

Clarifying Christianity: Do Justice

Micah 6:8, 1 Peter 2:1-12 || Pastor Shawn Gendall || 18 October 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: Share about the last time you asked God what He wanted you to do?

Worship: Micah 6:6-8 (*Read aloud 3 times, reflect and listen for God's invitation to you.*)

Sermon Summary for Micah 6:8 // 1 Peter 2:1-12 (*Read the passage before reading the sermon summary.*)

Justice is dear to the heart of God, and therefore it is close to our own. So why does justice seem so far from our reality? And what would it look like to experience a world where *“justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream”* (Amos 5:24)? The questions and promises of the prophets are fulfilled in Jesus, and so our question becomes not “How good would this be?”, but “How good will this be?” Because justice is promised to us as a gift of grace. Yes, in this world there will always be trouble until the fulfillment of time. But let us seek the wisdom of God, that we might be channels of the rolling streams of justice even now.

What does the Bible mean when it talks about justice? It is the “making whole of” individuals and communities and the world. It’s when people live in shalom, because God reigns in wisdom and has given voice and dignity to all. To gain deeper insight into Biblical justice, let’s look more closely at its five facets as described by Tim Keller:

Community // We are to sacrificially give of ourselves so our community would be cared for. This honors the belief that everything comes from God and will return to Him. We are simply stewards of His resources.

Equity // No favor or favoritism should be given. Everyone is offered equality and dignity.

Corporate responsibility // We bear responsibility for right-ness and justice in our community. We share responsibility for the systems in which we participate and live in. We all share as stewards.

Individual responsibility // We are responsible for our sins; we “reap what we sow”. In addition, because we live in a broken world, things like poverty, oppression, and famine are a reality. And as the people of God, we are called to acts of mercy and to be stewards of the witness of the Gospel in the world.

Advocacy // While we never show favoritism, we do stand on the side of the powerless. As Keller says, “we are seeking to give more social, financial, and cultural capital (power) to those with less.”

How does the Gospel uniquely allow us to embrace justice: in our lives, our church, and the world? First we ask: Are we willing to develop and embrace a vision for justice in our own hearts? We live with a constant tension between the abundant life found in union with Christ and a realistic view of the world. Yes, we live a rescued, redeemed life. But we live a missional life too. We live in the glorious, faith-stretching tension of the now and the not yet. And so we pursue justice through honesty and integrity, by following through on our commitments, and by avoiding hypocrisy, deceit, envy and slander (1 Peter 2:1-3,11 & Rom 12:15-19). May we pursue the wisdom of God in His scriptures that we may grow into our salvation and find the freedom to forgive and the freedom to serve.

Will we participate together in the building of a “just” community? As a church, we are the way that the watching world understands what the Gospel looks like. The nature of our relationships in Christian community are meant to

serve as a testimony of the beauty of life under the care and love of Jesus. So we treat each other with fairness. With dignity. And we give our voice to all (1Pet 2:4-5). Let us express leadership through servanthood and sacrifice.

Will we as a community pursue justice in our world? *“It is a terrible misunderstanding of the Gospel to think that it offers us salvation while relieving us of responsibility for the life of the world, for the sin and sorrow and pain with which our human life and that of our fellow men and women are so deeply interwoven”* wrote Lesslie Newbigin. God has built us together as a community – “a royal priesthood” – that we might “proclaim the excellencies of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1Pet 2:9). One of the manifestations of this Light working in us is that we are a people of justice. And by participating in this community, we both display the Gospel working in our lives and we go out into the world and share the love and the truth and the light of the Gospel.

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussion.)

- Discuss the five facets of biblical justice described by Tim Keller and how it might help someone grasp the concept.
 - How does 1 Peter 2:1-12 help us see that biblical justice reflects who we are in Christ?
 - In what ways does this provide a foretaste of God’s Kingdom? See 1 Pet. 2:9
 - Justice is a relational/community term meaning to set things right or make them whole — loving our neighbor. Name some injustices seen in our city.
 - Discuss how doing justice honors human dignity, human flourishing and the sacredness of life.
 - What would be different to see “justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” in our world? See Amos 5:24
 - How can you use your voice and influence to get in the way of injustices you are aware of?
 - How are you encouraged or challenged to *do justice* by this sermon or bible passage?
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Prayer: See CG Prayer Guide [Here](#). Use the prayer guide prompts for group, family, or personal use this week.

Engage & Experience: Commit to advancing justice not as an extracurricular part of faith, but as an imperative expression of faith. Consider as a group how Jesus might be inviting you to care and pursue justice for the least, the last and the lost this month.

Sign up for a Box of Love [Here](#) and begin praying for the recipients.