

5. Why are the story of Creation (Genesis 1-2) and Separation (Genesis 3) so crucial for understanding biblical justice?

6. What are some of the personal reasons we sometimes neglect doing restorative justice?

7. What is needed in order for your small group and/or your family members to have substantive discussions on justice issues without blowing everything up?

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

Justice (A Story of God Series)

“Shalom and the Need for Justice (Creation & Separation)”

Genesis 1:26-29; 2:8-9,16-17; 3:14-15

This series seeks to _____ 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 _____ 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.

Defining Justice

Justice is about _____ all people with dignity and fairness because humans are equal before God. (Tim Mackie)

The Hebrew word for justice is _____.

R_____ justice is about rectifying acts of injustice by making someone pay for doing wrong.

Only about _____ passages about justice are about retributive justice.

R_____ justice is about making sure people are treated equally and fairly and given an opportunity to flourish.

In the story of God restorative justice is about getting us as _____ as possible to the way things were supposed to be (Genesis 1-2) and the way it was before sin entered the world (Genesis 3), a time of human flourishing.

Why Start with Creation & Separation (Genesis 1-3)?

Shalom = The Way Things are Supposed to Be

- The idea of justice is introduced in Genesis 2. (Genesis 2:8-9,16-17)

Adam can live in _____—in a just world, a world where all humans are equal before God and have the right to be treated with dignity and fairness, a world of flourishing—or he can choose not to trust God and experience retributive justice for bringing evil and death into paradise.

- The Bible ties justice to the human _____ established in Genesis 1. (Genesis 1:26-29)

Genesis 9: 6 “Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed for in the image of God has God made mankind.”

James 3: 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness.

“You see, the founding fathers were really influenced by the Bible. The whole concept of the imago dei, as it is expressed in Latin, the “image of God,” is the idea that all men have something within them that God injected. Not that they have substantial unity with God, but that every man has a capacity to have fellowship with God. And this gives him a uniqueness, it gives him worth, it gives him dignity. And we must never forget this as a nation: there are no gradations in the image of God. Every man from a treble white to a bass black is significant on God’s keyboard, precisely because every man is made in the image of God. One day we will learn that. We will know one day that God made us to live together as brothers and to respect the dignity and worth of every man. This is why we must fight segregation with all of our nonviolent might.” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

- Genesis 3 _____ and restorative justice is introduced as one of the key threads that weaves through the whole story to Jesus and the New Creation. (Genesis 3:14-15)

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. Why might it be possible to seek unity without uniformity in the church regarding doing justice and still do justice?
3. How would you define “justice,” “retributive justice,” and “restorative justice” to an educated 13-year-old?
4. What are some of the ways our culture’s understanding of justice overlaps with the Bible’s understanding of justice?