

Restorative Justice
Covenant Community Church
February 16, 2020

Restorative Justice is a system of criminal justice which focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders, the healing of victims and the repair of the community at large. These practices work to break cycles of generational trauma, to interrupt the trajectory of generational incarceration, to restore all people impacted by both crime and incarceration, and to invest in future generations so that all in our city can flourish.

Restorative justice takes breaking the law seriously by addressing accountability to offenders and facilitating healing for victims. Restorative justice practices have been shown often to bring greater restoration and healing for victims than retributive justice, and where practices have been implemented recidivism rates have dropped making communities safer and society more flourishing.

“The Church is called to bear witness to the reality of God’s saving justice in Christ, both by proclaiming it verbally in the story of the Gospel and by putting it into practice in the way it deals with offending and failure in its own midst. Knowing God’s justice to be a restoring and renewing justice, the Church is obliged to practice restorative justice in its own ranks and to summon society to move in the same direction.”

— CHRIS MARSHALL, Center for Christian Ethics

SHALOM

**Peace, harmony, wholeness, completeness, prosperity,
welfare and tranquility**

“The basic idea underlining all the various translations [of shalom] - a harmony of relationship or reconciliation based upon the completion of a transaction, the payment of a debt, the giving of satisfaction.” – Nathan Stone

“Seek peace *and* well-being for the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its peace (well-being) you will have peace.” Jer. 29:7 AMP

“So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord is Peace [Jehovah-shalom].” Judges 6:24

**For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [Shalom]
Isaiah 9:6**

“And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8

The term for “mercy” is the Hebrew word *chesedh*, God’s unconditional grace and compassion. The word for “justice” is the Hebrew word *mishpat*. In Micah 6:8, *mishpat* puts the emphasis on the action, *chesedh* puts the emphasis on the attitude [or motive] behind the action. To walk with God, then, we must do justice out of merciful love. Timothy Keller

**“For I, the Lord, do not change”
Malachi 6:8**

**“He who has seen Me, has seen the Father”
– Jesus, John 14:9**

**“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or
the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to
fulfill.” – Jesus, Matthew 5:27 NKJ**

“He executes justice [*mishpat*] for the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, he lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous [*tsaddiqh*]. The LORD watches over the immigrant and sustains the fatherless and the widow but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.” Psalms

146:7-9

**“Righteousness [*tzadeqah*] and
justice [*mishpat*] are the
foundation of Your throne;
Mercy and truth go before Your
face.” Psalm 89:14**

***Mishpat* = Rectifying or retributive justice. It means punishing wrongdoers and caring for victims of unjust punishment; giving people their rights or their due.**

***Tzadeqah* = Primary or distributive justice. It means behavior that, if it was prevalent in the world would render *mishpat* (i.e. rectifying or retributive justice) unnecessary because everyone would be living in right relationship with one another.**

“We do justice when we give all human beings their due as creations of God. Doing justice includes not only the righting of wrongs, but generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable.

This kind of life reflects the character of God. It consists of a broad range of activities, from simple fair and honest dealing with people in daily life, to regular, radically generous giving of your time and resources, to activism that seeks to end particular forms of injustice, violence, and oppression,” – Timothy Keller

**“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked;
for whatever a man sows, that he will also
reap.” Galatians 6:7**

**“See, I am coming soon; my reward is with
Me, to repay according to everyone’s work.”
Revelation 22:12**

“...As I live,” says the Lord God, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?” Ezekiel 33:11

“Who is a God like You pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy.” Micah 7:18

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases Who redeems your life from destruction an, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies... He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.” Psalms 103:2-3, 10

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.”

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

Matthew 5:38-47

“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

Therefore

**“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;**

**For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Do not
be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Romans 12:17-21

“You will be judged on whether or not you are doing what Christ wants you to. So watch what you do and what you think; for there will be no mercy to those who have shown no mercy. But if you have been merciful, then God’s mercy toward you will win out over his judgment against you.” James 2:12-14 TLB

“God’s justice is retributive then inasmuch as it is never prejudiced, arbitrary or impulsive and is always morally attuned to human deeds and deserts. [Romans 2:1-16] But what ultimately shows God’s justice is not the ineluctable imposition of retribution on wrongdoers but the restoration of right relationship made possible by ‘his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’” [Rom 3:24-26]

“Biblical justice includes retributive components but it cannot be adequately characterized principally as retributive justice. It is better described as a relational or restorative justice.”

– Chris Marshall