



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE
for the Sermon given on January 16, 2022,
"And Justice for All" — Isaiah 42:1-9



The hope of the series of Promiseland is to identify the promises and problems the people of God face. The series is rooted in the book of Isaiah, and will be examining the context of the children of Israel in exile. While we modern day Westerners have not been exiled in this way, many have us felt the cultural ground move beneath our feet and a sense of cultural displacement over the years. As we consider our context, let us also consider the promises that God has made to his people, particularly as we approach the necessary of racial justice this Martin Luther King Jr. weekend.

Group Discussion Questions

Q – What thoughts and feelings went through your mind during Pastor Bryan's intro as he told the story of the passing of the oldest World War 2 veteran, Lawrence Brooks, who was denied the same American GI benefits that his white counterparts received? Lawrence was among 1 million black veterans who came back from serving their country and did not receive tuition reimbursement, mortgage approval and other benefits. As a result, many missed out on the economic boom that generation received post-World War 2.

Q – Let's read and examine the Biblical vision of justice in Is. 42:1-9. It might help to slowly read it out loud and then a time or two personally and silently to meditate on it before discussing.

The first four verses are describing a “Messiah” that Isaiah’s audience have never seen or will live long enough to have met. Imagine that for a few moments ...

- ... How do you think your faith would have felt if it hinged on believing in the promise of a coming Messiah?
- We live in imagining the promise of Jesus fulfilled in his earthly ministry 2000 years ago, and placing our faith in our own personal experience with the Lord. We also live holding to the promises in the New Testament that he is coming again. How can we relate to living imagining the promises kept then and also yet to be fulfilled?
- What are our distinctions from Isaiah and his original audience, and what do we have in common?

Q – Bryan pointed out the word “justice” was used 3 times in the first 4 verses in describing the coming Messiah. Verse 2 uses the term “bruised reed” to symbolize the people who have been beaten up by life and those who have been marginalized. The “smoldering wick” describes the hopes and promises of that are at risk of being extinguished but can be fanned back aflame again. The Old Testament vision of justice is “*mishpat*” – meaning “everything done and being put right.” What comes to your mind of the imagery of the “bruised reed” and the “smoldering wick” and God’s vision for *mishpat*?

Q – The term justice has become politicized. And while we could spend countless hours speculating why and how, the better use of our time and energy for us Jesus followers would be to ask how can we reclaim the Biblical vision of justice and allow it to flourish in our churches and throughout our society?

Q – Pastor Jeanette interviewed Vivian Maburi and Ed Ollie, both Christian leaders in the church. When asked about some of the painful racial moments they faced, Ollie, a pastor described a board meeting where he felt his race was used against him, and Vivian, a speaker and writer, told a story of an encounter in a restroom with an older white woman using intentionally broken English to find out if she was Chinese. (You have to hear the story for yourself to feel the full cringe). Can you describe your empathy that you felt as they were sharing their experiences?

As the interview continued, Jeanette asked what can people do to live out the vision of racial justice

Ed answered there were three things we could do to challenge “the global excuse of busyness”:

1. **Stay curious** by reading and learning the experiences of those different from you? And further, what does it mean to be in “relational conversation with someone that is close and different than you?
2. **Become a better listener** by taking the time to get to know people by asking good questions (because that leads to deeper trust).
3. **Place yourself in a situation where you are in the minority to learn.**

Vivian encouraged her non-Asian friends to read widely and to **put yourself under the leadership of a person of color**. She further emphasized that “defensive people cannot

empathize in order to be humble learners.” For her Asian brothers and sisters, she gave the encouragement to learn to **speak up**.

While there is a lot of practical wisdom there to unpack, identify a place to start and consider what resonates most with you today?

Q – Bryan’s big takeaway was “God’s promise of justice someday compels us to work for justice today” – How can we as individual Christ followers **and** us a Christian community live out God’s promise for justice today?

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don’t feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team.