

Living a Life of Justice

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 January 2008

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Micah 6, verses 1-8. Please stand with me for this reading from God's Word. Listen to what the Lord says.

Stand up, plead your case before the mountains. Let the hills hear what you have to say. Hear, O mountains, the Lord's accusation. Listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth.

For the Lord has a case against His people. He is lodging a charge against Israel. My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me.

I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam. My people, remember what Balak, king of Moab, counseled, and what Balaam, son of Beor, answered.

Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord. With what shall I come before the Lord and bow before the exalted God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

[1:04] Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

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.

If there is a living God, and there is, then surely one of the most important things in life is to get to know Him, to know what He's like, and to respond in appropriate ways to who He is.

For the last three weeks, three sermons, we've seen that He is a God of justice.

A God of justice. Now, the justice of God means several things for us. First of all, it means we've got a problem. We saw that, didn't we? He's too just to ignore our sins.

[2:15] How can God be just and still justify us sinners? That's the great legal problem we looked at, and we saw that the answer can only be found in Christ and Him crucified.

That at the cross, Jesus Christ took my sins upon Himself and suffered all the punishment that justice pronounced upon them. And yet, because my faith is in the Lord Jesus, all His righteousness is put to my account, so that God is able to say of me, not guilty, but just, righteous in my sight.

That is the only way that any of us can escape the just damnation that is ours for our sins. So the justice of God creates a great problem that is only to be answered in the cross of Jesus Christ.

But then there are also other applications of the justice of God. That if we say we believe God is just, then it ought to change the way we live. And it comes to us with great encouragement then, we who are justified ones in the sight of God.

What do you do when you're treated unjustly? When someone mistreats you? Well, the justice of God is a great comfort to us, isn't it? It enables us to not be revengeful and to seek justice in our own way, in our own sinful anger, in our own getting even.

[3:48] But rather to commit ourselves to the Lord who judges justly and to continue to do right. We can trust in Him.

You know, the sense of a violation of justice is a very strong emotion that's stirred up in us. When we have been wrong, there's this sense that justice has been violated here.

Now, what is big enough and strong enough to keep you from running into revenge and getting even? Well, the consideration that our God is just and He is the righter of every wrong.

And so I can entrust my case to Him and go on doing good. But there's another application of God's justice that runs right through our Bibles.

And we want to consider this this morning. And it's this, that the God of justice calls on us to live a life of justice. The God who is just calls on us to be just.

[4:54] To imitate Him in His justice. To be just in all of our dealings with our fellow man. I wonder how important that is to you.

That you live a life of justice. That you do what's right and fair and honest in the sight of God. I assure you, it is a huge matter with God.

Throughout His word, God weighs in on this matter of justice. Did you know, first of all, that the Bible refers to believers as the just?

The just. That's how they're identified. You have the wicked and you have the just. Their lives are so marked by justice that they're called the just.

Psalms 37 and verse 28 is just one of many texts. The Lord loves the just. And will not forsake His faithful ones.

[5:54] There are two titles given to the people of God. They're the just. They are the faithful ones. And then we see in Scripture that God pronounces a blessing upon the just.

Psalms 106.3 Blessed are they who maintain justice. Who constantly do what is just or right.

Psalms 112.5 Good will come to Him who is generous and lends freely. Who conducts His affairs with justice. There's blessing in store for the man who conducts his life with justice.

In this world of justice. Of unjust judges. Unjust businessmen.

Unjust fathers. Unjust husbands. Unjust workers and employers. There are people whose lives are marked by justice.

[6:56] They're the ones doing what's right and fair in the eyes of God. These are the people of God. And God is greatly honored by them. The just God has a just people.

It's only right isn't it? Only right that He should. The just God has a just people. They're like Him.

They're lovers and doers of justice. Now not a one of them were born this way.

We were born unjust. Cheaters. Liars. Deceivers. But we've been made this way. By the transforming grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And by reflecting His justice then. They reflect His glory in the earth. Living justly is involved in glorifying God.

You pray for God to be glorified. For Him to be honored. Then you are praying that you will live a just life. A life of justice. Again we're seeing how God weighs in on this matter of you living a life of justice.

[8:05] The third way is that He shows His great pleasure with King Solomon's choice in 1 Kings 3. You remember how the Lord came to young King Solomon. He's now king on the throne.

Ruling over the nation. And God says ask me for whatever you want me to give you. I remember when I was a kid and we played that game. If you had a wish what would you wish? We asked for three more wishes.

That's not what Solomon asked for. He said this is what I want Lord. I want discernment to know the difference between right and wrong. I want wisdom to be able to administer justice in my kingdom.

And God was so pleased with His request. That He had not asked for long life, wealth, or the death of His enemies. And so pleased was the Lord that He gave him what He asked for.

And He made him the wisest of all men on earth. In administering justice. That He might be able to bring about justice in His kingdom. And He also gave him what He did not ask. Riches beyond telling.

[9:11] Fame. And a long life. If he walked in God's ways. Surely that shows us God's high value on justice. That when His servant asks for the wisdom to administer it correctly.

He so smiles on it. And heaps rewards upon Him. And then fourthly, God gives us a whole book in the Bible for just this purpose.

For teaching us how to live justly. It's the book of Proverbs. And it opens this way. The Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel.

For acquiring a disciplined and prudent life. Doing what is right and just and fair. Kids, you've been challenged, I know, over and over to read through the book of Proverbs.

Do you know what that book is in your Bible for? It's there to teach you how to live in a way that's right and just and fair. It's there to teach you how to flesh out this matter of a life of justice in the world.

[10:15] And if you apply yourself to this book and search in it as for hidden treasure. The promise is that you will understand what is right and just and fair.

Chapter 2 and verse 9 promises. You will be taught from it how to live a just life. But it's not just the book of Proverbs really, is it?

There it's stated purpose is to teach you a life of justice. But indeed, the entirety of God's word is to lead us into a life of what is right and just and fair.

And then, are we on the fifth point, I believe? There's the message of the prophets. The message of the prophets in which we find a constant call for justice to be done.

And I invite your attention to Micah chapter 6. The passage that was read for us. There's a Q&A; session going on here.

[11 : 20] After Micah has rehearsed, Micah being the spokesman for God. In rehearsing to the people of Israel how blessed they've been that he's brought them out of bondage and redeemed them.

Now, he expects something of them. And so we have the question of the worshiper. Here's the worshiper. He's been redeemed out of Egypt. Now, he's coming before God to worship him.

And he's got a question on his mind. Verse 6. With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God?

I trust that you have asked that question. What is this exalted God after as we come to worship? Shall I come before him?

And now the worshiper is presenting some of his own thoughts of what he thinks God might want. Shall I come before him with burnt offerings? With calves a year old?

[12 : 18] You know, some of the offerings were not as stringent as the others. A fellowship offering, for instance, when you offered it to the Lord, it would then be eaten in the presence of the Lord.

Well, that's not as costly as a burnt offering, which would be consumed on the altar. There's nothing left for me to eat. So what is it God's after? Is he after a burnt offering? Or a calf a year old?

You could bring a seven day old calf and offer it as a sacrifice. But you know that a calf that's only seven days old, you've not expended that much effort and money and energy upon.

But if you've kept that calf for a whole year and fed it and cared for it, that's a far more valuable sacrifice. Is that what God's after? Year old calves?

Burnt offerings? And he goes on with his question. Shall or will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams?

[13 : 22] Maybe it's not the value of the offering. Maybe it's the number of them. Thousands of rams or 10,000 rivers of oil. You see how he's stretching language.

There are no rivers of oil. But imagine if there was a river and it flowed with oil and oil was often used in the offerings to the Lord. Shall I bring a whole river of oil?

What about 10,000 such rivers? And then he asks, the utmost, shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression?

Is that what God wants? The fruit of my own body for the sin of my soul? Oh man, you're thinking all wrong. That's not what God's after.

Here's what he's after. Verse 8. He has showed you, oh man. He's not left it up in the air. He showed you, oh man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?

[14 : 19] To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. You see, the people had reduced the true religion to ceremonies of worship.

What was done in the temple. And they thought God ought to be pleased with what they were doing in the temple, with their sacrifices. All the while ignoring God's moral demands upon what they did in the court rooms, in the marketplace, in the neighborhood, in their homes.

It's Sunday. Religion is what Micah is confronting. Here's the man who goes to church on Sunday and he's very faithful to be there. And he performs all the rituals, the songs, the prayers, the sermons, perhaps even emotionally entering into the worship.

And then he lives like he pleases Monday through Saturday. Cheating at school, cheating the employer, cheating the customer, taking advantage of the weak and the poor, taking bribes, giving bribes in the courts, perverting justice with false testimony.

And then he's back to his religious ceremonies on Sunday. And he thinks that God should be pleased and accept his worship. But the message of the prophets and the message of Micah is that he wasn't pleased.

[15 : 43] And his judgments were falling upon the nation because of it. He's not after more sacrifices. He's not after more valuable sacrifices. He tells you, oh man, what he's after.

A life of justice, mercy, and humility. And first up is to act justly.

That's what he's after. To conduct all your dealings with justice. Justice is the favorite word of the prophets used to summarize all of our duties toward our fellow man.

It's to treat them justly, rightly, honestly, fairly, faithfully. Don't think you can mistreat your fellow man and then come worship me, God says.

Don't think that your worship on Sunday gives you coupons to live how you want the rest of the week. Don't think God is only concerned with what you do in the temple and what and not what you do in the court room, the marketplace, the neighborhood.

[16 : 50] He's after justice in the whole of your life to act justly. And so today, on this day of worship, church buildings are full up.

And I wonder how much worship is detestable to the God of heaven because the lives of the worshipers are not just. There is no justice in their dealings with their fellow man.

Turn back to chapter 3 and verse 9 and you begin to see this problem emerging in this letter. This book, the prophecy, chapter 3 and verse 9.

Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right.

You turn justice upside down. You twist it. Who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with wickedness. Yes, you establish your great capital city, but with violence and bloodshed and wickedness.

[17 : 56] Her leaders judge for a bribe. Her priests teach for a price. And her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet. Though all this is going on, yet they lean upon the Lord and say, is not the Lord among us.

No disaster will come upon us. Why? Because they keep bringing their sacrifice. They keep worshipping Him. They're there. They're giving.

And surely God will not allow disaster to overtake us. These who are prophesying about disaster. False prophecies. God will not let disaster come to us.

Here's a judge in Judah and he's holding court and the man is guilty. And the judge knows it. And yet the man slips him a hundred dollars on the side.

And lo and behold, the judge says, not guilty. Perverting justice in the courts. And now it's time to go worship God and to bring Him sacrifices.

[19 : 08] And God says, am I still to forget what I've just seen? Am I to accept your worship?

Chapter 6, verse 10. Right after He's called on them to act justly. In chapter 6 and verse 10, He moves from the marketplace or from the courtroom to the marketplace.

Am I still to forget, O wicked house, your ill-gotten treasures? And the short ephah, which is accursed? Shall I acquit a man with dishonest scales with a bag of false weights?

No. I'm too just for that. Now, you say, what's this ephah? This short ephah? Well, you come into the marketplace and I have a stand here and I'm selling grain and you're buying.

And I'm measuring by the ephah. Now, an ephah was a basket that was about three-fifths of a bushel. You've seen a bushel basket. We still measure corn by the bushel.

[20 : 11] Well, an ephah was three-fifths of a bushel. And so that's my measuring device and I'm selling grain. But I've had a special basket made.

It's a short ephah. It's a short ephah. It had it all woven and it looks about like any other ephah. But what you don't know is that it's a little bit shorter than a true ephah.

And that means that every time I measure out grain and sell it to you in my short ephah, I am cheating you out of grain and you don't even know it. But God knows it and it's a violation of justice and He hates it.

And I've also got a bag of false weights. You want to buy five pounds of cheese. And so I reach into my bag and I grab the five-pound weight. At least that's what it says.

But again, I've had it made special and it's really only four pounds and twelve ounces. And so I put that on one side of the scale and down it goes. And then I start loading cheese on the other side until it's balanced.

[21 : 28] And you give me the money for five pounds of cheese and I just gave you four ounces less than what you paid for. And you didn't even know it. False weights.

And God saw it and God hates it. But now it's time for worship. It's Sabbath again and into the temple we go and we come with our sacrifices. I may even be bringing a tenth of that ill-gotten gain and I expect God to hear my prayers and I expect God to look kindly and receive my worship. Am I to forget what I've just seen going on in the marketplace, God says, and accept your worship? No, it's because of this.

In verse 12, he says, I've begun to destroy you. Judgment is falling, you see, upon the nation. That's what we saw in Jeremiah. And it's falling not for a lack of sacrifices in worship, but because of a lack of justice in living.

They're cheating each other, lying, deceiving, and abusing. And these are the professing believers in God. There is a perverted idea in man, and it's found in every form of man.

[22:50] It's found in every religion. It's found in Judaism. It's here in Judaism. We've just been reading of it. It's found in Roman Catholicism. It's found in Protestantism. It's found in Islam.

It's found in Islam. It's the idea that thinks that God can be bought off with religious ceremonies and thinks a life of treating your fellows with injustice all week long is atoned for by a day in church, by giving of money, by going to confessional, by saying so many prayers, by fasting.

There's this great disconnect in the minds of many between what one does all week long and what they do in worship. It's a compartmentalizing of our life.

Here's my worship. And the walls are to, are all the way to heaven. And so, nothing I do out here in the market and in the family and neighborhood and courtroom, none of that enters in, you see, to my worship.

That's how I think. And so I'm thinking, here I am. I brought my gifts. I brought my money. God ought to be pleased. I'm singing the song. I'm making confession. But God doesn't think that way. There are no walls, you see, this morning.

[24:03] So, so God sees you this morning, not as you are just today. He sees you as you have been all week long. And that's who's worshipping Him this morning.

Not the Sunday you, but the, the, the Monday through Sunday you. And that's how He's receiving your worship. worship. And that's why He had no good thing to say for these who were worshipping while their lives were a travesty of His justice.

What does the Lord require? To act justly. To live justly. Proverbs 21, 3, to do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

sacrifice. Now that's a peek at the prophecy of Micah. I want to take a peek at the prophecy of Isaiah, another prophet.

In chapter 58, they were keeping a religious feast. They were going without food. And they were thinking that God ought to be pleased with them because of it. Yet, on the day of your fasting, verses 3 to 7, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.

[25:19] Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen?

Is that what you call a fast? A day acceptable to the Lord? Oh, is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen? To loose the chains of injustice.

To untie the cords of the yoke. To set the oppressed free. To break every yoke. 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 them and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood. Should God not be satisfied? I'm going without food.

God says the kind of fast that I'm after is not merely going without food. It's living without injustice. Living without injustice. Breaking the chains of injustice.

[26:21] Setting the oppressed free. And he continues the accusations against them on into chapter 59 and verse 8. There is no justice in their paths. They've turned them into crooked roads.

So justice is driven back. And righteousness stands at a distance. Truth has stumbled in the streets. Honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found.

And whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice. You see, that's what he's looking for.

He looks. And he's not just looking in the temple to see what we're doing there. He's looking in the streets where all the business transpires. Where neighbor speaks with neighbor.

And there's no truth. Where is it? Where's honesty? There's no justice. And he's displeased because of it.

[27 : 22] Woe to those who make unjust laws. Chapter 10. Who issue oppressive decrees to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people. Making widows their prey.

Robbing the fatherless. And yet all the while keeping up their religious activity. And so he says in chapter 1 in verses 11 through 17. The multitude of your sacrifices.

What are they to me? Says the Lord. I have more than enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle. I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

When you come to appear before me, who's asked this of you? This trampling of my courts. Stop bringing meaningless offerings. Your incense is detestable to me.

New moon, Sabbaths, and convocations. I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts. My soul hates. They've become a burden to me.

[28 : 19] I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you. Even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood.

Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight. Stop doing wrong. Learn to do right. Seek justice.

Encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless. Plead the case of the widow. You see, Isaiah's message, your worship is worthless.

It's worse than worthless. It's detestable. It stirs up hatred in me. Why? Not because you haven't offered enough sacrifices. I have plenty of them. But because injustice marks your treatment of one another.

Get it out of my sight. Seek justice, he says. And we've just peeked at Micah and Isaiah. And I've got two or three pages here of texts of the prophets because they all bear the same stamp.

[29 : 24] charging Israel with their injustices done to each other and calling on them to live justly. What is the Lord after?

To act justly. Jeremiah chapter 7 verse 5 he calls them deal with each other justly. 22.3 Do what is just and right.

Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who's been robbed and so on. 22.15 to 17 he says to King Shalom the son of King Josiah did not your father have food and drink?

He did what was right and just and so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?

Declares the Lord. But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion. Isn't it interesting that he would say is this not what it means to know me?

[30 : 25] To do what's right and just and fair. Because if you know God you know him to be a God of justice. A God who exercises justice and righteousness in the earth because he delights in such.

Jeremiah 9 24. And if you know him to be such a God you yourself will exercise justice and kindness and righteousness in the earth. Is this not what it means to know me?

Ezekiel. Give up your violence and oppression and do what is right and just. Hosea. You must return to your God. Maintain love and justice.

He charges the people in Amos with skimping the measure, boosting the price, cheating with dishonest scales and so on. Depriving the poor of justice in the courts.

What's the answer? Hate evil, love what is good. Maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps then the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.

[31 : 31] You see, judgment's coming and it's coming because you are not living justly with your fellow man. Repent, practice justice. But still they kept up their religious ceremonies.

And in Amos 5 he says, I hate, I despise your religious feasts. I cannot stand your assemblies.

Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.

Away with the noise of your songs. I will not listen to the music of your harps. Music, songs are so important to worship. Our own day has elevated them far above the place of scripture and yet here God is saying, away, away with them.

The noise, that's all it is. It's noise to me. I will not listen to them. Why not? Because you're not living justly. I will not listen to the music of your harps, but let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like

a never failing stream.

What is God after? He's after justice in our treatment of one another. So, through other of the minor prophets, I trust we can see something of the importance of living justly before God and what it actually means by looking at the minor prophets and the major prophets.

[32 : 49] But sixthly, we see the importance of justice in our Lord's own words. You say, John, that's all Old Testament. Does that somehow not apply to us? Well, let's come to the new and let's come to our Lord.

And in Matthew 23, he's talking to the Pharisees who had the very same problem of their Old Testament counterparts. And in Matthew 23, he's pronouncing woe upon the scribes and Pharisees.

And he comes to verse 23 and he says, Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You give a tenth of your spices, mint, dill, and cumin, but you have neglected the more important matters of the law.

Now, we ought to sit up real high in our chairs when we hear Jesus talk about the more important matters of the law. What does the Lord require? the Son of God.

What is the more important things of the law? And he says, Justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

[33 : 53] You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former. According to Jesus, treating one another with justice is one of the weightier matters of the law. It's one of the big ones.

Talk about the big sins, the big virtues. Here's a justice. It's a priority concern. More important than tithing.

Tithing doesn't make up for neglect of justice. You should have done the one without neglecting the other. And what's more important to Jesus must become more important to us than it must receive top priority status.

So I come to the application. How important is a life of justice to you? How important is that to you? Does it you wake up in the morning and head into work and say it is very important today that I carry out my business at work with absolute uprightness and justice?

As you go to school and say I must be honest in school God says this is very important to him or does this justice not weigh in on our consciousness I'm afraid 21st century Christians have not been well schooled in the priority of a just life as God has deemed it to be important what will it actually look like if you act justly well I trust we've seen that all of our business dealings will be conducted with justice and honesty we've just seen as we've just glanced through the prophets that honesty and business is a huge thing with God in fact the strongest words are used to register his disgust with dishonesty in the marketplace Proverbs 20 23 the Lord detests differing weights and dishonest scales do not please him

[35 : 53] Proverbs 11 1 the Lord abhors dishonest scales but accurate weights are his delight greatest hatred for injustice and business dealings so we've heard him condemning the people for their skimping measure the short ephah dishonest scales and so on we don't have ephahs we don't have these sorts of things indeed you can see it on the gasoline pumps that people come around and make sure that the pumps are accurate every so many days they come around and weigh the scales at the grocery store and make sure that they're not charging you too much for that banana we have much of this justice built into our system where'd that come from came from Christianity it came from Judeo Christian ethics that are found in the scriptures and our country has built in many of these things!

but there's other ways to work the system in our own day aren't there there's always some way to cheat the customer there's always some way to cheat the seller or the buyer you can talk up your inferior product as if it's better than what it really is you can talk down the product you're about to buy as if it's not worth anything and then go around and boast how little you must be absolutely above board and honest more important than coming out with more money in your pocket is walking away knowing that God in heaven is smiling upon you if you come away with that you can afford to have a couple hundred dollars less in your checkbook to know that God in heaven is pleased because I've treated my neighbor as I've wanted to be treated in that business deal and that's what he requires of me means keeping your word in business did you agree to do it for so much keeping your word even to your own hurt psalm 15 verse 4 says means when you're given too much change at the store that you return the change and explain the error if the only time we raise our voice is when we've been shorted then our commitment to justice is suspect isn't it it looks

a whole lot more like commitment to self than commitment to justice if I'm committed to justice then whenever I see the balance of justice tipped in either direction I'll speak I'll write it I'll seek to do what I can to see it put right 2nd Corinthians 7:11 a mark of true repentance is a readiness an eagerness to see justice done and that's exactly what we find in Zacchaeus when he repented and he met the Lord Jesus Christ and turned from his thieving ways of his tax collecting business he had a great eagerness to see justice done here and now Lord I give half my goods to the poor and if I've cheated anybody of anything I'll pay him back four times the amount he didn't care one whit about justice the day before he met Jesus but meeting the Lord Jesus suddenly made him concerned about justice toward his fellow man it's the fruit of true faith and true repentance you can discover a lot about someone by learning what they delight in it goes on the human plane you want to know me better find out what I delight in I want to know you better what really turns your crank what really gets you excited and I'll have a window into your heart but the same is true of our God want to know God better find read the Bible and find out what he delights in what really thrills him and brings him pleasure come to Proverbs 11 in verse 1 and you find accurate weights are his delight and I'm sure we do a double take on such a verse we come back and we say accurate weights his delight I mean we think that in order to please God we've got to crawl up a mountain on our knees or we've got to take the gospel to every nation in the world ourselves or we've got to pray 10 hours a day then maybe God will be pleased what is it that I should do to bring pleasure to my God and he tells me accurate weights are my delight when I see you conducting business with absolute honesty the living God says I delight in that I am thrilled to see it don't think less of this matter of honesty and financial matters you might not think God thinks much of it you just were brought up that way to be honest and you say oh it's really nothing oh it is something it's huge it's a huge thing with God he delights in accurate scales so let others come out with their money ahead by their dishonest game you have what money cannot buy the knowledge that God in heaven is pleased he's delighting in your honest business deal means you'll pay your taxes all of them you'll take advantage of every deduction that is given you honestly and then you will pay what you owe and you will not hide your income you'll turn it in justice is a delight in [41:39] God did you think about that next time you you're working on your taxes remember honesty in these financial matters are a delight to God and dishonesty is a violation of justice that his soul detests it means paying your bills means paying them on time that's when you owe or making some other arrangement with the one you owe but conducting your affairs with justice in school means no cheating plagiarism is the rage of the day it's all too easy to go on the computer and get a term paper and change the name and a few words and turn it in as your own work when it's not your own work a C paper honestly done is better than an A paper dishonestly written the one receives! the delight of God the other receives kids don't go there don't be tempted to that realize the delight of your God in not cheating in school acting justice that's what it means at work no cheating no stealing of employers time material 60 minutes of hard work for every hour he pays you not calling in sick when you're not sick employers not defrauding their workers paying them well who perform services for you in sports and games no cheating playing fairly playing hard but not cheating because that's detestable to the Lord he delights in justice the courts of law that was a huge area that Israel was sinning against the God of justice and do we have to even mention our own court system it's why we need to pray for our supreme court it's why we need to pray for those who sit on judges seats there's to be no room for prejudice no room for partiality for favoritism have you seen lady justice on the top of court houses statue of lady justice she's on many government buildings court houses there you see her and often she has a balance in one hand that's her job to balance the scales and be sure equity is meted out and there's often a sword in the other hand she has authority to punish the evildoer to carry out her sentence of guilty and not guilty but the real peculiar thing about lady justice is she's often blindfolded why is she wearing blindfolds kids it's simply saying to us and this this is a statue that dated back to the Roman era the time when our Lord Jesus was living and the blindfolds were stating that every judge ought to carry on his judgment and his courtroom as if he did not see who was being charged with guilt or innocence he can't see oh it's it's Mr.

so and so the big important guy with lots of money that might return a favor to me later on so I'll throw the judgment his direction can't see who he is can't see that it's that poor widow who has no husband to defend her and though she's crying for justice I can just ignore her plea and just rule in the favor of my friend over here no he cannot see who she is he doesn't allow prejudice to enter in he doesn't allow partiality favoritism to sway justice do not deny justice to your poor people in law courts Exodus 23 do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd with the many over the few don't see the many don't see the few you're just listening to the merits of the case and judging accordingly!

[46:07] a bribe will cause a judge to show partiality to one or another so 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 follow justice and justice alone well you say I'm not a judge John no but you've got to hold some courts dad in your house you've got to hear testimony and you've got to make a judgment be sure it's fair be sure it's equal don't show favoritism mom toward one over the other justice pleases the Lord act justly God is no respecter of persons he judges each man's work impartially 1st Peter 1 17 so must we no prejudice in life and in our speech no coloring of the truth the mouth of the righteous utters wisdom and his tongue speaks what is just just the truth nothing but the truth in our homes in our treatment of the vulnerable of society how many times the prophets condemn

Israel because they are mistreating the aliens and kids aliens are not just people from other planets they're people from other places other countries and you've got them in your school systems and you've got them up town people who are in the country and this isn't their homeland they've come into this country now they need to be legal to encourage encourage them to be here illegally would be a violation of justice but the charge against Israel is that they were mistreating the alien because here they were they didn't know the language they didn't know the ways and you could easily take advantage of an alien don't do it when you mistreat the alien you're dealing with me says the judge God how does that apply to!

well I dare say that there are some Hispanics in town that need to be treated with justice older brothers and sisters who are wiser and stronger and more powerful can easily take advantage of younger siblings just because they are bigger and older and smarter no justice act justly in your home our commitment to justice must not only be to stand up for my rights but our commitment to justice must stand up for the rights of others who are being oppressed William Wilberforce a member of English parliament labored 44 years to end the slave trade and slavery in England and six days before his death in 1833 a bill for the emancipation of all slaves in the land was carried through parliament and his life's work was over Wilberforce and a whole group of Christians formed a society the

Clapham society and they worked tirelessly in the cause of justice for the needy and the oppressed fighting against all sorts of abuses doing good to humanity wherever they could Proverbs 29 7 says the righteous care about justice for the poor but the wicked have no such concern the just care about justice for the poor Proverbs 31 8 and 9 speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves for the rights of all who are destitute speak up and judge fairly defend the rights of the poor and needy speaking up for the rights of the oppressed surely when we think of that we think of the unborn who cannot speak for themselves who are receiving the great injustice of having their lives taken in their own safe place the mother's womb and if they cannot speak will we not say oh but 73 that's a long time

Wilberforce every year put up the bill again just to see it washed away but he didn't give up and he cried to God for justice and he cried to man about his injustice we dare not give up the fight for the unborn you say but I'm not a politician like Wilberforce I'm not a king no but you have a voice use it whether it's at the water cooler or writing into a letter a letter to the editor or speaking to your neighbor stand up for the oppressed you have a vote use it you have two hands use them when you see the oppressed those who have been mistreated by others lying alongside of the road don't walk around the other side and get on with your business do something give something say something in the case of those who have been mistreated act justly no one should be trumpeting the message of social justice more than

[51:20] Christians who know that God is just and so what have we seen we've seen that our religion must go way beyond the sanctuary no area of life is to be un influenced by God's justice no relationship is to be un influenced by his justice this is what God requires of us to act justly to

practice justice to pursue justice and that for the glory of God that for the pleasure of God does God love justice then so must we does he exercise justice on the earth then you do the same and so we move from the worship of the God of justice here out into a world of injustice where we act justly to the glory of his name now we can't read from the prophets without having our own consciences struck have you found anything this morning in the law of

God that's caused you to see that you come short of acting justly well the answer is not just to try a little harder this week the answer is to come to Christ the just one Jesus Christ is the just one his was the life of constantly doing what was right and upholding justice for the oppressed he lived 33 years of perfect justice and then he died for the unjust first Peter 3 18 for Christ died for sins the just one for the unjust ones to bring us to God that's the answer you get to Christ and you confess your sins to him and you act faith again in the gospel you believe again that what he did on the cross was to take the punishment that your acts of cheating your fellow man that he paid the full price on Calvary and you act faith in the Lord Jesus to have all the grace that you need to walk through a mine field of injustice in this world and to act justly and to live towards your fellow man he's full of grace let us turn our hearts to him number 411 a song of repentance but a song of looking to Christ and therefore we do not come despairingly we don't come oh poor me the unjust we come to a savior for the unjust one who has strength to forgive us and to transform us let's pray god of infinite justice there are judges and there are men on this earth that we would be afraid to come and to tell all that we are to but how we thank you for your character that in

Jesus Christ we can come without having to try to hide what we really are that we can stand in the blazing light of your word your own commands that demand from us an acting toward our fellow man with pure justice we can be found out with our sin and yet we can come boldly to the throne of grace because you are a savior with grace for those who confess their sins you said you're faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness so do come and cleanse us come and wash us make us like yourself make us like the Lord Jesus who went about doing good doing what was right and just and fair so may we be even this day and in every day of our life Monday through Saturday and again on Sunday those that bring you pleasure those who bring you glory work in us by your mighty grace and power we ask in Jesus name amen