

JUSTICE & MERCY: THE TRUTH OF JESUS

SCRIPTURE & SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE = JUNE 21

OPEN

1. This conversation can be so overwhelming given the sheer scope and significance of it all. What is one way over this past week—however small it may seem—that you have sought to stay engaged with or even apply what Pastor Curtis has been preaching on?

Last week, we reflected on key theological concepts from the Old Testament (e.g., creation, the image of God, and sin) to our conversation on race, justice, and mercy. This week, Pastor Curtis led us to consider key aspects of Jesus's message and ministry. Curtis mentioned many passages in the Gospels, but several in particular were emphasized in shaping our understanding of justice and mercy:

- Luke 4:16-20 — Jesus's First "Sermon" and "Mission Statement"
- Luke 14:13-21 — Jesus & The Patronage System
- Matthew 23:23 — "The Weightier Matters of the Law"
- Luke 10:25-37 — The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Spend some time reading through these passages before jumping into the discussion.

DISCUSS

2. From these passages (and other points from the sermon), what do we learn about Jesus's heart and concern for the vulnerable, marginalized, and outcast?
3. When reading the Bible, Pastor Curtis warned us to be aware of false dichotomies—of separating the physical from the spiritual, and the religious from the social and political.
 - a. How does Jesus distinguish these aspects of life without separating them?
 - b. How should the nature of God's kingdom as both already and not yet impact the way we engage culture in matters of race and justice?
4. Pastor Curtis has challenged us to consider the nature of our privilege(s) and power. How does Jesus's teaching in Luke 14:13-21 challenge the way you think about and steward your own resources and relationships? How else have you thought about privilege and power when it comes to matters of justice and mercy?
5. With the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus pushed back against the man's limited perspective on what loving God and loving our neighbors involved.
 - a. How are you being stretched to reconsider what it means to love your neighbor—especially those of a different race and ethnicity?
 - b. As expressed in the parable, mercy is expressed through costly actions that almost always involved a risk of some kind. How do you sense the Spirit leading you to "Go, and do likewise" (v. 37)?

PRAY

Ask the Lord to search our hearts that any apathy, self-protection, or bitterness would be exposed. Pray for a renewed sense of grace and the Spirit's power to continue boldly pressing into these areas of race, justice, and mercy. Pray for the clarity and conviction to not follow Jesus through sacrificial acts of mercy to our neighbors.