

The 6:8 Assignment

Xenos Summer Institute | 7/14/16

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He has shown 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. - Micah 6:8

Are justice and mercy contradictory?

- Psalm 89:14 - *"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face"*

ACT JUSTLY

"justice" = mishpat = to treat people equitably

- Leviticus 24:22 - *"have the same rule of law [mishpat] for the foreigner as the native."*
- Deuteronomy 18:3 - *And this shall be the priests' due [mishpat] from the people, from those offering a sacrifice*
- Proverbs 31:9 *"Defend the rights [mishpat] of the poor and needy"*

Especially the "Quartet of the Vulnerable"
widows | orphans | immigrants | poor

Because of God's character

- Ps 33:5 - *He (the Lord) loves righteousness and justice*
- Ps 97:2 - *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.*
- Ps 106:3 - *The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.*
- Ps 146:7-9 - *(the Lord) executes justice for the oppressed, and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless...*

Working definition of justice = making wrong things right.

Our place in the Meta-Narrative

creation | fall | redemption | restoration

Justice is personal

“Justice is not an abstraction, a value. Justice exists in relation to a person, and is something done by a person. An act of injustice is condemned, not because the law is broken, but because a person has been hurt. God doesn’t love justice, God loves people.” - Abraham Heshel, from The Prophets

LOVE MERCY

“mercy” = hesed = God’s unconditional compassion

Because of God’s character

- Ezra 9:13 - *What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us far less than our sins have deserved...*
- Ps 103 - *The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love... He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgression from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*
- Micah 7:18 - *Who is a God like you, who pardons sins and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*
- Hebrews 4:16 - *Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with fullest confidence, that we may receive mercy for our failures and grace to help in the hour of need.*

Working definition of mercy - loving people beyond what they deserve

Example of Jesus | Matthew 25

- hungry and thirsty - emergency relief
- strangers –friendship / advocacy
- naked – basic needs
- sick - comprehensive care
- prisoners - comfort / encouragement

Justice and Mercy need Each Other

“Divorced they (justice and mercy) become deformed. Mercy without justice degenerates into dependency and entitlement, preserving the power of the giver over the recipient. Justice without mercy grows cold and impersonal, more concerned about rights than relationships. The addict needs both food and treatment. The young woman needs both a safe place to sleep and a way out of her entrapping lifestyle. Street kids need both friendship and jobs.” - Robert Lupton, from Toxic Charity

WALK HUMBLY

Humbly = tsana – humility with a purpose

1 Corinthians 4:7 - *What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?*

James 4:6 - *God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.*

6:8 Assignment: the church

1. Redemptively engage culture

2. Step into the mess

6:8 Assignment: individual Christians

1. Overcome APATHY

2. Increase AWARENESS

3. Take ACTION

What is your 6:8 Assignment? _____

Sources and Additional Reading

- When Helping Hurts by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert
- The Prophets by Abraham J Heschel
- Generous Justice by Tim Keller
- Toxic Charity – by Robert Lupton
- Unfinished by Richard Stearns