



NEW HEIGHTS CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

"Our Heart is People, Our Message is Jesus"

Table Group Discussion Questions

Series: Words We Thought We Knew

Title: "Righteousness"

Icebreaker / Getting Started (10-15 minutes)

1. What's a word you used confidently for years before finding out it meant something different — or that you'd been slightly misusing it the whole time?
2. When you hear the word "righteous" or "righteousness," what's the first image or feeling that comes to mind? Where do you think that association came from?

Digging into the Scripture & Sermon (15-20 minutes)

Read together: **Deuteronomy 32:4, Luke 4:18–19, James 1:27, and Philippians 3:9**

3. The sermon defined righteousness as right relationship with God, ourselves, others, and creation — not just pious behavior. Where do you see the effects of unrighteousness playing out in your everyday life — in relationships, in systems, in yourself — that you might not have previously called by that name?
4. The sermon described righteousness as moving in two directions — vertical (relationship with God as the cornerstone) and horizontal (holiness and justice outward). Why do you think it's so easy to flatten righteousness into just one of those directions? What gets lost when we do?
5. In Luke 4, Jesus announces his mission and it's remarkably concrete — good news to the poor, release to prisoners, sight to the blind, liberation for the oppressed. How does that list expand or challenge your understanding of what Jesus came to do — and what it means to follow him?
6. James 1:27 holds justice and holiness together in one sentence and calls that true devotion. Why do you think those two things tend to pull apart in Christian communities? Which one does your church background tend to emphasize, and what does the other one look like when it's missing?

Personal Reflection (15-20 minutes)

7. The sermon described the holiness camp and the justice camp — people who lean hard into one at the expense of the other. Honestly, which way do you tend to tilt? What does it cost you — and the people around you — when you lean that direction too far?

8. The sermon used the image of standing at the base of an overwhelming peak and just sitting down on a bench because the summit feels unreachable. Where in your life does righteousness feel like that right now — like a distant, overwhelming peak you've quietly given up on?
9. Philippians 3:9 says that in Christ we have a righteousness not our own — it comes from his faithfulness, not our achievement. The sermon described the exhaustion of being your own righteousness project. Does that exhaustion resonate with you? What would it feel like to actually receive righteousness as a gift instead of earning it?

Action & Follow-Up (15-20 minutes)

10. The sermon suggested that when the peak feels overwhelming, come back to the path and ask: what's one step I can take toward righteousness this week? Name one specific, concrete step — in the direction of either holiness or justice — that you can actually take before the group meets again. Tell someone in the group what it is so they can follow up.
11. The sermon connected justice to proximity — that you don't manufacture compassion, you position yourself near people in need and let empathy do its work. This week, identify one person or community outside your normal circle who is vulnerable, marginalized, or in need. You don't have to solve anything. Just notice them. Pay attention. Come back and tell the group what you saw.
12. Think about the two cycles from last week's grace sermon alongside this week: the cycle of self (achievement → entitlement → resentment) and the cycle of grace (gift → gratitude → generosity). Where does pursuing righteousness out of the wrong cycle show up in your life? What does it look like to pursue holiness and justice from the cycle of grace instead?

Close in Prayer

The sermon ended with three invitations. Let each person in the group identify which one resonates most right now, and pray accordingly:

- **Hunger:** Lord, build in me a longing for righteousness I don't yet have.
- **Healing:** Lord, bring your righteousness into the specific brokenness I'm carrying — in myself, my relationships, or my connection with you.
- **Thanksgiving:** Lord, surprise me again with the gift of your righteousness. Make it feel new.

Close by reading **Philippians 3:9** aloud together as a declaration — that the righteousness we walk in is not our own, but Christ's, offered freely before we ever reach the peak.