

Eagle Ridge Lake Elsinore — October 27, 2019
“Four Pillars: What We Value As A Church” (Part 4: Justice)

Welcome/Introduction

- God has given us 4 values (pillars) as a church.
 - Wisdom, Humility, Love, and Justice
 - Everything we do as a church (ministry, program, events, etc.) will be filtered through these values.
 - LAST WEEK: Pastor Jason discussed our value of Love.
 - TODAY: We discuss the fourth of our core values, Justice.

Scripture Reading

 **Micah 6:1-8 (Go to Matthew and turn back 7 books)**

1 Hear what the Lord says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. **2** Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel. **3** “O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! **4** For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. **5** O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.” **6** “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? **7** Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” **8** He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Scripture Reflection (1-2 minutes)

- In **Wisdom**, we seek to understand and know God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the reading and study of His inspired scripture.
- In **Humility**, we sacrifice our lives for the sake of the least, the last, and the lost.
- In **Love**, we unashamedly provide for those around us through the agape love of God.

At Eagle Ridge Lake Elsinore, in Justice, we set out to provide hope, through service, to those around us.

Verses 1-5

1 Hear what the Lord says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. **2** Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel.

- In the courtroom of God's justice, Israel [and ourselves] are brought to the witness stand to answer for our grumbling, complaining, and disobedience.
- God Almighty stands before us and asks, **3** "O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me!"
- What is your answer?
 - When things aren't right in your life, or there aren't any blessings in your life, who do you blame?
 - Our typical immediate reaction to anything that goes wrong is to point the finger at someone else.
 - Rarely do we take responsibility for our own actions.
- God provides the understanding
 - Israel = I set you free from bondage and slavery in Egypt!
 - Church = I sent my Son to set you free from the bondage and slavery to sin!

 - Israel = I put leaders, both men and women, before you to lead you.
 - Church = I have given you pastors, elders, and ministry leaders to help guide you in your faith.

 - Israel = I faithfully fulfilled my promise to bring you in to the promised land.
 - Church = I will faithfully fulfill my promise to have my Son return and bring you to your promised inheritance in eternal glory!


Verse 6 (the people get their chance to respond)

6 "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?"

- So now the people respond with questions of their own.
- Almost in a resentment-type way, the people ask, "What can we possibly give to you God?! You already own everything! What will satisfy you?"
- God had provided specific instructions to their forefathers on the sacrifices they were to offer.
 - The people essentially asked, "Do you want *another* sacrifice?"


Verse 7


7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

- They up the ante.
 - “How about thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil?”
 - “How about about now God?! Would that satisfy you?!”
- They then go to the limit, and offer the lives of their children as the ultimate sacrifice.
 - God says, “Just wait...I’m sending my Son to do that very thing for YOU!”
 -  **1 John 2:1-2**, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate [one who speaks on our behalf because we are not capable to do so] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation [the one who takes our place] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”
 - God says, “In fact, here...take my Son. Let Him pay the wages for your sin. He will take on Himself the consequences of what you have done. You are set free. Case closed!”
- The people of Israel got so caught up in ‘religious practice’, they completely forgot about the relationship God wanted to have with them!
 - He wanted to dwell in their midst. He provided them food, water, provision, and protection.
 - That’s a God of relationship, not ritualistic practice.
- What is it about always feeling the need or pressure to ‘do something’ in order to fix what we’ve messed up.
 - We always tend to fall back on, “What do I do to make it right?”
 - “I feel like I really sinned a lot today, maybe if I give more money this week, or maybe even serve in Children’s ministry two weeks in a row! I’ll feel better about what I’ve done. That will make God happy won’t it?”

Verse 8

8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness [mercy], and to walk humbly with your God?”

- So God provides the answer to all our questions on how we are to be in relationship with Him, and live out our faith.
- He answers the same way He did throughout the Old Testament.
 -  **1 Samuel 12:24**, “Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.”
 - This is very important for us to understand. Consider everything He has done for you!


-  **Amos 5:21-24**, “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. [NLT, “I hate all your show and pretense—the hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies.”] **Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”**

- There is nothing that we can do or anything we can give to earn our salvation or forgiveness of our sins.
- God desires more than just attending church, and doing the typical church things.
- How we view others, from God’s perspective, and what we can do to take care of them is what God prefers.
- The action of endlessly loving others is a greater offering to the Lord than coming to church once a week, tithing out of compulsion, and doing nothing else with your life.

- **Isaiah 1:16-17**, “...cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.”




- So what does it mean to ‘do justice’?

- Some would say the opposite of justice is loving evil, practicing/habitual sin, and using people for our own gain.
- NIV & NKJV = to act justly
- NLT = to do what is right
 - According to God’s standard of ‘doing what is right’, He clearly tells us the things we are to do that will provide justice to those who need it.

-  **Matthew 22:37-39**, “And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

- Before we define further what it is that we are to do, let’s look at the other attributes from Verse 8.

- “To love kindness [mercy]”
 - As we’ve been loved by God, we are to love others.
 - As we’ve been shown kindness by Jesus, we are to be kind to others.
 - As we’ve been granted mercy, so we are to give mercy to others.
 - Mercy = NOT getting what we deserve.

- Jesus took our place on the cross...that's mercy.
- “Walk humbly with God” (**reference to our value on Humility; 1 Peter 5:5, clothe yourselves in humility**)
 - We must wholly trust and be dependent on God.
- So in order to provide justice to others, we must be walking humbly with God. Which in turn gives us the ability to love kindness and mercy, which gives us the vision to see others as God sees them, which will ultimately lead to treating them as He treats us...service and sacrifice.
- This is the spiritual reality we must live in...not mere ritual worship.
- Jesus provided many warnings to those simply practicing religion.
 -  **Matthew 23:23**, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.” [Jesus pulling them back to Micah 6:8]
-  Jesus heals on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-14 ESV)
 - **9** He [Jesus] went on from there and entered their synagogue. **10** And a man was there with a withered hand. And they [Pharisees] asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse him. **11** He said to them, “Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? **12** Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” **13** Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. **14** But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.
 -  **James 1:27**, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”
 - Our purpose is to help and provide for those who can not do it for themselves.
 - This is why we present multiple opportunities to provide for others outside these walls.
 - Student Venture Club, SWAG, Dream Center, etc.
 - If there are other opportunities that you'd like to present, come talk to us!
 - Understand that you don't need the pastor or church's permission to act justly.
 - If the Holy Spirit prompts you to act, then act!
- This is why Justice is one of the values of Eagle Ridge Lake Elsinore.
- This is why we don't make Sunday service the 'end game'.

- Our faith and obedience to the Lord goes beyond our attendance, tithe, and service at church on Sunday.
- Because in the courtroom of God's justice system, our Advocate, Jesus Christ took the penalty on Himself, paid our debt, and set us free.
- Therefore, we ought to do all that we can to provide that same hope for others.
 - Our attendance at church is to study, learn, and hear from the Lord **[Wisdom]**.
 - Our tithe/offering and whatever else we bring to give back to God is an outward expression that we are dependent upon Him for all that we have and all that we are **[Humility]**.
 - Our fellowship with others and how we treat them is a direct reflection of our fellowship with God **[Love]**.
 - Our acting justly, loving kindness and mercy in how we provide for others who deserve all that we have in Christ is a reflection of our obedience to Christ **[Justice]**.

Closing Prayer/Response

Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 17-20, "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?...For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear."

Tithe/Offering

Closing Worship Song