

JUSTICE & MERCY: THE LIES IN OUR STORIES

SCRIPTURE & SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE = JUNE 14

GUIDELINES

1. Keep our eyes on Jesus.
2. Act like a family (respond with grace; seek understanding; offer the benefit of the doubt).
3. Embrace the nuance (resist either-or thinking).
4. Listen well (don't "hear" what's not being said).
5. Stay 'til the end (lean into the discomfort—which is the place where growth happens).

OPEN

1. What have you read, listened to, or watched this past week as you've sought to engage with the challenges of racial injustice? What has this learning brought to mind in your own personal story?

Last week, Pastor Curtis shared about his experiences as a black man. This week he walked us through some foundational theological and scriptural principles as we think about race, justice, and mercy. In doing so, he exposed some of the lies circulated around that prevent us from fully and honestly engaging these issues.

DISCUSS

2. Pastor Curtis brought out two key principles from Genesis 1—God's authoritative voice as Creator and the creation of mankind in His image. How do these truths shape how we approach these topics of race, justice, and mercy? How did Curtis apply these truths in his reflections on the Black Lives Matter movement? What do you think of that assessment?
3. As we look at Genesis 3-11, we see that sin is personal (Adam & Eve disobeyed God), familial (Cain killing Abel), and societal or systemic (humanity developing institutions—the Tower of Babel—contrary to God's will).
 - a. To what extent was systemic sin (injustice) discussed in your upbringing and church background?
 - b. What do you think motivates the thought that if we talk about or focus on systemic sin (injustice) we will (end up) ignoring or minimizing the impact of individual sin?
4. How does the gospel help us acknowledge that racism has been a key stronghold within the American church without giving into the condemnation that comes with our "cancel culture"?
5. Pastor Curtis challenged us to consider that the lack of prayer and lack of understanding of God's heart towards justice has minimized the church's prophetic voice in this area. What is your next step here when it comes to prayer? And a biblical understanding of justice?

(Here are a few passages referenced by Pastor Curtis: Exodus 22:16-23:9, Proverbs 31:8-9, Psalm 146:7-9, Jeremiah 22:3, and Zechariah 7:9-10; For additional resources, consider Tim Keller's *Generous Justice* or Redeemer Presbyterian's 2018 Formed for Justice Conference (currently free for download at gospelinlife.com)

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PRAY

Consider using our corporate confession from this past weekend's worship as you close your time together. Leave space between sections for reflection and your own own prayers:

We confess that we have watered down Your truth for our own comfort and convenience. We confess that we resist submitting our hearts to Truth when it challenges our preconceived notions. Merciful God, forgive us.

We confess that it's easier to hold up my [good intentions, good works, gentleness towards others, color blindness] than to admit that systemic sin is carried out [performed] by people just like me. We often choose blindness over sight. Merciful God, forgive us.

We repent of the lens that we approach Your Word with that has caused us to omit the core principle of righteous justice. Remove the scales from our eyes, so we can see Your heart more clearly. Merciful God, forgive us.

We know that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:39)