




TALKING WALKING POINTS

A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Discussion & Reflection

- 2021.6.13
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- 1 What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
 - 2 Granted, "**true justice aligns with God's character**" (point "I" in the [Sermon Summary](#)), but how do we walk the fine line of obeying biblical teaching in a secular world that rejects God and biblical authority?
 - 3 What should we do when we **are** angry at things at which the world **doesn't** get angry, or we're **not** angry at things at which the world insists we **must** be angry (point "III" in the [Sermon Summary](#))?
 - 4 As a group, discuss the responsibilities and freedoms inherent in the concept of "**two jurisdictions**" (from point "IV" in the [Sermon Summary](#) through the end of the sermon). **5** Have you mistakenly been bearing any burden to restore injustices which are "above your pay grade"? Tell us about it.
 - 6 "**True justice is giving people what they are due**" (point "II" in the [Sermon Summary](#)).
What is something which **you** are due, but which you've been denied?
How have you grappled with that injustice?
 - 7 What is someone else's due which **you've** denied him/her?
 - 8 How can you begin rectifying that injustice?

Application-Challenge

1. This week, take note of **what** you get angry at. It shows what you think is unjust.
 - Do you get angry at people and things that deny you what you want? That's selfish.
 - Do you get angry when others are denied their due, as God's image-bearers?Are you getting angry at the **right** things?
2. Of the acts of **true** injustice you encounter, **which ones** are within your jurisdiction to rectify? Which ones do you have responsibility and authority to try to put right?
 - Involve yourself in those ones. Try to give each person what he is due.
 - When an injustice is **not** within your jurisdiction, pray for God to move the appropriate people to intervene. Speak to that person if you can.
3. Put your hope in Jesus, **not** in this world, for the **perfect** justice for which we all long. Long for **that** day. Fix your hope on **that** day. And, until Jesus returns, to the best of your ability, "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God."

- 1 Although this is a standard opening question, it may not be quite such a “softball” today with this topic. Reactions to this topic may be a bit heated! The older a group member is, the more likely he/she might agree with this sermon’s teaching on justice—but you never know! (Sometimes if a younger loved-one [a child or grandchild] has been influenced by secular social justice norms a parent or grandparent will begin question what he’s previously though on the subject. Be prepared **not** to react too strongly to any strong negative emotions expressed here (just take note of anything you ought to follow up on).
- 2 1 Peter 3:15 gives us this guidance/warning: **“Honor Christ as Lord of your life. If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way.”** Simply saying “Because the Bible says so.” doesn’t carry much weight with today’s secular mindset. Here are some helpful lines to pursue with your group as you answer this question:
 - **Even though we disagree significantly, what “common ground” do we agree on?** (eg. the importance of justice; the brokenness in our world; the difficulty of solving these problems—throughout history oppressed peoples have overthrown the yoke of their oppressors, and then have in turned oppressed others; etc.)
 - **What questions can you ask the other person in order to understand—and to help *them* understand—what *they* mean by various terms, such as “just/fair”, “oppression”, etc.?**
 - **Finally, remember that simply listening and asking questions might be sufficient for now.** If pressed for your opinion (but you don’t think that they’re really ready to give it a fair hearing), you always can say, “These are complex issues. I’d like to think on it a bit more so I can give you a well-reasoned answer.” Then, later you can come back to a conversation, saying something such as: “I’ve been thinking about what we talked about Monday. It seems to me...” or “...I’m wondering if...” Our goal certainly is not to “win an argument”.
- 3 Just probe folks for their thoughts on **both** angles of this question. Many of the same principles of “gentle and respectful communication” (from 2). What we **must** do is help Christians learn not to abandon biblical teaching when we experience pushback to biblical teaching. How to do this winsomely is the essence of this question.
- 4 Regarding our **responsibilities** to “do justice”, consider Proverbs 24:11-12. Regarding the **freedom** inherent in the concept of jurisdiction, consider the implications of: “If possible, as far as you are able...” of Romans 12:18.
- 5 Now that you’ve identified some of the **freedom** inherent in the concept of jurisdiction, ask who has unknowingly tried to help restore justice in an area that actually lay **beyond** their jurisdiction.
- 6 This question is designed to help folks grapple with the pain of living in a fallen world, and to help group members learn to “bear each other’s burdens”.
- 7 This question could expose some real pain. It’ll require significant humility and vulnerability. Be prepared to “prime the pump” with your own answer.
- 8 Ditto on this question—it’ll require significant humility and vulnerability. Be prepared to use your own answer to 7 to get the ball rolling on this one.

Sermon Summary (Key Text: Micah 6:8)

Do Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly

Part Two

Whether it's a minor squabble between your children, or a major tragedy such as a fatal shooting, there's a need to bring justice to our world—but how? Christians care deeply about issues of injustice and oppression, but get confused about how to be involved. Jesus said, "You'll know a tree by its fruit"—so we have a means for knowing if an approach to justice isn't good (see James 3:13-18)—but positively, what should we do? Thankfully, the Bible gives us guidance for that, too (see Micah 6:8). We see Jesus getting angry at injustice in the Temple (John 2:14-17). The prophet Jeremiah warns us to "start treating each other with **true** justice"—which means that there's such a thing as "false" justice (see 7:5). So, how do we figure out if we're getting angry at the right things?

I. True justice aligns with God's character. God himself is the moral plumb line which determines what is just for all peoples, in all eras (Proverbs 8:20; Psalm 97:1-2 & 103:6). And an action is "unjust" if it is out of alignment with God's character and word.

II. True justice is giving others what is due them (Romans 12:17 & 13:7). What does that slow sales clerk deserve? What does your tired, fussy toddler deserve? Ahmaud Arbery, the jogger who was killed because someone deemed that he was jogging in the "wrong neighborhood"—what did he deserve? What about the unborn? What's their due? A chance at life? And don't leave God out—what is he due? If our discussions of justice don't even consider what **God** is due, that's a problem. God deserves love from the totality of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. If we're not giving God what he's due, then whatever we're doing, it ain't "just"—no matter what we call it. If we're robbing **God** of what he is due, we have **zero** chance of getting "justice" right for people made in his image. Take racism, for example. Racism is not merely **horizontally** unjust, depriving fellow creatures of what they are due. Racism also is **vertically** unjust—making one's own race more important than God.

III. True justice gets angry at what God gets angry at. Is our anger aimed at **real** injustice? The Bible tells us **what** to get angry at—things like slavery, environmental degradation, and deciding that a baby is too damaged to deserve life. On the other hand, we shouldn't get angry when a baker declines to make a cake which celebrates something he opposes. We shouldn't get mad simply because someone makes more money than we do. When Jonah was angry because God had compassion on the wicked Ninevites, God asked Jonah: "Do you **have a right** to be angry?" He didn't; his anger was unbiblical. It was evil. The "what makes you angry?" test can help us evaluate whether we're getting angry at the right things, the things that anger God. Or, our anger may flow from the bitter jealousy and selfish ambition we talked about last week.

IV. True justice falls into two jurisdictions. Although true justice gives a person what he is due, it's not quite that simple. There's another question: "Am **I** the authorized person to bring justice to **this** certain situation?" The Bible divides "justice" into two "jurisdictions", two domains, two levels of authority—and we've got to know **which** level of authority is within **our** personal pay grade: **[1] Governmental justice** is established by God to distribute to every person what is rightfully his. And when someone claims that they've been denied what is rightfully his, the government has jurisdiction to settle controversies. **[2] Interpersonal justice** consists of fair, honest interaction between individuals. It's "above the pay grade" of individuals to meddle in things God has given government the authority to decide. When individuals try to settle disputes, we call it vigilantism.

(continued)

Sermon Summary (concluded)

So, what does justice at the individual level mean, how do individuals “do justice”? We “give them what they’re due”. People made in the image of God deserve love, so we love our neighbor. We tell them the truth—because that’s what people deserve. We consider others more important than ourselves, because that’s what the Bible commands. We serve each other. All of the virtues of the Christian life make up the obligations that we have toward each other. All of the Christian virtues delimit and define the obligations we have to each other. That’s how individuals “do justice”. Justice means following the rule of law, showing impartiality, paying what you promised, not stealing or swindling, not taking bribes, keeping your promises, and not taking advantage of the weak. It is treating others as you wish to be treated. It is just living out the Ten Commandments in our everyday relationships.

What level of authority and responsibility do individuals have in “doing justice”? Unless you’re a government official, it’s limited to refraining from evil ourselves and positively doing good toward others. It’s within the government’s jurisdiction to judge and to correct wrongs that others may have done. (And there’s a jurisdiction that belongs **only** to God: He says “Vengeance is **mine**— *I* will repay. **Revenge** is above **every** human’s pay grade.) Fallen human governments can’t deliver perfect justice, but they must do the best they can do in this fallen world. One day, perfect justice will come (Isaiah 42:1-4; 51:4; 61:8). Partial, imperfect justice can be rendered now via relatively just court systems, but perfect justice has to wait for King Jesus. King Jesus will bring justice to the nations—he’ll do it perfectly and completely, and he’ll do it gently and kindly.

Let’s review what we’ve learned today: First, we’ve seen that **true justice aligns with God’s character**. We can’t just come up with our own ideas of right and wrong. God’s Word tells us what true justice is. **True justice gets angry at what God gets angry at**. Anger is the **proper** response we feel in the face of injustice, but we have to be careful that we’re getting angry at the things God gets angry at. Mere differences between people are not **necessarily** the result of injustice. **Sometimes** advantages are a simple issue of opportunity, circumstance, or personal effort. Finally, **true justice means giving others what is due them**, but there’s also **the question of jurisdictions**. God has reserved the **correcting** of societal wrongs for governmental authorities, not private citizens. And, of course, the ultimate jurisdiction is God’s: **he**, and he alone, will bring about perfect, complete justice. We individuals, however, give each other what they are due when we treat one another fairly, when we treat others as we want to be treated.

“Doing justice” is both simpler and more difficult than we might first have imagined. Simpler since it is not our jobs to bring about perfect justice in this fallen world. Simpler because not all injustices lie within our jurisdiction. Yet justice also is more difficult because we are to aim for **as much** justice as we can in this fallen world. That’s the best we fallen humans can do.

Talking To God About This Week’s Message

“Heavenly Father, today I want to be a ‘doer’ of the Word, and not just a ‘hearer’. Amen.”

Talking To Others About This Week’s Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, “*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*”, how would you summarize the most important elements of this week’s sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) *is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to understand the biblical truth about justice...*

Monday—Read Psalm 99:1-5. What do you learn about **God's justice**?

Tuesday—Read Psalm 72:1-4. What do you learn about what a **just ruler** will do?

Wednesday—Read Deuteronomy 4:5-8. What do you learn about a **just nation**?

Thursday—Read Luke 1:6. Describe the **just individual**. What do you learn from v. 7?

Friday—Read Psalm 119:67-68, 71 & 75. How does God **teach us** to be just/righteous?

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping the risen Lord with your church family,***
study **Exodus 33:13-23 & 34:6-8.**

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]