

# The Gospel and Biblical Justice

## Scriptures:

Psalm 89:14; Micah 6:8; Matthew 11:4-6; Matthew 25:31-40; James 1:26-27; James 2:1-4, 6; Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 22:16; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 4:18-19; Luke 10:25-37; Acts 4:32-37; Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:14-15, 19; Psalm 41:1; etc.

[Also see handout]

## Secondary Resources:

- Thaddeus Williams, *Confronting Injustice without Compromising Truth*
  - Tim Keller—four-part series of articles: “The Bible and Race,” “The Sin of Racism,” “A Biblical Critique of Secular Justice and Critical Theory,” “Justice in the Bible”
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## I. Introduction and Preliminary Remarks

## II. Critique of “Social Justice”

## III. What is Biblical Justice?

### Four Facets:

A. Generosity (*Luke 12:32-33; Lev.19:9-10; Lev.23:22; Deut.24:19; Acts 4:32-37*)

B. Equality (*Lev.19:15; Deut.16:19; James 2:1-4*)

C. Advocacy (*Psalm 41:1; Prov.31:8-9; Prov.14:20; Prov.22:22-23; Deut.24:14-15; Luke 10:30-35*)

D. Responsibility (*Ezekiel 18:1-32, see verse 20; Joshua 7; Acts 2; 1 Sam.15:2; Deut.23:3-8; Amos 1-2; Jonah*)

**Discussion #1**—What are some of the multiple factors causing people to experience destitution?  
What are some of the privileges and advantages you have had in your own life?

## IV. The Gospel and Biblical Justice

*Mark 6:30-44*

## V. The Church’s Mission as it Relates to Biblical Justice Issues

### A. Listening

**Discussion #2**—How can we do a better job of listening? If God’s common grace means that he gives gifts of wisdom, moral insight, goodness, and beauty even to those who are not believers, is it possible we might learn from a non-believer? Also, are you or have you been in dialogue with any black person (Christian or otherwise) about their perspective as it relates to injustice? Have you read any good books or literature from a person of color who has a different perspective from yours?

B. Let’s be the church

**Discussion #3**—What are some ways we at FPC can live out biblical justice in our own church (or perhaps along with other churches in our community), as a living witness to our community? (For example: sharing our resources/wealth, or racial/ethnic harmony, etc.)

C. Motivating and equipping Christians to do justice

**Discussion #4**—Can you name some of the organizations our FPC members are involved with already? Share any that you have been directly involved with. What can you do, what can our church do, to be more intentional in promoting biblical justice for the disadvantaged members of our local community?

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 58:6-7; Matthew 25:34-40

# The Gospel and Biblical Justice

## Micah 6:8

<sup>8</sup>He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

## Psalms 89:14

<sup>14</sup>Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.

## Leviticus 19:9-10

<sup>9</sup>“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup>Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.

## Leviticus 23:22

<sup>22</sup>“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.”

## Deuteronomy 24:19

<sup>19</sup>When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

## Acts 4:32-37

<sup>32</sup>All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup>and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. <sup>36</sup>Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), <sup>37</sup>sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

## Leviticus 19:15

<sup>15</sup>“Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

## Deuteronomy 16:19

<sup>19</sup>Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

## James 2:1-4

<sup>1</sup>My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. <sup>2</sup>Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. <sup>3</sup>If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here's a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” <sup>4</sup>have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

## Psalms 41:1

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble.

## Proverbs 31:8-9

<sup>8</sup>“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. <sup>9</sup>Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

## Proverbs 14:20

<sup>20</sup>The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.

## Proverbs 19:4

<sup>4</sup>Wealth brings many friends, but a poor man's friend deserts him.

## Proverbs 22:22-23

<sup>22</sup>Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, <sup>23</sup>for the LORD will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them.

## Deuteronomy 24:14-15

<sup>14</sup>Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns. <sup>15</sup>Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

Ezekiel 18:20

<sup>20</sup>The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.

[Joshua 7; Acts 2; Deuteronomy 23:3-8; 1 Samuel 15:2; Amos 1-2; Jonah]

Mark 6:30-44

<sup>30</sup>The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” <sup>32</sup>So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. <sup>33</sup>But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. <sup>35</sup>By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. <sup>36</sup>Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” <sup>37</sup>But he answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “That would take eight months of a man’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” <sup>38</sup>“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.” <sup>39</sup>Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup>So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. <sup>41</sup>Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup>They all ate and were satisfied, <sup>43</sup>and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. <sup>44</sup>The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Isaiah 58:6-7

<sup>6</sup>“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? <sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”

Matthew 25:34-40

<sup>34</sup>“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup>I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ <sup>37</sup>“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup>When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ <sup>40</sup>“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”