

Church In the Community -3 Justice and Mercy in the Old Testament: Part 1

(Pass out verses to read.)

Psalm 146:7-9 *Who executes justice for the oppressed, Who gives food to the hungry. The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; The Lord raises those who are bowed down; The Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.*

Micah 6:8 (NKJV) *He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*

Mercy and Justice: Earmarks of God's People

Exodus 22:21-23 *"You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. "You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.*

Exodus 23:2-9 *You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.*

"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

"You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.

"Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:10 *And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God.*

***Proverbs 14:31** (NKJV) *He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.*

Deuteronomy 27:19 (NKJV) *'Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.'* "And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Universal Concerns

Genesis 2:1-3 (NKJV) *Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ² And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*

Indeed, the seventh-day Sabbath tells us that God is the Creator and Rest Provider of all who live on this earth. If we truly observe the Sabbath, we will not remain satisfied with only our own rest and redemption but ultimate restoration in the new earth (Isa. 66:22, 23).

***Hebrews 4:4-5** (NKJV) *For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; ⁵ and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."*

Colossians 2:16-17 (NKJV) *So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

Amos 8:4-7 (NKJV) *Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, And make the poor of the land fail, saying: "When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit, That we may buy the poor for silver, And the needy for a pair of sandals— Even sell the bad wheat?" The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their works.*

Prophetic Voice: Part 1

Proverbs 31:8-9 (NKJV) *Open your mouth for the speechless, In the cause of all who are appointed to die. ⁹ Open your mouth, judge righteously, And plead the cause of the poor and needy.*

Isaiah 1:13-17 (NKJV) *Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. ¹⁴ Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.*

¹⁶“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

Luke 18: 1-5 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: “*There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’*”

***James 1:27** (NKJV) Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. **Why widows and not widowers?**

1 Peter 3:7 (NKJV) Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Prophetic Voice: Part 2

Isaiah 58:1–2 (NKJV) “Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins. ² Yet they seek Me daily, And delight to know My ways, As a nation that did righteousness, And did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; They take delight in approaching God.

Read Isaiah 58:3–14.

Proverbs 21:13 (NKJV) Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be heard.

A Force for Good

Luke 7:11–15 (NKJV) Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. ¹² And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “*Do not weep.*” ¹⁴ Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, “*Young man, I say to you, arise.*”

¹⁵ So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

***Psalm 82:3** (NKJV) Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy.

1 John 3:17 (NKJV) But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Matthew 25:33–36 (NKJV) And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

Deuteronomy 24:10–15 (NKJV) “When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge. ¹¹ You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you. ¹² And if the man is poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight. ¹³ You shall in any case return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment and bless you; and it shall be righteousness to you before the Lord your God. ¹⁴ “You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates. ¹⁵ Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you.

Deuteronomy 24:17–22 (NKJV) “You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow’s garment as a pledge. ¹⁸ But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing. ¹⁹ “When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. ²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. ²² And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.