

What Does The Bible Say About Social Justice?

And How Is It Defined Today?

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Issues & Answers, Week 2



I&A Class Schedule

- Today: *What Does the Bible Teach About Social Justice? Part 2*
- Oct 23 – Jim and Linda Maiorino – *Christian Ed Mission to the Navajo Indians*
- Oct 30 – *The Presidency and the Constitution* – Dr. Larry Arnn, Hillsdale College
- Nov 6 – Elder Steve Landis
- Nov 13 – Elder Stan Ott



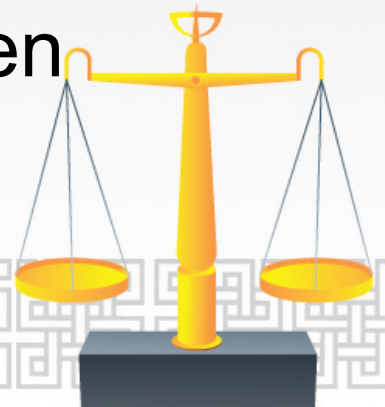
Last Week

- OT references to justice appear over 150 times.
- Justice and righteousness often linked together side-by-side and sometimes used interchangeably.
- Same holds true with righteousness and faithfulness.
- Fundamentally, justice is rooted in God's character.



Last Week Summary

- Practically, it means achieving righteousness by exercising faith in our faithful God.
- Programs that diminish faithfulness and impede one's ability to strive toward righteousness are unjust.
- Programs that treat people as merely material entities are unjust.
- Today's enablers of social justice often bring about injustice.



Agenda for Today

- NT Passages on justice
- Charity statistics and trends
 - *Who Really Cares?*, Arthur Brooks
- In what ways do we at Leidy's promote biblical justice?



Greek word for Justice

- **Strong's Concordance**
- **dikaíosuné: righteousness, justice**
- **Original Word:** δικαιοσύνη, ης, ἡ
- **Transliteration:** dikaiosuné
- **Phonetic Spelling:** (dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay)
- **Short Definition:** justice, justness, righteousness
- **Definition:** justice, justness, righteousness, righteousness of which God is the source or author, but practically: a divine righteousness.



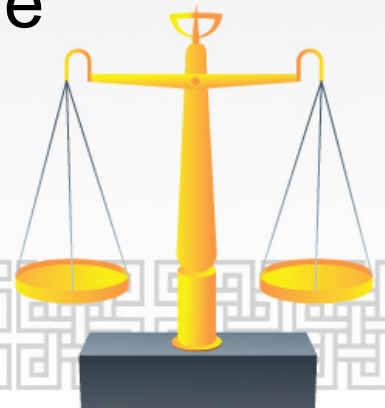
NT Justice

- 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.”*
- Jesus makes a promise in contrast to the false polytheistic gods of Rome.



Jesus and the Pharisee

- Luke 11:37-42
- Pharisee invites Jesus to eat a meal.
- Jesus does not wash his hands as a metaphor for addressing Pharisaical practices.
- Jesus uses the metaphor to launch into a series of “Woe to you” condemnations of the Pharisees.
- M. Henry: “Wash the spirit, which He is the Father of, and get the leprosy in the heart cleansed.”



Key verse on justice

- Luke 11:42 - *“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect **justice** and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.”*



Tithing of Herbs

Matthew Henry

- The Pharisees gained a reputation with the people as strict observers of the law.
- They “made an interest in the priests”.
 - The priests and the Pharisees contrived how to strengthen one another’s hands.
- Christ does not condemn them for paying tithes (*without leaving the former undone*).
- However, this tithing would not atone for the neglect of their greater duties.
 - Those laws which relate to the *essentials of religion* they made nothing of: *You neglect justice and the love of God.*
 - *Justice is getting the leprosy of the heart cleansed.*



Paul's Joy over Repentance

- II Corinthians 7:9-12
- Paul is happy because “your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended...”
- “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation, but worldly sorrow brings death.”
- See what this godly sorrow has produced in you:



Paul, man of lists

- what earnestness
- what eagerness to clear yourselves
- what indignation
- what alarm
- what longing
- what concern
- what readiness to *avenge the wrong or*
“see justice done”



Justice and Righteousness

Acts 1:17

He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (NASB)

He has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” (NIV)



Righteousness and Justice

Revelation 19:11

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in **righteousness** He judges and wages war. (NASB)*

*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With **justice** he judges and wages war. (NIV)*



Equating Faith and Righteousness

- Romans 4:5 - *But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his **faith** is credited as **righteousness**.*
- Galatians 3:6 *Even so Abraham **believed** God, and it was reckoned to him as **righteousness**.*
- Galatians 3:11 - *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The **righteous** man shall live by **faith**.”*



In Sum

- The goal of justice is to reveal the righteousness of God.
- The purpose of our experience is toward more faith in God. Justice that inhibits faith in God cannot be just.



Social Justice

- Income Inequality
- Providing material goods without God
- Welfare via Federal and State Govt
- Redistribution
- “What we like”
- Being a “locavore”
 - The impact on labor
- Equality of outcome
- “Fairness” (whatever that means)



Social Justice Today

Income Inequality

- In what way is it “unjust” that some are rich, some are middle class, and some are poor?
- Is it contractually unjust?
- Is it legally unjust?
- Is it commutatively unjust?
- Is theft, bribery or misrepresentation involved?



Injustice

- Promotion of Fatherlessness – Dad rendered irrelevant to family economic well-being.
- Lack of choice in education.
- Marriage tax penalty.
- Taxes that force Dad to take a 2nd job.
- Discrimination against biblically based programs that help prisoners, widows and orphans.



Abuse of power

- Corporations
 - Predatory pricing
 - Abusive labor practices
- Union
 - Shakedown of employees refusing to pay dues
- Any program that says that increased wealth enhances your relationship to God



Private vs. Public

- Private Charities:
 - Personal, Challenging, Spiritually-based
- Government
 - Impersonal/bureaucratic, Entitlement, man is a beast of burdern



Rise of the Welfare State

- Frank Dekker Watson
 - Director of PA School for Social Service
 - Professor at Haverford College
- *“No person who is interested in social progress can long be content to raise here and there an individual”, 1922*
- Private groups “went on strike”
- Depression
- The Great Society



The Great Society Programs of the 1960's

- *“Freedom is not enough.....For what is justice? It is to fulfill the fair expectations of man.”* – LBJ 1965
- Out of wedlock birthrate soared from 10 to 40% of the population.
- Fatherlessness soared
- Children who grow up without a father:
 - 5 times more likely to live in poverty
 - 10 times more likely to drop out of school
 - 50 times more likely to end up in prison



Welfare Office Signs

- “A Family Doesn’t Need a Man to Be Whole”
- “Don’t wait for Prince Charming, his horse broke down”
- “I have the power within myself”
- “If you think you are something special, then you are”



Professor Kevin Porteus Hillsdale College

- *The fundamental mistake that Johnson makes is his presumption that we can remake society, that we can literally create through state action precisely the kind of human being, and precisely the kind of social order that we want; the presumption that man is nothing by nature.*



Families

- Can welfare offices direct people spiritually?
- Can they reduce illegitimacy?
- Are they merely private entities?
- Does family breakdown have a public cost?



Justice and Generosity

- Psalm 112:5 - *It is well with the man who is gracious and lends; He will maintain his cause in judgment. (NASB)*
- Coercive redistribution reduces the amount of justice in the world by reducing and even removing voluntary charitable action.
- *Who Really Cares? – Arthur Brooks*



Drivers of Charity

- Four factors:
 - Religion
 - Skepticism about government
 - Strong Families
 - Personal entrepreneurism



Stereotypes about Charity

- The political left is compassionate and charitable toward the less fortunate
- Conservatives are oblivious to suffering and are “greedy”.
- The only reason conservatives give more is because they are more likely to attend church and that shouldn’t count as charity.
- *A society that has more justice is a society that needs less charity.*

– *Ralph Nader*



Stereotypes Reinforced

Jim Wallis, Sojourners

- “Christian conservatives are trading the lives of poor people for their agenda. They are being unbiblical.”
- Then, he quotes Isaiah 10:1-2 “*Woe to those who enact evil statutes and to those who constantly record unjust decisions, so as to deprive the needy of justice and rob the poor of My people of their rights. So that widows may be their spoil and that they may plunder the orphans.*”



Stereotypes Reinforced

John Kerry

- “There is not anywhere in the 3-yr ministry of Jesus Christ, anything that remotely suggest – not one miracle, not one parable, not one utterance that says you ought to cut children’s health care or take money from the poorest people in our nation and give it to the wealthiest.”



Stereotypes Refuted

The evidence

- Households headed by conservatives gave 30% more to charity than households headed by liberals even though liberals earned 6% more than conservatives.
- 2004 election:
 - In states where GW won over 60% of the vote, charitable donations were 3.5%.
 - In states where he won less than 40%, charitable donations were 1.9%.



Giving Away Riches

- Andrew Carnegie:
 - *“The man who dies rich dies disgraced”*
 - Gave away more than \$350million creating 2,509 libraries in the West
- Charles Spurgeon
 - Earned \$26.5MM in sermons/books; gave away it all.
 - Gave \$ to church
 - Funded 66 social service ministries including two orphanages, book fund, Sunday school for the blind, nursing homes, ministries to policemen and many others.
 - Despised debt.
 - Emphasized stewardship, not ownership.



S. Dakota vs. S. Franciso

- Families in each location give the same to charity - \$1300/yr.
 - S Dakotans are half as likely to have a college degree.
 - SF residents earn 78% more.



S.D. vs. S.F.

- Why the difference?
 - “Religion...we were taught to tithe”, Executive of the SD Community Foundation.
 - Weekly church attendance:
 - 14% in SF, 50% in SD
 - Percent never attending church:
 - 49% in SF, 10% in SD
 - “This is a pretty godless place. People don't fell an obligation to give”, ED of major SF Foundation.



More Data

- Religious people are 10% more likely to give to nonreligious charities than secularists.
- They are also 21% more likely to volunteer for secular causes such as donating blood.



The “Crowding Out Effect”

- Government spending on social programs leads to less charitable giving.
- For every \$ spend on government programs, 50 cents is lost in private giving.
- From 1933-39, church based charity dropped 30% while government aid to the needy went from 0% to 4% of GDP.



Crowding Out in Practice

- TANF recipients in CA receive 5 times more than those in MS.
- Middle class CA residents give 2/3 the amount MS residents give to charity.
- If TANF increases its spending by 10%, charity drops 3%.



What is the best poverty fighter?

- Free markets
 - Pushes people to think of others even when we have selfish motives for doing so.
 - USSR employees used to say, “We have a perfectly just agreement with the state - We don't work and the state doesn't pay us”.



Conclusion

- C. S. Lewis – *“Aim at heaven and you’ll get earth thrown in, aim at earth and you’ll get neither”*.
- Proponents of social justice aim at earth. Justice of the bible aims at heaven and we benefit on earth as well.



Justice at Leidy's

- In what ways does Leidy's promote and engage in biblical justice?

