

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

July 2nd

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. What is your favorite thing to do during July 4th? Any family traditions? Or did you grow up with any July 4th traditions?

Bible Study Questions

1. What do you think of when you hear the words “justice” and “righteousness”?
2. What would you imagine a “just” society to look like?
3. Read Psalm 72
 - How does this chapter describe the chief role of the king?
 - How does sin create a society in which this is important?
4. Read these passages:
 - Isaiah 58:6-8, Jeremiah 22:3, Jeremiah 22:15-16, Psalms 146:7-9, James 1:27
 - What do these verses all teach about justice?
5. Pastor Michael suggested that God does care about freedom, but why does God spend so much time emphasizing justice in the Bible? How is restorative justice reflected in his character?
6. What are some examples of injustice that you see in America today? What steps can we take to be more involved as people who promote justice?

July 2nd The Coronation Psalm

It is July 4th weekend and during this time, we celebrate our freedom. While freedom is an incredible gift from God, we can miss a greater vision that God has for society: one that prioritizes Biblical justice.

Psalm 72 is a prayer that David wrote for the coronation of his son Solomon. It was meant to be prayed at every following coronation after that. He begins asking that God would give the king both justice and righteousness (verse 1).

I. Defining Words

- **Justice: an approach to society that reflects God’s heart for a community where all people treated with dignity of being made in his image:** Our culture tends to be confused. Some view it merely as legal retributive justice. Others view it as fairness in which people have either equal freedom or government enforced shared resources. God’s view is much bigger and revolves around the dignity of all people.
 - **Special attention is given to those who cannot defend themselves.** The reoccurring theme in the Old Testament is restorative justice in which those who have been abused are restored to a place of dignity.
- **Righteousness: A way of living that aligns with what God says to be good and true:**

II. Psalm 72

- **Blessings on the king are conditional on his commitment to restorative justice:** Verses 3 through 11 contain a series of blessings such as prosperity and fame. Verse 12 begins with “for”, meaning that the blessings are the result of what is to follow. Then in 12-14, examples are given of the king restoring the weak and defending the defenseless.
- **Recognizes that sin warps a fair society:** The king needs to do this because sin has created a self centered society in which people are casualties in one’s pursuit of happiness.
- **Righteous people have an obligation to protect and restore the weak:** The conclusion is that the king, and society respond to the impact of sin by acting on behalf of those who have been abused. This theme is repeated throughout the Old Testament. In Isaiah 58, God laments that the people have failed to worship because they have no “loosened the chains of injustice”. In Jeremiah 22:3, God demands that the people “do what is just and right”. In Psalm 146:7-9, he commands people to pursue justice

and labels those who don’t as “wicked.” Even in the New Testament, James 1:27 describes justice as a core part of a pure and faultless religion.

Conclusion

My goal in this message is to get us to think. In my own life, I have often focused on freedom and the defense of my own rights at the expense of justice. However, God never condemns his people for not having enough freedom. He condemns them for ignoring justice. A truly just society will include freedom, but a free society can include a number of injustices such as abortion, or elder abuse, or neglect of the poor and disabled.

God calls us to be people who reflect his just nature by pursuing Biblical justice. We should pray for justice. We should look for ways to be involved and support candidates who reflect God’s definition of a just and righteous leader.

I hope that we all go and celebrate our freedoms this week, but don’t settle for that. May we set our gaze toward a higher calling, which is promoting a culture that shares God’s view of justice.