

SESSION 7 NOTES
Justice: A People for Others

[Isaiah 58:3-10; James 2:1-17] Luke 10:25-37

The Hebrew word for “peace” is *Shalom*. It means total flourishing in absolutely every dimension: physically, relationally, socially, and spiritually. *Shalom*, in other words, is the way things ought to be. Another way to think about *shalom* is right relationships. *Shalom* is like a fabric woven well together, a body functioning well together, a family living in harmony together, etc.

If we want people to experience *shalom*, we must re-weave the broken fabric of this world in a way that reveals Christ to people, with the gifts of the spirit and the resources of the gospel. This is what the Bible means when it talks about “doing justice.” Leviticus 19 — “Love your neighbor as yourself” = “do not defraud...perfect justice...or do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life.” Justice, then, is love in action.

It’s easy to love people who are like you and who you like; but, according to the Bible, we must love our “neighbor”—anybody in need. In Isaiah 58:6, God described true spiritual fasting—“to loose the chains of injustice” and “to set the oppressed free.” What this looks like is described in verse 7—“to share your bread with the hungry...bring the homeless poor into your houser...cover [the naked]” etc. (cf. v. 10).

Jesus draws on Isaiah 58 in Matthew 25 — Jesus says, in essence, “If you don’t love the poor, the hungry, the wanderer, the homeless, then no matter what you say, you do not love Me, you do not have the relationship with me that you think you do.” Cf. Proverbs 14:31; 19:17

God identifies with the poor and oppressed to the extent that He did so physically, emotionally, relationally with them in the person of Jesus Christ. He literally became poor—He was even buried in a borrowed tomb. And, He was literally oppressed (the victim of injustice...He suffered with us)—His trial was even illegal.

Christ began ultimate justice during His first coming, and He will finish it when He comes again. Therefore, we, too, should do what God “requires” of us: to “act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).