

Theme: To know God is to love kindness and to do justice. Our care for the poor and the powerless is not an addition to our faith - it is the necessary evidence of it.

Background: Returning to series on Core Values to look at justice and mercy.

Introduction: There is much in this world that makes us cry out for justice - from matters great and small. Let us consider how God seeks justice.

I. The Justice of God

A. Justice for all!

1. Righteous Judgment - Will people get what they deserve?
 - God will settle all accounts perfectly.
 - Psalm 1:5; Romans 2:5
 - He will render righteous judgment for all.

2. Judging righteously - more than the wicked getting what they "deserved"?
 - a. Justice: *mishpat* -
 - 1) Acquitting or punishing justly
 - 2) To give people their "rights"
 - 3) To treat people equitably - Exodus 23:6
 - 4) Caring for the victims of unjust treatment - Psalm 10:18
 - b. Justice: *tzadeqah*
 - 1) Being just or being righteous - Job 6:29
 - 2) Being right with God and seeking "right" for others
(cf. Job 29:12-18; 31:16-23)

B. Justice for me?

- I don't really want justice.
 - I want the mercy of God found in Jesus Christ
 - I want Gospel Justice
- The "good news" of justice satisfied and grace poured out!

II. The God of Justice

A. The being/nature of God

1. Before Israel?
 - a. A holy Deliverer - Exodus 20:2/Duet.5:6
 - b. A God of Justice! - Deuteronomy 10:17-18
 - Fatherless (orphan), widow, sojourner
 - Those with no power, no "standing" before the rulers/courts
2. To the world? (cf. Psal.146:7-8)
 - a. Psalm 68:4 - Concern for His name
 - b. Jeremiah 9:23 - Revealed as the God of....
 - Steadfast love, mercy, kindness - *chesed*
 - Justice and righteousness - *mishpat* & *tzadeqah*

B. In His Son

1. Luke 2:7
 - He moved in with the poor, broken, sinful
 - To satisfy the justice of God
2. Luke 4:16-21 - (hear it in context) - quotes Isaiah 61.
 - For the poor, captive, blind, oppressed

- To proclaim God's promise
- NOTE: This is Who God is.

III. Justice and His People

A. Through Israel

- Deuteronomy 10:19
- Jeremiah 22:3, 15-16
- Zechariah 7:9-11
- Proverbs 31:9

B. Through the Church

1. James 1:27
 - "Visiting" widows and orphans
2. Matthew 5-7 Especially 5:2-13
 - The poor, meek, hungry, merciful, peace-makers, persecuted
3. Matthew 25:37-46
 - How do we know we belong to Christ?

IV. "Doing" Justice - Why so great an emphasis on "justice" for the weak?

A. His great love

- Because his own people were orphaned, widowed, poor, aliens
- Because it is who we all are! If we are apart from Him
- Ephesians 2:4

B. His perfect justice!

1. Justice judges rightly - and seeks to "sets things right"
2. Being made in His image – we are called to the same work
 - We are not saved by our works, but they are the necessary fruit of our salvation
3. This work of the church is as important as gathering for worship or sharing the gospel!

NOTE: God give us grace to see the world around us as He sees us.