

# Compass Church East “God and Justice” Week 3: March 7, 2021

## What we learned today summary

- 1) We are all image bearers first and foremost and we must view others as image bearers as well, you cannot pursue biblical justice without this heart posture. The problem is that we can't reduce human identity to group identity. The groups we belong to shape us. They do not define us.

| WORLDVIEW QUESTIONS                                     |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | Biblical Social Justice  | Ideological Social Justice  |
| <b>What is our fundamental problem as human beings?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Our fundamental problem is not <b>“out there”</b> in oppressive societal structures. Our fundamental problem is <b>“in here”</b> in our foolish, darkened hearts. (<i>Romans 1:21-23, 28-31; Psalm 51:5, Ephesians 2:2-3</i>).</li> <li>▪ Scripture says that we are born sinners and that we are “by nature sinners.”</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In ISJ evil doesn't originate in the human heart <b>“in here”</b> it originates <b>“out there”</b>. It's sourced outside of us, in society and specifically in social structures, systems, institutions, laws, cultural norms that grant one group power and privileges at the expense of others.</li> </ul> |

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|---|---|--|
| <b>What's the solution to that problem?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The solution to our fundamental human problem is the Gospel. The good news that God himself has taken the initiative in reconciling with His rebellious children. To mend the broken relationship caused by sin. (<i>John 3:16-17, Ezekiel 36:26</i>)</li> <li>▪ The Bible says that evil comes from our hearts not from evil social structures. Evil social structures come from evil hearts. <u>A biblical view of evil is personal. ISJ sees evil as social.</u> Unjust people create, sustain, and perpetuate unjust systems and structures for selfish ends.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In ISJ the solution to the world's brokenness is “Revolution”. That revolution is to overthrow oppressive power structures, this is the primary moral duty in ISJ.</li> <li>▪ ISJ revolutionaries talk constantly about “subverting” or “dismantling” or “deconstructing” any manner of cultural, economic, or institutional systems or institutions that are claimed to propagate oppression but offer very little to replace it.</li> </ul> |

The disease is sin. The solution is inward heart and mind transformation through the gospel, leading to outward, societal transformation. **John Stott: “Evangelism is the major instrument of social change. For the gospel changes people, and changed people can change society.”**

**Justice flows from the gospel. This begs the question: Are you more concerned about a person's actions or about their eternal soul?**

*Text any questions you have to: 306-500-4847*

Social justice is all the rage these days, especially among young adults coming of age in this current political climate. Whether we hear about social justice from the news, our coworkers, our friends, or social media streams, it is unavoidable. On one level, it is a welcome change that people these days seem to care more about justice for others. It beats the days when minorities and individuals from other marginalized groups were an afterthought, pushed to the bottom of society or treated as subhuman. Yet the more I engage in social justice discussions with fellow millennials or gen Zers, the more disheartened I become. With this surge in social justice discourse there has been a steady increase in cynicism, aggression, and in some cases downright hatred toward people who are guilty of thinking about things in the "wrong way." Worse still is the unfortunate trend in people of my age group starting to see discussions and debates of social justice as an us-versus-them, zero-sum, winner-take-all battle. Instead of diverse perspectives being welcome at the table, daring to think outside the ideological confines runs you the risk of being "canceled," meaning declared null and void or having your career prospects erased. Disagreement is no longer taken as something that can be done respectfully and is seen instead as a rejection or attack on someone's personhood. The scary thing is that this is not happening just in the secular world but also within much of the church.

This reality has hit particularly close to home for me over the past couple of years. Friends in my inner circle have been strong Bible-believing Christians. They have unmistakably heard Scripture's call for justice, a call that has sadly been ignored in certain segments of the church. As I have engaged in conversations with my friends, a recurring theme has emerged. Their perception of the church's silence on matters of injustice such as explicit racism, homophobia, misogyny, or abuse has sent a loud and clear message that the church can't be trusted in matters of justice. Slowly but surely, young Christians begin looking outside the church and to the world for solutions to combat the injustice they see. When churches fail to live out biblical justice in a beautiful and compelling way, they turn rising generations into easy prey for social justice ideologues.

The results have been tragic, to say the least. Biblical morality is slowly replaced with the evolving moralism of progressive politics. Soon the Bible itself is deconstructed as an oppressive tool of the cisheteropatriarchy instead of the life-giving words of a loving Creator. The problem is that once we ditch biblical morality, we lose the concept of sin, and the gospel itself no longer makes sense. Then truth is seen as relative and socially constructed as opposed to defined by God. Again, we lose the gospel when we lose God as the sovereign standard of truth. In some cases, the idea of one God was considered as an oppressive case of "Christian supremacy." Universalism then becomes the default choice, and the uniqueness of Christ's saving work is abandoned. What started as a noble pursuit of justice becomes an erosion of a biblical worldview, and the gospel is lost. Through God's grace, some of my friends' views on social justice changed only temporarily. Some have realized the fatal compromises being made in the name of social justice. But others have become nominally Christian or in some cases no longer identify as Christians. My heart breaks for them, and I pray that they find their way back to the Lord. More than ever, I pray for revival and for the church to recommit itself to being a beacon to the watching world of what it means to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. To do that without succumbing to the ideologies of our age, we must make our highest priority what Scripture itself ranks "of first importance"-the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

- Ojo Okoye

(Ojo has worked at Arizona State University and is currently training for lifelong ministry.)