

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

### **May 15th**

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

1. When was a time as a kid that you thought that a practice in your home was “not fair”? Tell the story.
2. What do you think of when you hear the word, “justice”?

#### **Bible Study Questions**

1. Pastor Michael said that without a Biblical framework, our culture struggles because it doesn't have a shared view of justice. Have you seen this to be true? What is a conflict that you see in our culture in which both sides claim to be on the side of justice?
2. Read Micah 6:8. What does it mean to you to “act justly”?
3. Read Genesis 1:26-27. What does it mean for man to be created in the image of God? How does being made in the image of God become a foundation for the way that we view Biblical justice?
  - Does this impact the way that we interact with people that we don't agree with? How do we treat someone with dignity of whom we profoundly disagree on major issues?
4. Read Isaiah 1. The context is that this is at a time in which the Jews believe that they are righteous. In this chapter, why do the Jews think that they are good with God? What does God charge them with? What do you learn about justice from this chapter?
5. Tim Keller suggests that we should start living this out locally in the context of our church community. How is justice practically lived out in a church community? What can you do to better act justly in our church family?
6. Pastor Michael talked about developing relationships with people who have different backgrounds who can help us understand the

other side in complex issues. Do you have any of these relationships in your life? If so, how have they helped you?

## May 15<sup>th</sup>: Three Things I Require: Act Justly

Over the next three weeks we will be unpacking Micah 6:8. In the verse, people are asking about what is required of them to come before God. The answer is to “Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”

### Outline

- I. **Our culture is at a loss at how to deal with justice because we do not have a shared foundation.** People base their view of justice on the home that they grew up in, life experiences, and with what sounds good to them. In politics, one of the reasons that we have divisive arguments is because people have conflicting deep values that form their views of justice.
- II. **Justice is a central aspect of God’s character.** You find the word “justice” showing up over 450 times in the Bible. Passages such as Psalms 9:6, 33:5, or Matthew 12:18 are a few examples. God commands his people to act justly because they to be reflecting a key part of God’s character.
- III. **Biblical view of justice**
  - a. **All human life is valuable and worthy of dignity:** Genesis 1:26 tells us that when God made humans, he made them in his image to join him in caring for creation. Since then, we have made a habit of separating people into classes. During Old Testament times, the ancient world viewed the poor as being 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens. Yet God forbid any practice that took advantage of the poor (Amos 8:5-6 and Hosea 12:7). He even commanded them to love immigrants (Leviticus 19:33) and forbid the early church to show favoritism of any kind (James 2:1).  
If all human life is to be valued, then that includes all lives, including unborn babies, refugees, Alzheimer patients, and politicians that we don’t agree with. Valuing them means that we are willing to treat them with dignity and disadvantage ourselves for them.
  - b. **Personal responsibility for one’s own choices**  
Galatians 6:7-8 teaches that we will reap what we sow. Each of us is responsible to make good decisions to pay the consequences for what we do wrong. God offers mercy, but we are responsible for receiving that.
  - c. **Responsibility to care for one’s surrounding community:**  
God told his people that not only should not abuse the poor, but they should defend the poor (Isaiah 1:12, Psalms 41:4).

Both Daniel and Ezra confessed sin on behalf of the sinful Jewish community. The point is that God has given us the responsibility of caring for those around us.

### Conclusion

The topic of justice goes much deeper than these three points. But they provide a starting point. When we look at the injustices of the world, they can seem overwhelming. Here are some practical suggestions

- Start locally, specifically in your church community. We do not have credit with the world unless we do that in our own house. Actively look out for and care those in our community who are most often disregarded, such as the disabled, people who have gone through a crises, or older shut-ins.
- Find places to volunteer in the community.
- Start relationships with people who are different than you.