

# Theological Equipping Class

## *Biblical Justice*

August 30, 2020

Questions to consider:

1. What does the Bible say about justice?
2. What is justice?
3. What is social justice?
4. What's the problem?
5. Where do we go from here?

### **What does the Bible say about Justice?**

1. *You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you.* (Deuteronomy 16:19–20)
2. *The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.* (Deuteronomy 32:4)
3. *Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.* (Psalm 82:3–4)
4. *Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.* (Isaiah 1:16–17)
5. *Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."* (Jeremiah 9:23–24)
6. *But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.* (Amos 5:24)
7. *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* (Micah 6:8)

### **What is justice?**

"Justice is rendering impartially and proportionally to everyone his due in accord with the righteous standards of the moral law of God." (John Doe)

Attributes of justice:

- Truthful
- Impartial
- Proportional

- Direct

## 1. Justice is truthful.

*Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. (Is 59:14–15)*

### Weights and measures

*You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 19:35–36)*

### Bearing false witness

*You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice... (Exodus 23:1-2)*

*If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. (Deuteronomy 19:16–19)*

### Waiting for the facts

*The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him. (Proverbs 18:17)*

*If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. (Proverbs 18:13)*

*Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does? (John 7:51)*

## 2. Justice is impartial.

What is partiality? Literally: "to accept a face" | Idiomatically: to judge on the basis of some attribute other than facts and truth.

### What does the Bible say about partiality?

- *You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality... (Deuteronomy 16:19)*
- *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. (1 Timothy 5:21)*

- *But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (James 2:9)*

What about the poor?

- *You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. (Leviticus 19:15)*
- *You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice, nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his lawsuit. (Exodus 23:2-3)*

Lady Justice is blind?

### 3. Justice is proportional.

"The punishment fits the crime."

*lex talionis*: the law of retaliation.

*When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (Exodus 21:22-25)*

Overreaction or under-reaction

*If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord...and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (Deuteronomy 19:16-21)*

Similar crimes, similar penalties

### 4. Justice is direct.

Justice demands that the one who is punished be the one who perpetrated the injustice.

What about examples in Scripture where people are punished for the sins of others?

Adamic sin and the prophets

Commands to not judge in this collective sense:

*Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.*  
(Deuteronomy 24:16)

*In those days they shall no longer say: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge. (Jeremiah 31:29–30)*

*The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ezekiel 18:20)*

## **What is social justice?**

Origin: Jesuit priest Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio in the 1840s

Changing words and phrases: nice guy

1970s: "social justice" married to postmodern political theory

*Social justice today: while often an amorphous term, social justice has evolved generally to mean state redistribution of advantages and resources to disadvantaged groups to satisfy their rights to social and economic equality (William Young)*

Social justice isn't justice. Social justice is injustice.

Social justice, reproductive justice, environmental justice, sexual justice, racial justice, etc.

Before you can do biblical deeds, you must first have biblical definitions.

## Social justice and partiality

Biblical justice: is he guilty? | Social justice: what is his race, gender, socioeconomic class, etc.?

Blind auditions

Content of their character or color of their skin?

### Social justice and truth

Hands up, don't shoot

Wage gaps

Drug offenses

De jure vs. de facto injustice

### Social justice and the individual

Group identity

Reasons for poverty:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Zacchaeus?

### Social justice and proportionality

social justice assigns penance even where there is no crime

Does the punishment fit the crime: police shootings and murders, abortion vs. homeschooling, speech vs. "mostly peaceful protests"

### Social justice in 4 Steps

1. Identify various groups
  2. Assess group outcomes
  3. Assign blame for disparate outcomes
  4. Redistribute power and resources in order to address those grievances
- Social justice and western philosophical and political tradition:

- Confuses rights with charity, justice with mercy
- Confuses the role of the individual with the role of the state
- Negates individual choice
- Restricts speech

### **What's the Problem?** (aka: What in the World is Going On in the world?)

A pretty little philosophical pony for the Trojans!!!

existentialism, pragmatism, and feminism, postmodern thought and critical theory

Marxism? Really?

What is Marxism?

Marxist success stories:

The lens by which you view the world

What's the big deal?

1. social justice always ends up hurting the very people that it says it wants to help
2. offers neither forgiveness, nor hope, nor healing, but only pride or shame

### **Where Do We Go From Here?**

1. Stand firm.
2. Pursue justice.

3. Fear not.

*Justice may at times leave the courts of man, but it abides upon the tribunal of God. (Spurgeon)*