

Social Justice Biblically Assessed
Week 1: What Is Going On In America Today? Understanding Our Times and the Importance of Justice

Holy Trinity Sunday School, Fall 2021

I. Introduction: Understanding Our Times

- a. Our cultural moment

- b. What is taking place in the church

- c. These are our times – we need to understand.

1 Chronicles 12:23 *These are the numbers of the divisions of the armed troops who came to David in Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the word of the LORD..... (32) Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.*

II. The Biblical Imperative for Understanding Justice

- a. A cry that is vocalized in the scriptures – i.e. Psalm 10

- b. Nothing Less than the Spiritual Life of the Individual and the Church is at Stake

Proverbs 2:1-22 *My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, (2) making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; (3) yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, (4) if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, (5) then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. (6) For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; (7) he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, (8) guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. (9) Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; (10) for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; (11) discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you, (12) delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech, (13) who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, (14) who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, (15) men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways. (16) So you will be delivered from the forbidden*

woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, (17) who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; (18) for her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the departed; (19) none who go to her come back, nor do they regain the paths of life. (20) So you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. (21) For the upright will inhabit the land, and those with integrity will remain in it, (22) but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

- c. A biblical call for discernment for discernment in all of life and doctrine:

Ephesians 4:11-14 *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, (12) to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, (14) so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*

III. The Path to Understanding Justice

- a. Seek the Lord

Proverbs 28:5 Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it completely.

- b. The vertical (Godward) informs the horizontal (manward)

Job 37:22-23 Out of the north comes golden splendor; God is clothed with awesome majesty. (23) The Almighty—we cannot find him; he is great in power; justice and abundant righteousness he will not violate.

Psalms 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

Isaiah 5:16 But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.

Isaiah 32:1 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice.

Psalms 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

Psalms 103:6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

IV. Defining Justice Biblically

- a. The definition of “Social Justice” is murky in our culture
- b. A word about rights.

Proverbs 31:4-8 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, (5) lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. (6) Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; (7) let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. (8) Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.

Psalm 82:3 Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

Proverbs 29:7 A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge.

Isaiah 1:17 learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

- c. *Biblical Justice is a matter of respecting, maintaining, promoting, and defending those God-given rights.*