

4. How does pursuing God's kingdom concerns accomplish restorative justice in its persona, relational, and social dimensions?

5. Read Matthew 5:46-47. When do you most struggle to love your enemies?

6. What can we do as Jesus' followers to counter and address the contempt problem in our society and in the church?

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

Justice (A Story of God Series)

"How to Do Justice and Righteousness According to Jesus (Matthew – John)"
Matthew 12:15-21; 23:23-24

This series seeks to build a better understanding of social justice from a biblical point of view so that we can seek justice and stand against injustice together in a way that glorifies God and demonstrates love for our neighbor.

Christians can be united in a concern for biblical justice without always agreeing on particular solutions for injustice. We will even sometimes disagree on what constitutes injustice in our world.

Jesus and Justice

Matthew 12: ¹⁸ "Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim **justice** to the nations.

¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out;
no one will hear his voice in the streets.

²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he has brought **justice** through to victory.

²¹ In his name the nations will put their hope."

Matthew 23: ²³ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—**justice**, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."

Matthew's gospel _____ what Jesus does and says as a restorative justice mission. And, like the OT prophets, Jesus condemns the religious leaders for neglecting justice.

The word "justice" is rarely on the lips of Jesus for three reasons:

- The _____ word for "justice," unlike the Hebrew word mishpat, carries the connotation of condemnation (retributive justice).

- Jesus frequently talks about “righteousness,” the other side of the justice _____. We think of righteousness in terms of personal ethics, but the Bible speaks of it in relational and _____ terms, not just in terms of personal ethics.
- When Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God (his _____ preaching theme), the Kingdom of God is about restorative justice—the restoration of the way things are supposed to be. (Luke 4:13-21; 7:20-23)

How to Do Justice and Righteousness According to Jesus

1. Pursue God’s _____ concerns.

The gospel is about more than restoring health or about generosity to the poor or defending the fatherless and widow. It’s about reconciliation with God. It’s about restoring our _____ with God.

The outworking of our salvation is an empowering and calling to do the work of the kingdom—to not only proclaim it but to _____ it.

2. Steward your _____ fo kingdom purposes.

Jesus called us to be salt in the world and a light for the world by the way we live and _____.

3. Love your neighbor (even when your neighbor is your _____).

“We don’t have an anger problem in American politics. We have a contempt problem. ...If you listen to how people talk to each other in political life today, you notice it is with pure contempt. When somebody around you treats you with contempt, you never quite forget it. So if we want to solve the problem of polarization today, we have to solve the contempt problem.” (Arthur Brooks)

Jesus’ call us to love our enemies isn’t a sappy or sentimental kind of love. It’s love in _____ that’s made possible by God’s power in us. (See Matthew 5:43-47)

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week’s sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Matthew 12:15-21. How does Matthew frame Jesus’ ministry in terms of restorative justice?
3. Read Luke 4:13-21 and 7:20-23. How does what Jesus says about his ministry speak specifically to restorative justice?