



Colorblind

All Justice Matters: Micah 6:6-8

Pastor Jerome Gay Jr.

Announcements

- First-time guest (Tour 4)!
- Gabbi's Grounds
- No Bible Study Wednesday's at 7pm
- Go to Next Steps is you have a teen and meet Princess Brown (first event 2/23/20)
- Suggested Reads: Oneness Embraced | Stamped from the Beginning | Letters to a Birmingham Jail

This is the second week of our **Colorblind** series and whenever you address **race, justice, unity** and **human dignity** it's important to be reminded of God's agenda, otherwise we'll pursue a personal or a political one. To be clear these aren't political topics because God created humanity and should govern how we treat each other. In case you forgot we said these two BIG ideas:

- The gospel is not **colorblind**, its **color engaging**. (Rev. 7:9) (Colorblindness does not equal godliness)
- The goal of reconciliation isn't to **change stats**, it's to **change hearts**.

I we do this we'll achieve the five goals we have for this series:

1. **Connecting with Jesus** – the only way He increases in you if you decrease of self.
2. **Self-Awareness** – we must look within for **isms** in order to achieve authentic unity.
3. **Empathy** – you'll seek to understand before correcting. Growing in empathy enables us to grow in compassion and connect authentically.
4. **Unity** – I don't want us to be **uniformed**, but the gospel demands that we be **unified**. The gospel empowers us to achieve unity without uniformity.
5. **Crossing the cultural aisle** – willing to initiate a relationship with someone different than you. (dinner) The question isn't who's coming to church, but who's coming to dinner – **Albert Tate**

(Galatians 2:20-21 | 18-inch journey | tape measure)

There are many **cultural icons** (pic) today, all have views on life, politics, culture and spirituality, there are six primary values that our culture celebrates:

1. Self-Expression
2. Success
3. Sexual Freedom
4. Selfish Pursuit
5. Spiritual Tolerance (Universalism)
6. **Social Justice**

One of our plumb lines is if you give the city your ear, they'll want your voice. That's because we're not a church that just

does service and small groups but want to show what God's justice looks like in RDU and the world. We do that by inviting (evangelism), **investing (discipleship = justice)** and inspiring (multiplication).

The topic of social justice has been heavily debated, some say, since God is in control, we should just trust all judgment to Him in the end. Others say, God has commissioned us to do justice in His name and that that has social affects. God's word is clear, Jesus said teach them to do ALL that I have commanded (Matt. 28:20) and the bible is a HUGE book that speaks about justice. The question is do our responses match what God desires:

- Protest (pic)
- Black Lives Matter (pic)
- Abortion (pic)
- Immigration (pic)

Before we get to **Micah**, I want to quote something from the book of **Isaiah**:

Isa. 40:27-31 (NASB)

Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, And the **justice** due me escapes the notice of my God"?

I don't know about you, but oftentimes, I don't want to **watch the news**. Additionally, I'm not looking forward to the next election cycle because I know what it does to people relationally when people place too much hope into a political party and a candidate. **The question at hand is one of justice and judgment and does God care?** The

reality is when we look at our world, if we rely on the news, political pundits, social media, etc. there isn't a lot to be hopeful about, in fact, some of you would say I don't need to watch the news to feel hopeless, I just have to look at my life, things aren't going as planned and I wonder if God cares. So, **who should we go to for our concerns about justice?** We see things happening in our lives and around the world and some of us wonder if God sees it, because it doesn't seem to be changing anytime soon:

- Police Brutality
- Convicting Police without a full narrative
- Lives of the unborn
- Sex Trafficking
- Treatment of people at the border
- Immigration
- Racism
- Mass Incarceration
- School to Prison Pipeline
- Wealth Gap
- The Effects of Redlining

The people in Isaiah are asking what Marvin Gaye sang so eloquently in 1971, **what's going on?** What's going on God? **(Does God see me? The people in Isaiah feel ignored. Pain = purpose)** Listen it's okay to ask God questions:

In Isaiah the initial assumption is that God doesn't notice injustice, but there's a response to the question at hand:

Isaiah 40:28

28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the whole earth. He never

becomes faint or weary; there is no limit to his understanding.

The author of Hebrews echoes this reality that nothing gets past God:

Heb. 4:13

13 **No creature is hidden** from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.

God sees and He has responded to injustice through Christ for salvation and sending us to be His ambassadors. What does this have to do with justice? **Everything, people who object either the belief in God or the power of God tend to ask why God doesn't do away with evil immediately not realizing that if God does away with evil, He'll have to do away with you and me.** Justice must start with a just God in order for us to understand justice properly.

Thought Tattoo

God **defines, displays, delivers** and perfect justice.

Justice must start with being justified by God. Why? If you start justice socially before understanding justice spiritually, then **you'll begin to wrongly connect salvation to works or substitute obedience with activism.** Should we care about and engage in social justice? Of course, but that must never replace the most important form of justice, **God justifying the sinner and making them right with himself.** The word *justified* means "pronounced or treated as righteous." **For believers in Christ, justification is the act of God not**

only forgiving the believer's sins but imputing to him the righteousness of Christ. The Bible states in several places that **justification only comes through faith** (e.g., Romans 5:1; Galatians 3:24). Justification is not earned through our own works; rather, we are covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8; Titus 3:5). The Christian, being declared righteous, is thus freed from the guilt of sin.

Micah prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (about 750–700 B.C.), at about the same time as Isaiah. **It was a time of prosperity, and Micah denounced the wealthy, who were oppressing the poor, and warned of impending judgment.** The northern kingdom actually fell during Micah's ministry, in 722, and Judah almost fell in 701 (2 Kings 18–20). **The book contains three sections, which alternate between words of warning and messages of hope.** Micah told of a day when there would be peace among all nations, who would then be able to "beat their swords into plowshares" (4:3), and of a royal deliverer who would save God's people from all her enemies. **This deliverer would be born in Bethlehem** (5:2).¹

- ❑ Chapter 1 lets us know that judgement is coming because of the "sins of Israel" (Micah 1:5)
- ❑ The oppression that the wealthy are enacting on the poor is mentioned in chapter 2 on **how they take houses** (Micah 2:2)
- ❑ A question is raised in chapter 3 because God's standard is known and the question is this, **"you**

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mic.

rulers of the house of Israel, aren't you supposed to know what is just?" (Micah 3:1)

- ❑ God's redemption from the oppressed is mentioned in chapter 4 (Micah 4:10).
- ❑ What we find is the oppressed has become the oppressor and God responds.

Micah 6:6-7

6 What should I bring before the Lord when I come to bow before God on high? Should I come before him with burnt offerings, with year-old calves? 7 Would the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousand streams of oil? **Should I give my firstborn** for my transgression, the offspring of my body for my own sin?

Take Note...

Justice demands total sacrifice.

What is justice?

Doing the right thing accordingly to God's standard of rightness.

Justice is the byproduct of **shalom**, shalom means peace, but it means more than that. **A theologian defines it as the webbing together of God, humans and all creation in equity, fulfilments and delight is what it meant by shalom.**

There are several sacrifices mentioned in verses six and seven in the form of questions. **What's being exposed here how their opening question is then followed by their own suggestions** (are you telling God there are areas you won't give Him through your actions?). No mere ceremony is ever sufficient. "False worshipers think God's

favor, like theirs, can be bought" or earned. They "offer the Lord everything but what he asks for: their loving and obedient hearts."¹³ "Offerings ... are no substitute for obedience to God's will."¹⁴ **The burnt offering was wholly consumed and was intended to express one's devotion, commitment, and complete surrender to God. Yet such total commitment is the one thing the people were still withholding from the Lord. Calves a year old were regarded as the best sacrificial animals at the right age (Lev 9:3).**²

- ❑ **Time** – serving others, this is why we mentor boys at The Boys Club, this is why we serve His church and you should too. Do you give time beyond the time it takes you to type hashtag? #sandrabland #trayvonmartin #tamirrice #unbornlivesmatter
- ❑ **Talent** – your gift was designed to administer justice. How so? To all my producers here, what if we create Vision Productions and teach people how to produce? To all my people in the marketplace, what if you helped people with their resumes? What if you using your time and your talent to invest in someone else keeps them off the street? Out of jail? Or perhaps God providentially uses your gift to save a life, but you're thinking too small because you only

¹³ B. K. Waltke, "Theology of Micah," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. W. A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 527.

¹⁴ H. Vorländer, "Gift, δῶρον," *NIDNTT* 2:42.

² Kenneth L. Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, vol. 20, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 112.

want to use your gift to make money, not change lives. Stop thinking inwardly about your time and your talent.

- ❑ **Treasure** – I say it all the time and I'll say it again, **the Great Commission must be funded.** God says teach people to obey everything I've commanded, God has commanded his people to seek justice, do justice and speak justly. One of the ways we speak is by investing. We want this building to facilitate mission for counseling, employment, re-entry, education, families, etc. Guess what it takes, money. People who don't give aren't giving God all of themselves.

Isaiah 58:1-14

"Cry out loudly, don't hold back! Raise your voice like a ram's horn. Tell my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins. 2 They seek me **day after day** and delight to know my ways, like a nation that does what is right and does not abandon the justice of their God. They ask me for righteous judgments; they delight in the nearness of God." 3 "Why have we fasted, but you have not seen? We have denied ourselves, but you haven't noticed!"

"Look, you do as you please on the day of your fast, and oppress all your workers. 4 You fast with contention and strife to strike viciously with your fist. You cannot fast as you do today, hoping to make your voice heard on high. 5 Will the fast I choose be like this: A day for a person to deny himself, to bow his head like a reed, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to the Lord? **6 Isn't this the fast I choose: To break the chains of wickedness, to untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke?** 7

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your house, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to ignore your own flesh and blood? 8 Then your light will appear like the dawn, and your recovery will come quickly. **Your righteousness will go before you,** and the Lord's glory will be your rear guard. 9 At that time, when you call, the Lord will answer; when you cry out, he will say, 'Here I am.' If you get rid of the yoke among you, the finger-pointing and malicious speaking, 10 and if you offer yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted one, then your light will shine in the darkness, and your night will be like noonday. 11 The Lord will always lead you, satisfy you in a parched land, and strengthen your bones. You will be like a watered garden and like a spring whose water never runs dry. 12 Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will restore the foundations laid long ago; you will be called the repairer of broken walls, the restorer of streets where people live. 13 "If you keep from desecrating the Sabbath, from doing whatever you want on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, seeking your own pleasure, or talking business; 14 then you will delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride over the heights of the land, and let you enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob." **For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.**

Why is this so important? Because we're to obey ALL that God has commanded and God wants to use you to be a voice to the voiceless, to serve the poor, to deliver justice and not simply hold services that fits our comfort, we're to display God's justice:

Prov. 31:8-9

8 **Speak up for those who have no voice**, for the **justice** of all who are dispossessed. 9 Speak up, judge righteously, and defend the cause of the oppressed and needy.

How do we speak up for them? We serve, we give God our time, talent and treasure by serving others. The reality is, so many Christians get this wrong because they think more politically than they do biblically.

Leading up to verses 6-7 and I what I referenced in Isaiah, **the Lord is rebuking His people**. This is important because when it comes to the topic of **justice many people who claim to care about others tend to use scripture to disobey God**. Here's what I mean, I've been told phrases like don't talk about race, there's no such thing as police brutality, just obey the law of the land and most of the opponents to social justice appeal to Romans 13:

Rom. 13:1-2

Let everyone **submit to the governing authorities**, since there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist **are instituted by God**. 2 **So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing** God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves.

This what **Thabiti Anyebwile** calls the **philosophical fallacy** where evangelicals appeal to the government being ordained by God as a means for inaction, but this isn't exegetically faithful. They pick and choose what aspects of that chapter fits the narrative they embrace.

The role of the government is to reward the good and punish wrongdoing. **Is government perfect and do they administer perfect justice?** For instance, there are several examples of people of God going against the governing authorities because their treatment of people or their denial of God's sovereignty:

- ❑ **Shiphrah and Puah** who feared God more than they feared the king and resisted his order to kill male born babies and it was their bravery that allowed Moses' birth to occur (Exo. 1:15-18).
- ❑ **Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah** refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's statue and God supported them. (Dan. 3:12).
- ❑ **Ester** appeared before the king illegally and God was with her, because Haman was going to do an injustice against His people (Esther 4:15-17).

Micah 6:8

8 Mankind, he has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act **justly**, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Take Note...

Biblical justice saves, corrects and restores.

- ❑ **Mishpat** means more than just the punishment of wrongdoing.
- ❑ **Tzadeqah**, and it refers to a life of right relationships.
- ❑ **Rectifying justice** is *mishpat*. Primary justice, or *tzadeqah*, is behavior that, if it was prevalent in the world, would render rectifying justice

unnecessary, because everyone would be living in right relationship to everyone else. Therefore, though *tzadeqah* is primarily about being in a right relationship with God, the righteous life that results is profoundly social. – Tim Keller

How do we act justly?

1. We should be eager to do good works in light of Christ's finished work!

Titus 2:11-13

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14 He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, **eager to do good works.**

This isn't guilt, this is a desire to do justice based on God delivering justice to you.

2. We should pursue justice because Christ pursued us first!

Isaiah 1:16-17

16 "Wash yourselves. Cleanse yourselves. Remove your evil deeds from my sight. Stop doing evil. 17 **Learn to do what is good. Pursue justice.** Correct the oppressor. Defend the rights of the fatherless. Plead the widow's cause.

3. We don't withhold justice for personal comfort!

Matthew 23:23-24

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You pay a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, and yet you have neglected the more important matters of the law — **justice**, mercy, and faithfulness. These things should have been done without neglecting the others. 24 Blind guides! You strain out a gnat, but gulp down a camel!

4. We remember the injustice done against God by us!

In verses 6-7, they asked four questions:

- What should I bring before the Lord when I come to bow before God on high?
- Should I come before him with burnt offerings, with year-old calves?
- Would the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousand streams of oil?

Jesus endured every form of injustice (Romans and Jews | Enemies Conspired | False Witnesses | Real Witnesses Testify Now)

The fourth question was:

- Should I give my firstborn for my transgression, the offspring of my body for my own sin?**

We don't have to give up our firstborn because God gave-up His!