

# Lost in Translation (Week 1)

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026

“Reclaiming Biblical Justice”

## Introduction to series:

- What this series is about: words/concepts that have been redefined over time or have lost their power.
- As Christians we believe in the inerrancy of scripture.
- Rules for interpreting Scripture are called hermeneutics, and one important principle is called “*the grammatical principle*.”

**2 Timothy 3:14–17 (NIV84)** *<sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

## Justice:

### 1. First word in the series: Justice, and it is linked to righteousness in the Bible.

- **Righteousness:** “*behavior that is morally justifiable or right*.” Such behavior is characterized by accepted standards of morality, justice, virtue, or uprightness. The Bible’s standard of human righteousness is God’s own perfection in every attribute, every attitude, every behavior, and every word. Thus, God’s laws, as given in the Bible, both describe His own character and constitute the plumb line by which He measures human righteousness.
- To be just is to be righteous and make righteous judgements.
- **Justice** is the right application of God’s laws, leading to just and right consequences for wrongdoing.

### 2. The standard of righteousness in God is unchanging.

- God as an objective unchanging standard.
- God as lawgiver and judge.
- The concept of Justice (*a legal word*):
  - Right judgement of guilty or innocent.
  - Just punishment that fits the crime.
- The fact that we argue whether there is righteousness and should there be justice is an interesting argument – it implies an objective standard.

*“My argument against God was that the universe seemed cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?”* CS Lewis -Mere Christianity

Lewis continues to explain that his argument against God based on the existence of evil was flawed. He realized that if the universe had no meaning, he would never have known it was meaningless. This led him to conclude that the very concept of justice and injustice implies a higher moral law, which in turn suggests the existence of a moral lawgiver, or God.

### 3. Where did unrighteousness come from?

- God has placed righteousness in our hearts when we are born.
- We all fall short of God’s righteous standard.
- The **result**: the world is contaminated and is not fair or just because God has allowed the curse.
- **Genesis 3 and Romans 1.**

### 4. How does God deal with injustice?

- Some say God is unjust because of all the cruelty in the world, but...
- God sent His Son.
- God has set a time limit on injustice.

**Romans 1:20 (NIV84)** *<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

**Romans 2:13–16 (NLT)** *<sup>13</sup> For merely listening to the law doesn’t make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in His sight. <sup>14</sup> Even Gentiles, who do not have God’s written law, show that they know His law when they instinctively obey it, even without*

having heard it. <sup>15</sup> They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. <sup>16</sup> And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret.

#### 5. Our part in the process of restoring righteousness:

- God has given the world His representatives. What does that look like for us?
- We contribute to righteousness by eliminating our part of unrighteousness as we grow in Christ.
- We are seeing from God's point of view –what is good and bad.
- When we deal with injustice in our own lives we respond rightly by trusting God.

**James 2:1–6 (NIV84)** <sup>1</sup>*My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.* <sup>2</sup> *Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in.* <sup>3</sup> *If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet,"* <sup>4</sup> *have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?* <sup>5</sup> *Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him?* <sup>6</sup> *But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?*

#### A. We are loving mercy in action. We fill in the gap between what is right and what is wrong.

- Because we understand our need for mercy, we give it.
- Because we understand the heart of God, we speak salvation.

#### B. We point to the ultimate solution:

- To walk humbly with our God. Where is He going? What is He doing?
- Act justly means doing what is right.
- Love mercy means that when I fail, I love God's mercy for me. As I am experiencing it, we should also be reminding others of His mercy for them.
- I walk with Him where He is going.

**Micah 6:8 (NIV84)** <sup>8</sup>*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

#### FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

**Opening Question:** If you knew you could "*get away with it*," what law would you break?

**Main Point:** Biblical justice requires that every person be treated according to the same standards and with the same respect, regardless of class, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender or of any other social category.

**Main Scripture:** **Luke 15:11-32 (NIV84)**

#### Head Questions:

- How are justice and mercy represented in this story?
- What is the difference between biblical justice and worldly justice?

#### Heart Questions:

- How does God deal with injustice?
- How has God displayed both justice and mercy in your own life?

#### Hands Questions:

- How do you respond when you see people who seem to "get away with it" and don't get the justice they deserve?
- What scripture(s) can you turn to when you're wrestling with justice?

**Additional Scripture:** **2 Thessalonians 3:10, Proverbs 19:17, Romans 3:19-24 (NIV84)**

**Sermon Series Resources:**

