

Justice

What do believers fight over on this issue?

1. A quick overview of biblical justice

1.1. Vertical and horizontal justice

Proverbs 31:9 Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Isaiah 10:1-2

Woe to those who make unjust laws,
to those who issue oppressive decrees,
to deprive the poor of their rights
and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people,
making widows their prey
and robbing the fatherless.

1.2 Future justice

Psalms 98:7-9

*Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it!
Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord, for he
comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples
with equity.*

Psalms 72:1-4

*Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge
your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! Let the mountains bear
prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the
poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!*

1.3 Present justice

cf. Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37

Implications:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What impact does it have if you don't keep any distance between your biblical and political convictions?

2. What does the Bible command us to do with regard to justice?

Ezek 18:5-9 If a man is righteous and does what is just and right— 6 if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, 7 does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, 8 does not lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man, 9 walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully—he is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord God.

Ezek 16:49 'Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.'

What are the problems with having an individualistic conception of righteousness?

2.1 Be _____

Isa 58:2-7 they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God...Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers.....is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?...Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?....Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

James 2:15-17 *If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

How, or why, might a congregation drift into this?

2.2 A _____

Prov 21:13 *Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.*

Prov 28:27 *Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.*

Lev 19:9-10 *"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. 10 And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.*

2.3 G _____

Deut 15:7-11 *"If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, 8 but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. 9 Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, 'The seventh year, the year of release is near,' and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and you be guilty of sin. 10 You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. 11 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'*

cf. Prov 14:31, 17:5, 19:17; Gal 2:10

2 Cor 8:9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*

2.4 F _____

Isa 1:17 *learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.*

1:23 *Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them.*

5:7 *For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!*

Where are you personally most challenged when it comes to practicing justice?

3. Will living out justice mean that we neglect evangelistic mission?

1.

2.

3.

Discussion: Should doing justice be a good in and of itself, or it should it always be accompanied with word proclamation?

4. How much should believers seek to engage with justice in the world (i.e. outside the church) ?

Gal 6:10 *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

cf. parable of sheep and goats in Matt 25:31-46

1 John 3:16-17 *By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?*

God is Creator and Judge of all cf. Matt 5:45

Luke 10:25-37

Matt 5:14-16; 1 Pet 2:12

But what do we practically do?!!

5 questions:

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