in our lives and in the world for His purposes.



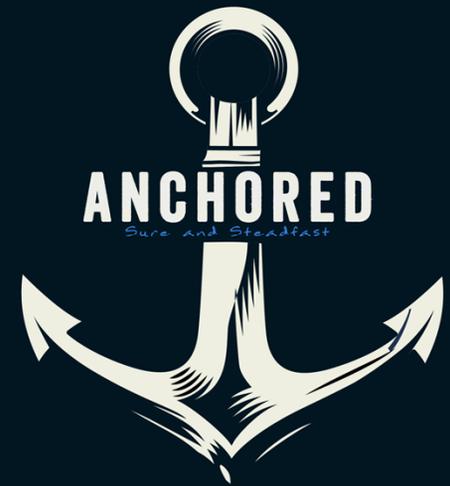
Introduction

- What we want to do with what we learn:
 - Redefine the age-old question of God's fairness. By understanding that God works on a different timeline and with larger goals in mind, we can reframe our understanding of what is fair and what is God.



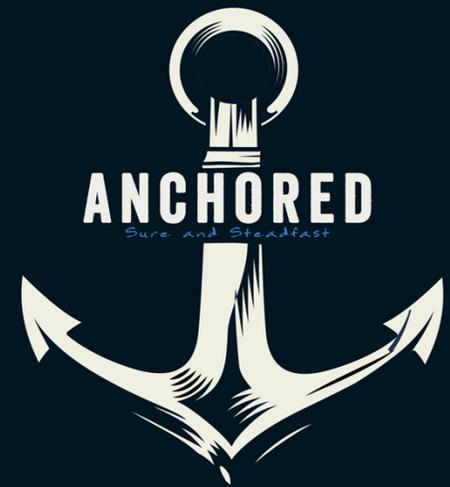
Scripture Focus

- Hebrews 4:14-16
- 2 Peter 3:8-9
- John 15:18-21
- Luke 15:11-32
- Lamentations 3:22-27

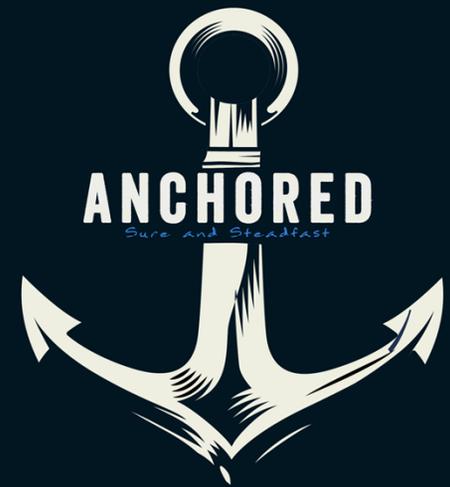


Anchor Statement

God is just and fair, even when I don't see it in the moment.

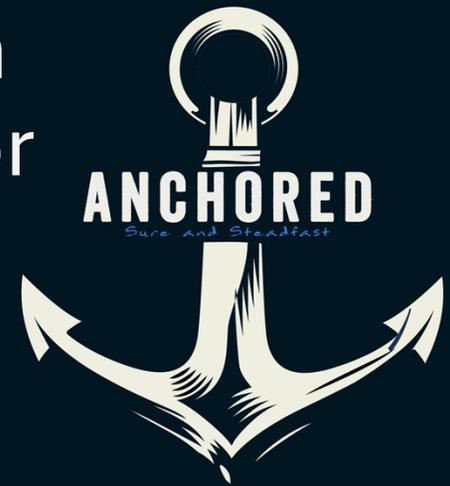


OVERVIEW



Overview

- Humans strive for fairness
- We may wrongly assume that humanity is capable of being fair at all times
- We may wrongly assume that we can understand fairness for a situation for both the long and short term



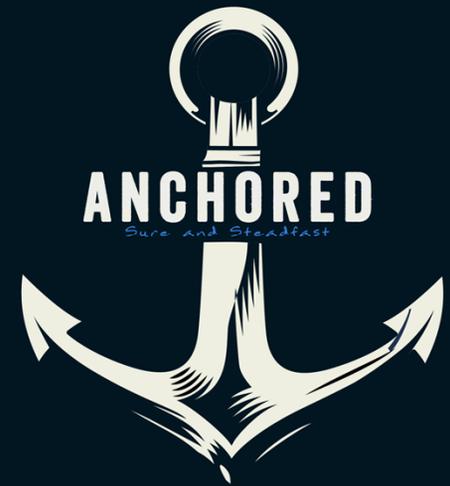
Context and Details

John

Author: John, the apostle

Time frame: ~85-95 AD

Purpose: to communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah



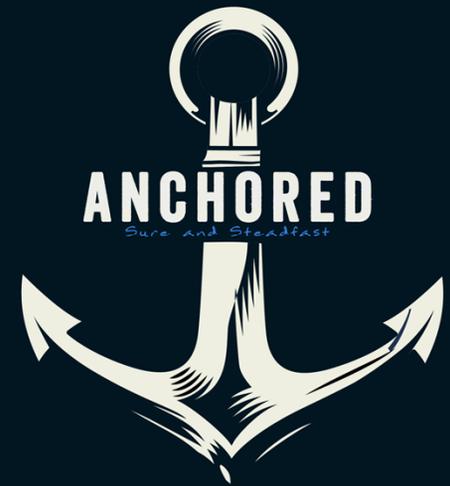
Context and Details

2 Peter

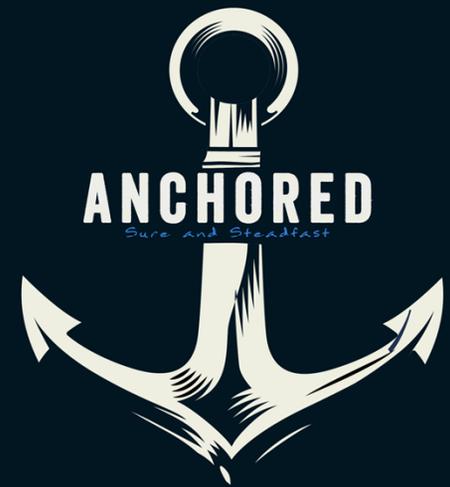
Author: Peter, the disciple

Time frame: ~64-67 AD

Purpose: to a people under persecution (from Nero); grace in the face of persecution



THE SETTING

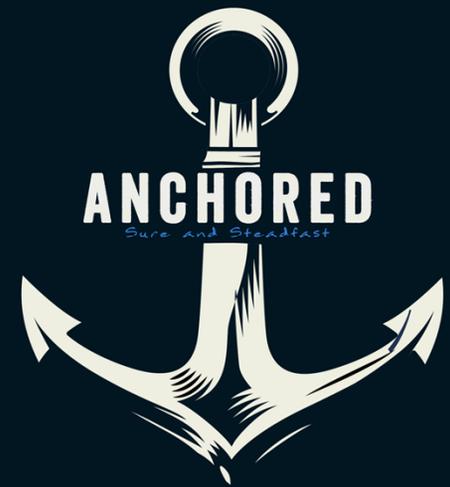


The Setting

- The question of God's fairness ultimately has nothing to do with what God allows but what we think we deserve.
- You will be challenged to redefine what fairness really is and why this question often becomes a hang-up for us today.

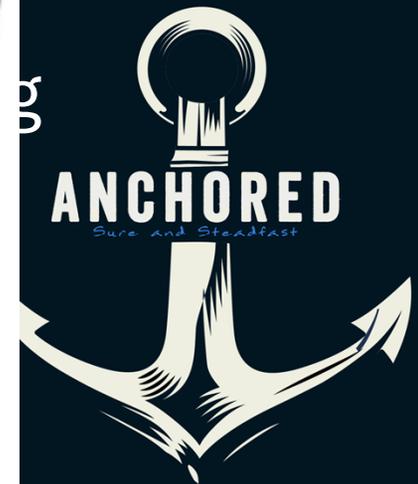


THE MAIN POINT

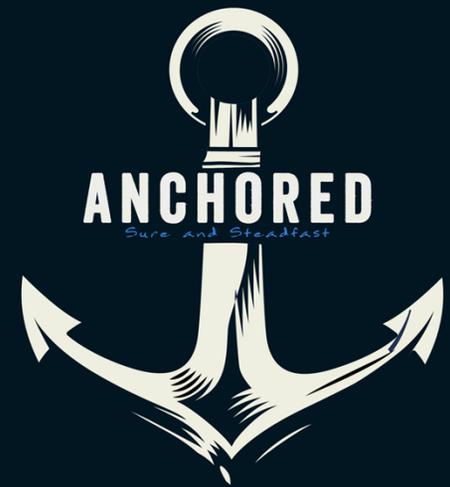


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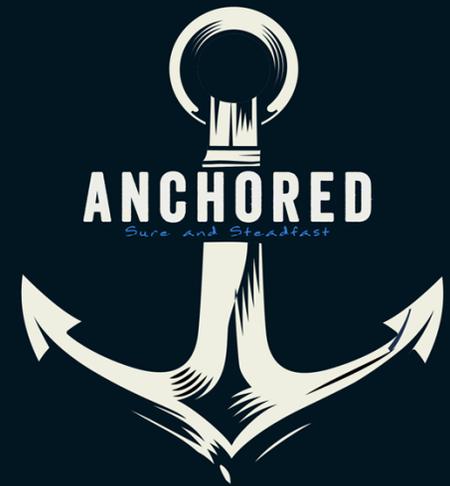


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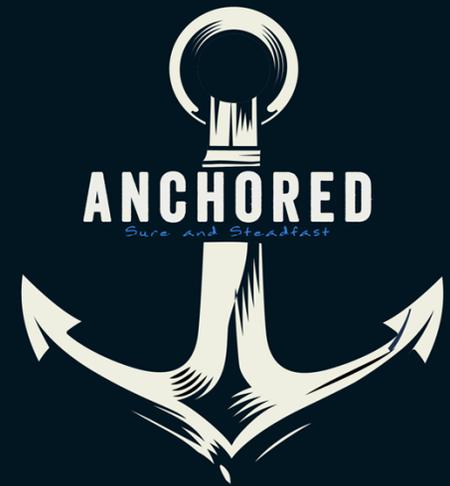
Goal

To introduce the idea of unfairness and understand that what we often view as unfair is falsely attributed to God



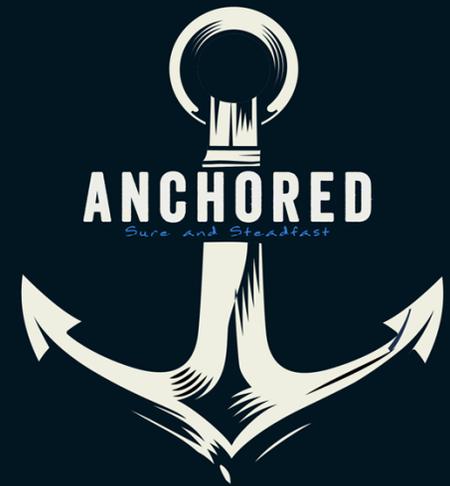
Question

- Have you ever broken a rule or did something that went against a moral norm?



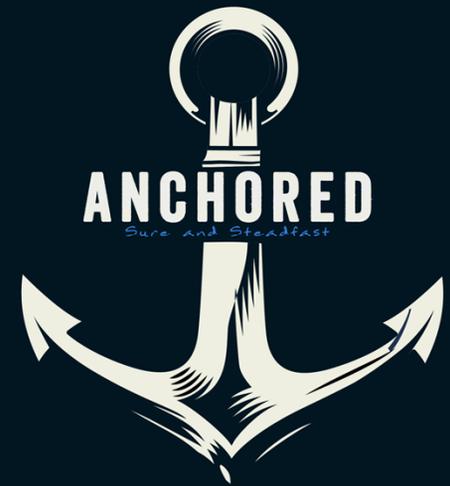
We All Make Mistakes

- **Whenever we break a rule, we fail to meet the standard of the person that was our authority.**
- **Sometimes, we don't like the idea of authority, but God set it in place to help bring order and structure to our world.**
- **Authority is a good thing when it is carried out properly.**



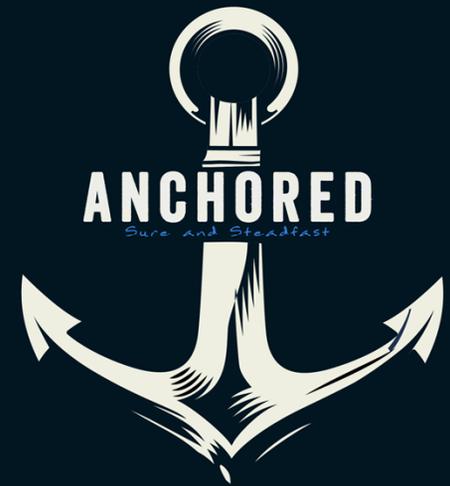
Question

- Have you ever felt that a rule set by someone in authority was unfair or wrong?



Rules and Expectations

- **The way we feel about the rules and expectations in our lives often ties in directly with what we think about the authority that is making them**
- **Every one of us must accept that sin is a part of humanity being imperfect authorities.**
- **God is without sin, which means that He alone is capable of leading, coaching, or teaching perfectly.**



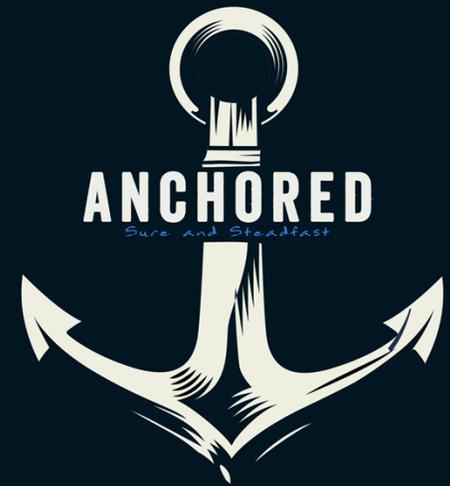
God's Authority

- His authority is perfect and without sin
- He knows each of us as only a Creator can
- He knows how to take our difficult experiences and turn them into growth and learning



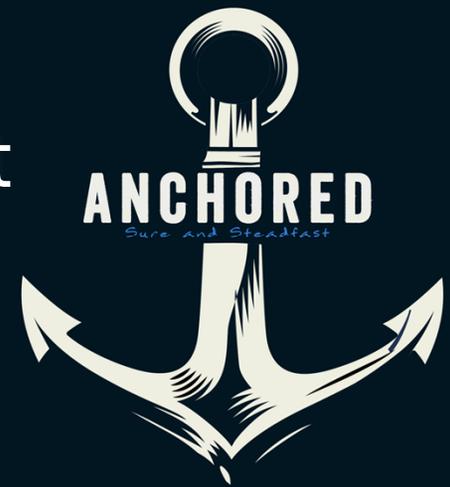
Hebrews 4:14-16

- What does this tell us about God's role in our lives when things seem unfair?



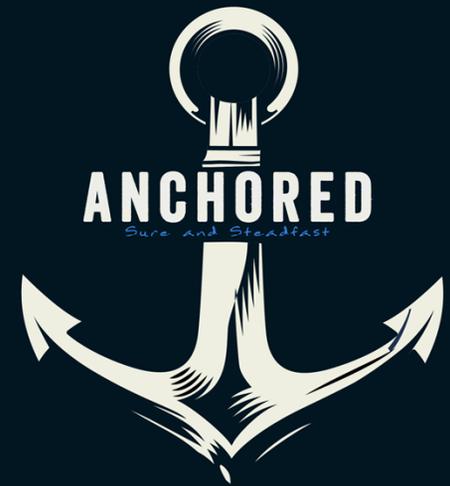
Life Can Be Unfair

- He has watched AND lived it
- He is right there beside us, extending grace and empathy
- He is not unfair to us
- He goes above and beyond to comfort us

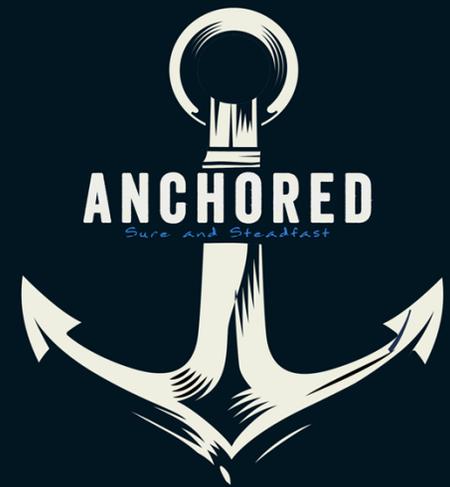


Life Can Be Unfair

- God is not unfair, sin is
- But let's look at some reasons we may blame God

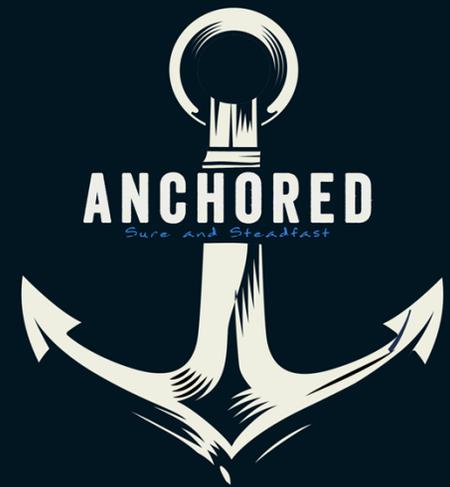


THE MAIN EVENT



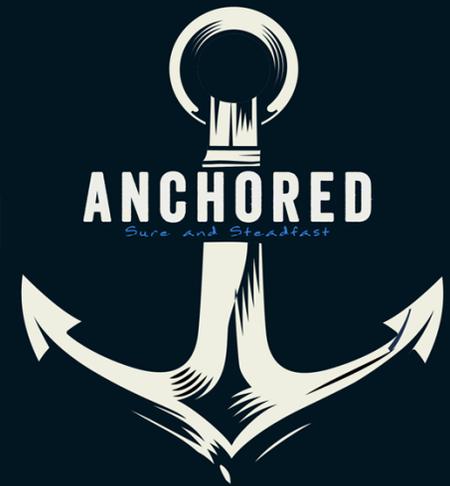
Goal

- To understand that:
 - Our understanding of fairness is broken, but God's is perfect.



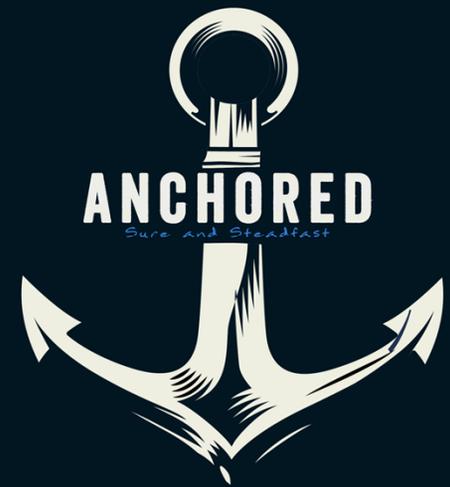
Is God Unfair?

- **It's a natural response to living in a fallen world that we do not understand**
- **Our perception of everything is tiny compared to what God knows**
- **God sees everything around us from beginning to end**
- **We may be ignoring His grace for us and others**



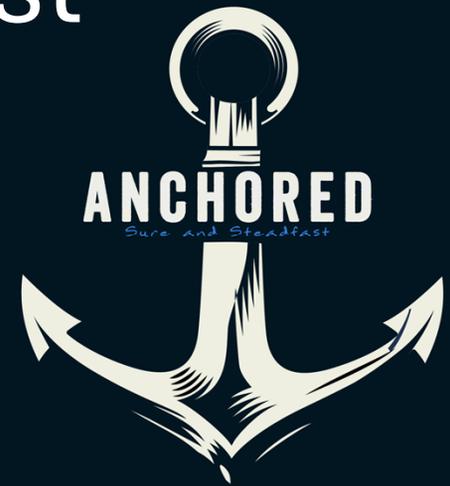
2 Peter 3:8-9

- To what promises of God is this passage referring?



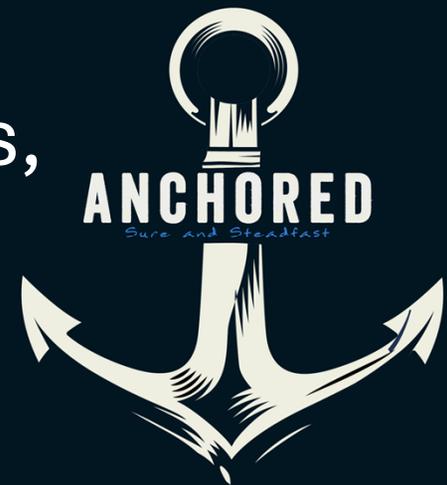
2 Peter 3:8-9

- The promise of an eternal home for His people where the effects of sin will not exist



When We Think About God's Fairness

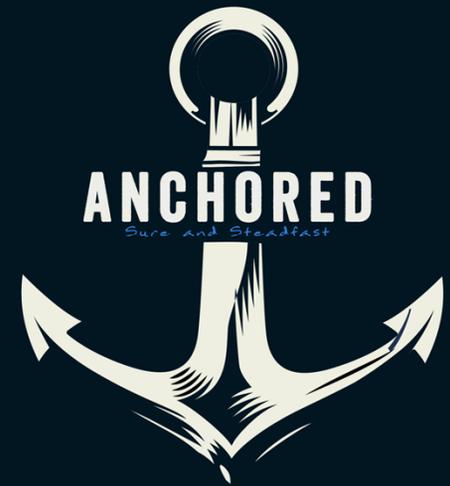
- We often look to have answers right now
- For us, fairness and justice should be on display instantly
- For example, when we see someone doing something really awful to others, we want them to be stopped



The Return of Christ

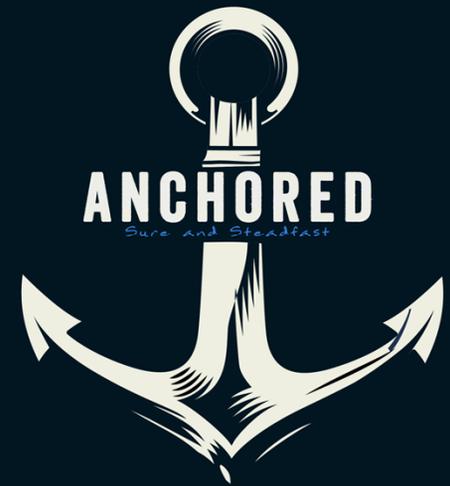
- **Something all believers should be excited about**
- **Jesus promises to put an end to all suffering, unfairness, and injustice when He returns**
- **We are now between His arrival and His return**
- **Jesus was clear about one thing before He left:**

Things are going to feel unfair



John 15:18-21

- Jesus uses unfairness as proof that we are living apart from the world
- We may see people doing horrible things without seeing the consequences
- We may extend grace, yet get taken advantage of
- Why doesn't God step in?



Why Doesn't God Step in?

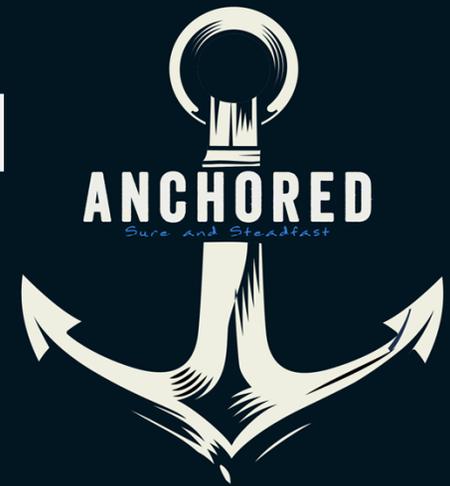
- God does step in
- You miss it when you question God's fairness in the wrong place
- If we don't begin with our own sin, we miss God's justice and mercy



1 John 1:8-10

Why does this say that the truth is not in us if we claim to have no sin?

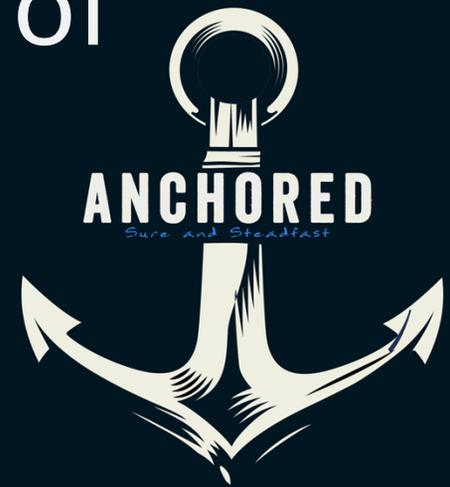
Because we have ALL sinned



According to Scripture...

What is the outcome for
anyone who sins?

Sin leads to and is deserving of
death



God Isn't Fair at All

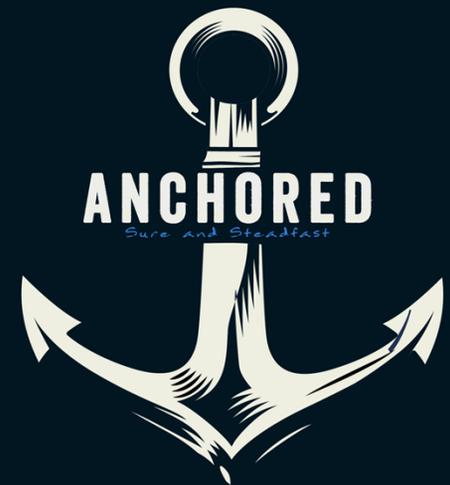
**If we define fairness as instant accountability
none of us would be here**

**God gives us something far greater than the
human understanding of fairness**

He promises justice but extends mercy

To God:

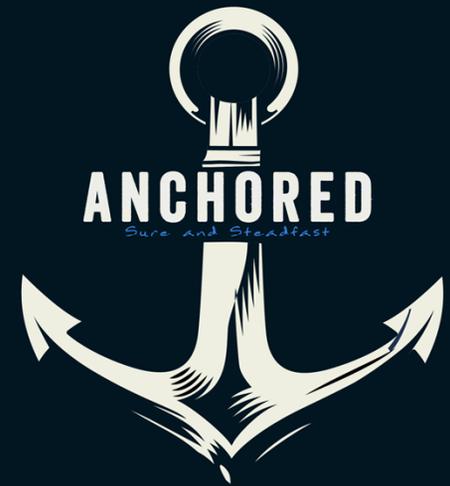
**Fairness means giving each of us an
opportunity to know Him and accept the
gift of salvation despite our sins.**



Questioning God's Fairness

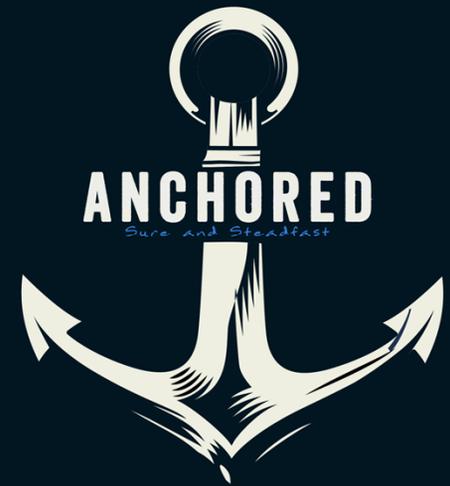
It may seem like the right thing
to do

But it is really our attempt to
make God fit into the
standards we have created



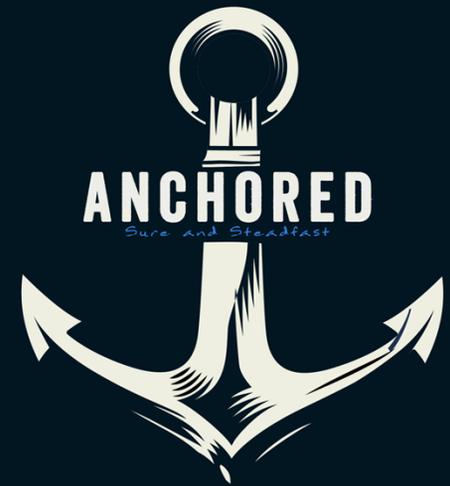
Question

- Have you ever felt held up in a group setting because one person wasn't "getting it"?
- What if YOU were that person?



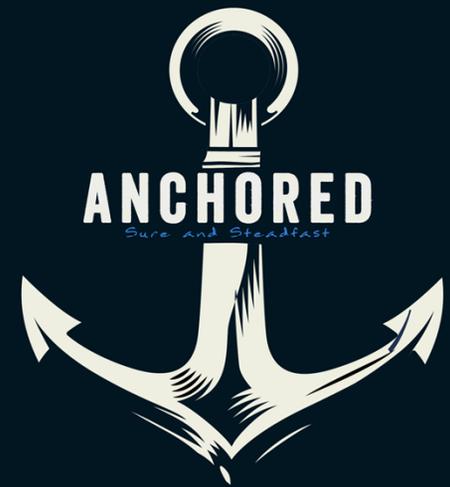
Luke 15:11-16

What does the son as for?



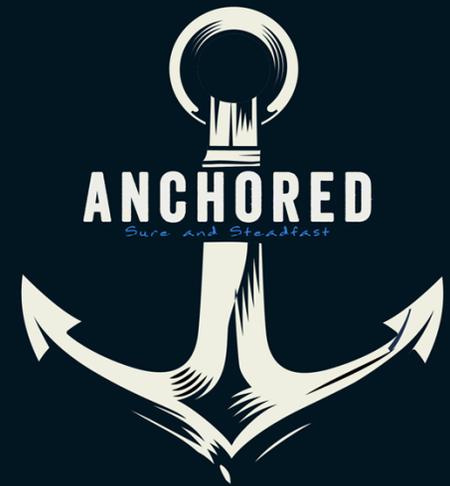
Luke 15:17-24

Now what does the son as for?



Question

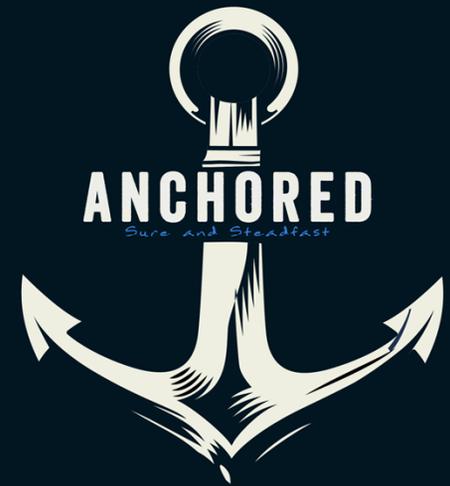
- How do the father's actions compare to what would have been fair?



Luke 15:25-32

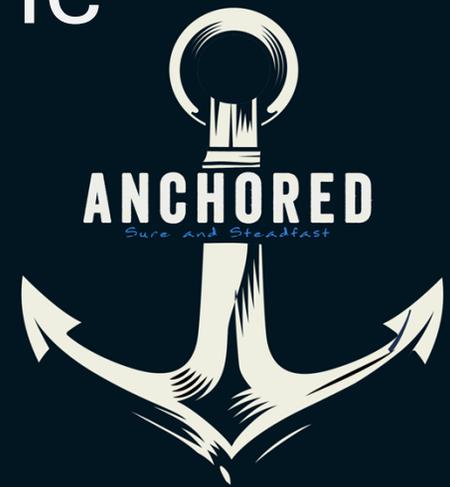
What do you think of the older brother's response?

Do you think the father's response is 'fair'?



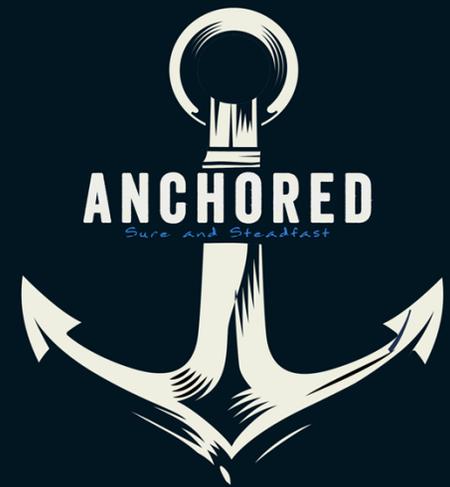
Genesis 50:15-21

How did Joseph's perspective change from the time his brothers wrong him to the time he forgave and provided for them?

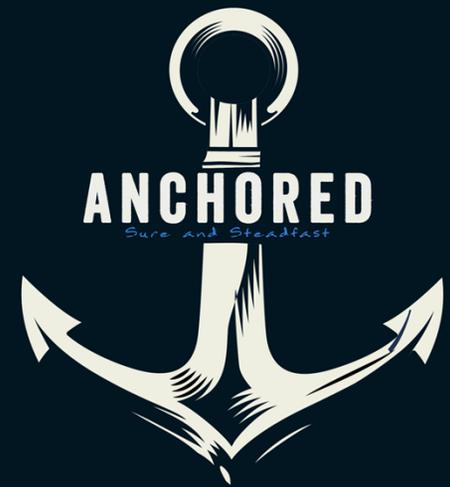


Anchor Statement

God is just and fair, even when I don't see it in the moment.

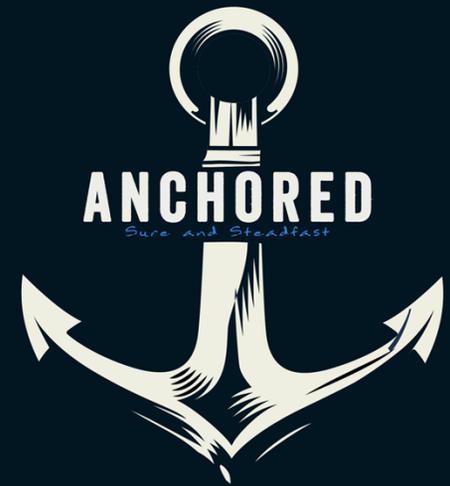


THE LAST WORD



Lamentations 3:22-27

Why is it important to remember God's steadfast love when life seems unfair?



The Last Word

- There are times in our lives when the effects of sin will be allowed by God
- That does not mean He is acting unfairly towards us
- It is in our most difficult moments that God extends love to us beyond what we could imagine



The Last Word

- There are things that happen to us that don't make sense
- Remember in those moments that God's love and mercy far outweigh the bad
- Even in lamentations, God's mercies come new every morning

