



Sermon-Based Bible Study

July 13, 2025

"Justice" - #3 in the series *The Influence of Jesus*

Texts (NIV): Luke 11: 37-42, Micah 6:8, Psalm 85:10-11

Guest Speaker: Sarah Martin

1. The concept of justice has been a relevant and urgent theme throughout human history. It was as timely a concern in Jesus' day as it is today. Consider these two definitions of justice:
 - Legal Justice - *the concept of fairness within the legal system, ensuring that laws are applied impartially and consistently to all individuals.*
 - Biblical Justice - *God's righteous character and actions that encompass both the punishment of wrongdoing and the restoration of the wronged by showing love and compassion.*
 - Why does it seem so difficult for these two perspectives on justice to co-exist in society?
 - What has been your experience in reconciling the tension between legal and Biblical justice?
2. **Read Luke 11:37-41 - What Is Christian Justice?**
 A Pharisee, a member of the prominent Jewish religious and political group, invited Jesus to dinner and was surprised that he did not first wash before the meal, a traditional Jewish ritual.
 - Why would Jesus' example of cleaning only the "outside of the cup" have resonated, yet offended, the Pharisee?
 - Why would the Pharisee likely have taken further offense at Jesus' instruction to be generous to the poor?
3. **Read Luke 11:42, Micah 6:8 - How is Christian Justice Best served?**
 Jesus declares that justice begins *in the heart* and that the Pharisee should practice justice that is lawful and fair, but that also shows love and compassion.
 - Why does this perspective on justice require courage?
 - Considering areas of both systemic and personal justice, which area(s) seem most challenging to you?
5. **Read Psalm 85:10-11 - Where is God Calling Us to Justice?**
 Consider this excerpt from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," April 16, 1963:
"I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is ... the white moderate who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says, 'I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action' who paternistically feels that he can set the timetable for another man's freedom... Shallow understanding from people of goodwill is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will."
 - How do Dr. King's words resonate with Jesus' words to the Pharisee about justice?
 - Where do you think God is calling us as a community of faith at Hope to practice justice?
7. How can we pray for you?