

Lake Highlands Church

Sunday Assembly Reflection – 1/4/15

RECAP: Jim reminded us on Sunday about God's great passion for justice. In fact, the Lord God is on fire about it! As His people, God wants us to also pursue the kingdom values summed up by the prophet Micah: "do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God." Instead, we too often defend our own convictions and fail to show compassion. We label the very people we should be bringing to God, or "priesting." We listen to politicians and pundits who agree with our worldview rather than take time to hear what King Jesus says.

I was challenged by Jim's comment: "Justice is created by the grace of God through Jesus, which causes you to live a big life." Far too often, I live a very small life, showing favor to those I like and who are like me, and investing my energies in those whom I feel are "deserving," or at the very least, appreciative of my efforts. But the grace of Jesus I have experienced should compel me to move beyond "me" and pursue loving everyone well. That takes Jesus in me. And, it includes thinking long and hard about what Jesus says about violence, oppression, poverty and powerlessness.

REFLECTION: (Pick one of the questions below to answer in your small groups, or more if you have time. Be sure to pray for each other at the end).

Jim said we should stop "attacking the messenger" when we disagree with someone on an issue. Think of someone with whom you sometimes disagree. How do rhetoric and arguments get in the way of hearing one another? How might you begin to engage this person in honest conversation?

On which justice issues (i.e. deliverance of the poor and powerless from injustice, restoring the outcast and the refugee, stopping military violence) do you need to hear from Jesus?

Why does the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins describe a man who does justice as one who "keeps grace"?

Pray to be able to see that everyone longs for God. Ask God for a richer understanding of His grace. Then ask Him for ways to love others well by promoting justice in the world.