

Serving Communities in Mercy and Justice

Isaiah 58:1-14



Review of Core Values

Love God

Build the Church

Reach the World

By planting churches locally and abroad

By serving communities in mercy and justice



A Closer Look at Isaiah 58:1-14

- A bold call to listen (1)
- Privatized spirituality and request for personal justice (2)
- Their question and the prophet's response (3-5)
- The call to true spirituality (6-14)



Overview of Biblical reasons we ought to be concerned for mercy/justice?

The consequences of the Fall - Genesis 3-11

The commands of the Law - Deuteronomy 10:18-19

The call of the Poets and Prophets - Job 31:16-23/Micah 6:8

The teaching and example of Jesus - Matthew 23:23

The teaching and example of the Apostles - Galatians 6:10

The standard of the final Judgement - Matthew 25:31-46

The promise of the World to come - Revelation 21:1-4; 27



The Two Most Important Motivators for Mercy/Justice

The **Character of God**

God identifies with the poor, with those at the “bottom of the ladder” - this was unlike any other ancient religion

The **Gospel of God**

God intimately identifies with the poor, outcasts, and oppressed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ

He acts in both mercy and justice toward the Fallen

Our need to be motivated not by mere duty or guilt, but **beauty** (ex. music appreciation class)



“Where have we any command in the Bible laid down in stronger terms, and in a more peremptory urgent manner, than the command of giving to the poor?”

(Jonathan Edwards, The Duty of Charity to the Poor)

“there is a direct relationship between a person’s grasp and experience of God’s grace, and his or her heart for justice and the poor.”

(Timothy Keller, Generous Justice)



Qualification: The priority of the Gospel

Two possible ditches:

The drift into a “social gospel”

The drift into a “spiritualized gospel”

While we are to put a priority on the eternal needs of others, we are not to neglect the temporal needs of others



Applications to RBCN

Core Value - By serving **communities**

Not just the city, not just a particular community, but wherever we live, work, play, and worship

This is the reason for our inviting speakers from **Rescue1** (human trafficking), **PCN** (work and life programs), **Nashville Rescue Mission** (homeless and addictions) and **Cottage Cove** (underprivileged children)

We also need to pay attention to the current **racial/ethnic** issues, legitimate rights and dignity of **women**, the dignity and rights of the **unborn**



Applications to RBCN

Our desire to encourage and intermingle the varying gifts of Christ within His body and apply them in a variety of ways

Not everyone can/ought to do everything

Some things church-wide, other things individual

Examples from parenting...education...righteous laws... medical fields...engineering...building maintenance...real estate...etc.

The constant temptation to do these things merely to gain a paycheck or merely gaining converts



We do justice when we give all human beings their due as creations of God. Doing justice includes not only the righting of wrongs, but generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable.

This kind of life reflects the character of God. It consists of a broad range of activities, from simple fair and honest dealings with people in daily life, to regular, radically generous giving of your time and resources, to activism that seeks to end particular forms of injustice, violence, and oppression.

(Timothy Keller, Generous Justice)





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