

**Racial Injustice in America (Part 1)—
Thinking Biblically about the Issue:
Why Should We Care?**

--CEFC 11/8/20

I grew up in the 1960s.

That was a period of great upheaval in this country in all sorts of areas.

We went through the Vietnam War,

the sexual revolution,

the counter-culture hippie movement,

and it was especially transformative in the area of race.

The Civil Rights movement was largely led by pastors from the Black church,

and most notably, Dr. Martin Luther King,

and they called this country to live up to

its own biblical ideals of compassion, equality, and justice.

And through their own courageous acts and personal sacrifice and suffering,

great progress was made in overcoming the cruel discrimination

that had existed in housing, employment,

and all sorts of public services and accommodations.

The Civil Rights Acts of 1964¹

offered a new day of long-overdue legal protection for African Americans.

Before that time, it was legal in this country to exclude them

¹ Signed into law on July 2, 1964.

from restaurants and hotels,
and they were even given separate restrooms and water fountains.
That was in my lifetime.

My father served as Attorney General in Florida at the time,
and it was his job to see that the rights of protesters were protected,
and that the new civil rights laws were enforced.

And I was in high school when our schools were first racially integrated
through forced bussing,
and that did not happen without conflict and even violence in our school.
It was tumultuous, to say the least.

Issues related to race run deep in my experience.

In fact, the racial bigotry that I saw in many church-goers in my childhood
is one of the things that kept me from wanting to become a Christian.

I don't think we are at quite the same level of turmoil as in the 1960s,
but certainly, in the last few years,
the video recordings of the shooting of certain Black men by White policemen
has kindled the feelings of discrimination and prejudice
that are very much a part of the African-American experience,
and a new wave of protest with a demand for change
has swept over our country.

What are we to think of all this?

How are we to respond to it?

This is something that your pastors and elders have been discussing,

and more than anything we want to view what is happening around us,
and determine how we respond to it,
through the lens of Scripture—
as we seek the mind of Christ.

We don't want to be captive to the culture, as we talked about last week.

We don't want to simply reflect the one-sided spin
that our social media platforms and cable news channels feed us 24/7.

We want to be discerning,
avoiding the echo chambers and our bias-confirming bubbles
that lock us into our own little tribes
where we see everyone who agrees with us as **righteous**
and everyone who disagrees as **evil**.

We can do better,

We should approach these issues in a distinctively Christian manner.

Above all, we want to respond as followers of Jesus.

That doesn't mean we will all agree on everything,
and I certainly don't think that I or any of us has all the answers,
but I do hope that we can at least think as Christians
and not simply as political partisans.

We want to be like the men of the tribe of Issachar

“who understood the times, and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chr. 12:32).

So our elders have asked me to help us all consider

how we ought to think about issues of racial justice in this country,
and how we ought to respond to those issues.

As those of you on our weekly pastoral email list know,
in consultation with the elders,
I have been writing on this topic,
which has forced me to learn and think a lot about all this,
and now they have asked me to preach on it also.

So that is my task—this week and the next—

How are we to respond to the issue of racial injustice in our country?

This is not easy—people can look at these issues in all sorts of ways.

I recognize that I look at these issues as an old White guy
with my own experience and perspective.

And your experience may be very different
which may influence your viewpoint.

I get that.

So before I continue, I think it would be good for us to pray--

My deepest heart desire for our church

is that we be gospel people, united in a gospel-centered church.

I pray that we not only believe the gospel,

and proclaim the gospel,

but that we also live out the gospel.

My prayer is that our relationship with Jesus Christ by the Spirit

will issue in loving obedience to all that God calls us to be.

That is what will testify to the world that Jesus has truly come from the Father,

and that is what will bring honor and glory to God.

Article 8 of our SOF, which we read earlier, says it well—

“We believe that God’s justifying grace”—

that grace by which we are pronounced not guilty before God

through the atoning death of Christ on our behalf—

“God’s justifying grace must not be separated

from his sanctifying power and purpose.”

In other words, we believe that gospel has power

to transform us into the image of Christ,

and that transformation is his glorious purpose for us—

that is what we are saved for,

for that is what will reflect back to God

his own goodness and glory.

As we saw in Paul’s words to the Colossians—

Col. 1:28—Paul says, **“We proclaim Christ so that we may present every person**

complete, mature, perfect in him.”

The gospel necessarily entails a new community—the church;

We are to be a church community of grace and truth.

And the gospel also entails a new way of life—

reflecting the life of Christ himself.

And supremely, that new life—the life of Christ working in and through us—
must be a life of love.

When Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment,
he said,

**‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul
and with all your mind.’**

This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: **‘Love your neighbor as yourself’** (Matt. 22:37-39).

And that Great Commandment is spelled out in our Statement of Faith this way:

**“God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially,
and to live out our faith with care for one another,
compassion toward the poor,
and justice for the oppressed.”**

We are to love one another within our church family—

**“Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit
through the bond of peace”** (Eph. 4:3).

And we are to love our neighbor outside our church family

with **“compassion toward the poor,
and justice for the oppressed.”**

That’s what I want us to reflect on this morning—

for this is why we ought to care about the situation

of so many African Americans in this country.

A history of racial discrimination and oppression

has resulted in a persistent and appalling poverty among many.

Many African-Americans feel like second class citizens in this country,

and that ought not to be.

The gospel calls us to approach their plight with compassion,

and to seek justice on their behalf.

That is my central message for these two weeks.

But this morning I think it is important that we first lay down

some fundamental theological principles

that provide the foundation for our thinking.

Then I want to look at little more closely at the biblical notion of justice—

which is critical to this discussion.

So first, four theological truths—

I begin with the one that is foundational--

All human beings are created in God's image

and, therefore, all human beings are to be treated with dignity.

Our worth is not determined by our wealth or our power or our social position.

Our skin color or any other physical characteristic

makes no difference in the honor we owe to one another.

The fact that we are created in God's image is what unites us as human beings,

and it is what separates us from all other creatures.

As Job puts it,

“Did not he who made me in the womb make them?

Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?” (31:15).

We honor God by honoring his image.

In his letter, James speaks of the evil inconsistency of the tongue:

with it **"we praise our Lord and Father,**

and with it we curse human beings,

who have been made in God's likeness" (3:9).

What the Proverbs says about rich and poor applies equally to Black and White:

“Rich and poor have this in common:

The LORD is the Maker of them all” (Prov. 22:2).

“Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker,

but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.” (Prov. 14:31).

We cannot hate the image and say we love the One it represents.

Biblical justice is grounded in this foundational principle

that every human being possesses a divine sacredness

in virtue of their creation as God’s image—

a sacredness that must be recognized and honored.

Racism, which is the explicit or implicit feeling or belief or practice

that values one race over other races,

or devalues one race beneath others,²

is a direct violation of this fundamental biblical truth.

That's the first principle.

The second is this--

According to the Bible,

human beings are not only creatures of great dignity.

Because we have turned away from God,

we are also creatures corrupted by our sin.

If racism is wrong because of our human dignity,

racism exists because of our human depravity.

None of our motives is entirely pure,

and none of our intentions is completely praiseworthy.

Sin pervades our entire personality,

as we are "curved in upon ourselves," full of self-centered pride.

This human depravity is the soil

in which the seeds of group hostility sprout and blossom.

In our pride we put ourselves above others

and we form in-group prejudices against those who are "other."

We exalt ourselves and consider others as inferior;

we excuse ourselves and condemn others;

² Using the definition given by John Piper (<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/structural-racism>)

we look after our own interests first,
and disregard the interests of others.

We find this in every culture among every people.

In America, as a result of slavery,
this sin has taken on a particularly “racial” form,
with white and black skin providing sharp dividing lines of group identity.

We as Christians ought to be the first to recognize that because of our depravity,
we are all vulnerable to the sin of racism.

It is “natural” to us as fallen sinners.

Therefore, we must approach this subject with great humility.

We will have our own blind spots (as have Christians of the past),
so we need the eyes of others
to see what we do not (or do not want) to see.

And we must be quick to take the log out of our own eye
before condemning others.

This is not an easy thing to do.

We also recognize that any solution to this problem
that does not take into account this universal human depravity
will ultimately fall far short.

This understanding of human depravity is critical.

And we must recognize that sin has not only affected our own hearts,
it has also affected our social and political structures,
creating injustices and oppression that give evil an institutional power.

We should not be surprised by this—

power often corrupts,

and those in power tend to act to preserve their positions of power.

Sinful human pride is woven into our every institution.

That's why the Bible calls "the world" an evil system in its hostility to God

that must be overcome (1 John 5:4).

This understanding of the breadth and depth of human depravity,

coupled with an understanding of the malevolent power

of demonic forces at work in our world,

lead to the conclusion that the evil of individual racism

can find expression in the injustice of societal structures.

How could it not?

Slavery itself was such a structure.

Whole cultures can be corrupt in various ways.

I think of Hollywood culture with its licentious sexuality, as an example.

As a result, any strategy to address the injustice of racism in America

must address it at both the individual and structural levels.

We must ask,

What are the structures that tend to perpetuate the effects of past prejudices?

Human beings, created by God in his image with an intrinsic dignity,

are also characterized by immense depravity

that affects every aspect of human life.

These twin truths provide both the reason that racism exists in our world,

and the supreme ground for opposing it as a great evil.

We must address this issue with both of these realities firmly rooted in our thinking.

But we must introduce another biblical theme.

God has entered into this fallen world in his Son Jesus Christ.

In Christ we see the fullness of God's grace,
forgiving rebellious sinners.

In the light of such grace, we need not be fearful
of facing the sometimes ugly truth about ourselves
and our national and church history.

After all, to receive God's grace,
we must first acknowledge our sin and repent,
but we can do so with the confidence that God's mercy is greater than our sin.

And in Christ, we see God's power to redeem and reconcile.

If our creation as God's image
gives us a point of unity with all humanity,
our new creation in Christ creates an even greater unity
with our fellow brothers and sisters in the body of Christ
from every nation, tribe, people, and language.

In our life together in the church,
we are called to demonstrate to the world
a reconciling power that goes beyond anything the world can provide.

One final biblical theme has great relevance to this discussion.

Our great God—mysteriously one God in three divine Persons—

has created a world of rich diversity.

And the one body of Christ is to encompass the rich diversity of people

from every nation, tribe, people, and language.

Our ethnic and cultural differences are not erased when we are united to Christ;

they are redeemed and subsumed into a higher unity.

And the less socially and racially homogeneous the church is,

the more it displays the supernatural power of the gospel to bring unity.

My natural inclination is to want be with people like me—

those who share my values, my preferences, my opinions, my life experiences.

But the church is to be a body of many members,

each with its own distinctive contribution for the well-being of the whole.

A church must have a fundamental unity in the gospel,

but if we are all too much alike in other ways,

we diminish the way the fullness of Christ is to be displayed

through the varied gifts within the body

and its various cultural expressions.

We ought to embrace the divine design of unity with diversity.

Human dignity,

human depravity,

God's redeeming grace,

and his design of unity and diversity--

these are but a few of many biblical themes

that demonstrate that we as Christians have great resources
for addressing the racial divide in our country.

But I want to turn now more specifically to the theme of justice.

This is important because we can come at this subject
with very different conceptions about that we mean by the term.

What does the Bible teach us about God's view of justice?

The Hebrew word for "justice," *mishpat*,

occurs in its various forms more than 200 times in the Old Testament.

It contains the notion of a judgment, usually with a sense of its fitness and equity.

More broadly, it has the sense of giving people what they are due,
whether punishment or protection or care.³

This word is closely coupled with another—"righteousness" (*tzedakah*),
which involves conforming to a standard.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, for example,

these two words are found in parallel in the same verse 16 times.⁴

In the Bible, true religion requires doing what is righteous and just
because that describes the character of God—

Psa. 33:5--"The LORD loves righteousness and justice;"

³On this subject I draw heavily on Tim Keller, "What is Biblical Justice?"

<https://relevantmagazine.com/god/practical-faith/what-biblical-justice>TIM KELLER

⁴They also occur together nine times in Ezekiel.

Psa. 36:6--"Your righteousness [O LORD] is like the highest mountains,
your justice like the great deep."

Psa. 50:6--"the heavens proclaim his righteousness,
for he is a God of justice."

Since God displays himself in his creation,
both terms also refer to the way things ought to be in God's world.
They speak, especially, of right relationships with God and among people.

The biblical writers declare God's righteousness and justice
and demand that any religion without these qualities
is an abomination to the Lord.

For example, Prov. 21:3—

"To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice."

Or in Isaiah:

"Stop bringing meaningless offerings!

Your incense is detestable to me. . . .

Learn to do right; seek justice" (Is. 1:13,17). /

Biblical law is a reflection of the just and righteous character of God,
and in it we see a number of key principles of biblical justice.

1. First, biblical Justice assumes that transgression deserves a just punishment.

We are moral agents, and we will be held accountable for our moral choices.

The Bible displays God as a righteous Judge,

and his moral authority is to be reflected in human affairs.

Justice entails giving the transgressor his due—

such that his punishment fits the crime.

This is the thrust of the often misunderstood principle:

“an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.”

This was never taken literally,

and, in fact, it was meant to protect the criminal

from a disproportionate punishment.

Justice demands that the severity of the punishment fits the crime—

no more, no less.

Biblical law made no provision for imprisonment,

so usually the criminal had to make things right with the victim

through some form of compensation or restitution (e.g., Ex. 22:3-14).

2. Second, Biblical Justice Requires that Everyone be Treated Equally Under the Law.

The equal treatment of every person under the law,

what is called “procedural justice,”

is deeply embedded in Biblical law:

Lev. 24:22--“You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born.”

Lev. 19:15 --“Do not pervert justice;

do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great,

but judge your neighbor fairly.”

In particular, the practice of bribery, widely condemned in the Bible,⁵

clearly undermines this principle,

because it provides special treatment for those with wealth.

In his New Testament letter, James is adamant that the wealthy

must not receive preferential treatment in the life of the church (Jam. 2:1ff).

3. Third, as a qualification of what I've just said,

Biblical Justice Gives Some People Special Protection.

Procedural justice demands equal treatment before the law,

but there is more to justice than that.

Legal equality can still be blind to social inequality.

As one writer cynically observed,

"In its majestic equality, the law forbids rich and poor alike

to sleep under bridges,

beg in the streets,

and steal loaves of bread."⁶

Laws may apply to everyone in the same way,

but they do not affect everyone in the same way.

This is a fallen world, and the reality is that the legal structures

that govern our common life are created by those with power,

and they tend to be structures that inevitably tilt in their favor.

⁵ e.g., Prov. 17:23; 2 Chron. 19:6,7

⁶ French author [Anatole France](#) in 1894, *The Red Lily*, [Chapter VII](#).

The Bible is very sensitive to the inequalities that can exist
through the imbalances of wealth and power,
resulting in a distortion of "distributive justice,"
that is, a fair distribution of the world's goods.

The Bible acknowledges that there are many factors that may affect
how much of life's goods a person may receive—
including a person's own effort,
their moral choices,
and the degree to which they live wisely.
All of these may affect the distribution of goods.

But another of these factors is injustice.

We see, for example, in Prov. 13:23—

**"A poor man's field may produce abundant food,
but injustice sweeps it away."**

Justice demands that we treat everyone the same,
but, because of the imbalance of power resulting in injustice in the world,
God puts himself on the side of the poor and the powerless.
God himself will be their advocate and defender.

This is a powerful theme in the Proverbs:

Prov. 22:22,23—"Do not exploit the poor because they are poor
and do not crush the needy in court,
for the Lord will take up their case
and will plunder those who plunder them."

Prov. 23:10-11—"Do not move an ancient boundary stone
or encroach on the fields of the fatherless,
for their Defender is strong;
he will take up their case against you."

To mistreat the poor is to mistreat God himself:

Prov. 14:31—"He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker,
but whoever is kind to the needy honors God."

This concern for the poor and the powerless is affirmed across the Biblical canon.

In the prophets, Zechariah declares—

"This is what the LORD Almighty says:

'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.

Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless,

the foreigner, or the poor" (Zech. 7:9-10).

And Isaiah says,

Is. 1:17—"Learn to do right; seek justice.

Defend the oppressed.

Take up the cause of the fatherless;

plead the case of the widow."

In the Psalms we read,

" the LORD secures justice for the poor

and upholds the cause of the needy" (Ps. 140:12).

In the Law of Moses—

“Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin” (Deut. 24:14-15; cf. 10:17,18).⁷

James tells us that **"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this:
to look after orphans and widows in their distress
and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world"** (James 1:27).

And Jesus condemned that rich man who lived in luxury every day
and ignored the beggar Lazarus who lay at his gate (Luke 16:19-31).

Our God is a God who gives special protection to the weak and powerless.

This is who God is;

this is how he is to be known:

Psa. 68:4,5—**"Sing to God, sing praise to his name, . . .**

his name is the LORD—

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,

is God in his holy dwelling."

Widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor—

these are the vulnerable in society, those with no material or social power.

To that list, we may include the elderly, the disabled,

the unborn, the immigrant, the minority, or the mistreated.

Because of their vulnerable social status,

⁷Cf. also Lev. 19:13; Mal. 3:5; Job 31:13-15; Ps. 10:14; 12:5; 14:6; 146:7; Prov. 3:27-28; James 5:1-6.

God himself pledges to be their protector.

His justice requires it, because, as one writer put it,

“Injustice is not equally distributed.”⁸

4. Fourth, Biblical Justice includes material provisions for the poor.

In the Bible, equal justice under the law did not require an equal distribution of wealth, but Israel did have laws specifically designed to protect the poor and to provide at least a minimal amount of material support.

The law of gleaning, for example, prevented a landowner from harvesting to the very edges of his field, so that poor people could come in and forage food for themselves.

The law requiring the cancelation of debts every seven years (Dt. 15:1-3), enabled an Israelite to get out from an oppressive burden of debt.

And the law of the Jubilee, a kind of bankruptcy law, required that every fifty years land ownership be returned to its original owner who had lost it to debt (Lev. 25).

These laws of the state mitigated some of the worst aspects of poverty and provided some form of social safety net.

5. Finally, Biblical Justice includes generosity and mercy.

In the Bible, justice is not just a legal term, related to the court and the laws of the state.

⁸ Nicholas Wolterstorff, cited in Keller, *Generous Justice*, p. 7.

It is also a social term, related to our righteous interactions with other people.
Justice is about the right ordering of the world—

giving people what is their due,
so it includes kindness and generosity,
sharing with those in need.

Biblical justice includes mercy and what we might call charity.

In a strict understanding of procedural justice, no one “deserves” mercy,
but that doesn’t mean I am not obligated to show mercy.
My obligation to show mercy does not come from the person to whom it is shown
but from the God who has shown mercy to me.

We see this often in the Old Testament—

Ex. 23:9--“**Do not oppress a foreigner;
you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners,
because you were foreigners in Egypt.**”

The Lord had mercy on the Israelites when they were foreigners in Egypt,
so they had an obligation to show mercy to foreigners in their midst.

Didn’t Jesus use the same logic in that parable of the unmerciful servant (Mt. 18:21-35)?

Because that servant had been forgiven a huge debt,
wasn’t he obligated to forgive his own servant’s debt?

The mercy he had received bound him to show mercy to others.

Justice required it.

That’s why our understanding of the grace of the gospel

should lead us to be champions of justice and mercy,
especially toward those who are poor or marginalized.

In the gospel, the recognition of our spiritual poverty and alienation
ought to open our hearts toward those who are materially poor or socially outcast.

Jesus entered into my spiritual poverty,
when I was undeserving of his grace,
when I had turned my back on him,
spurning his love, living as my own king—
and he acted in mercy toward me,
even as he satisfied God's justice in dying for my sin.

Now, as a recipient of that mercy,
I am justly obligated before God to act with mercy toward others.
How can I not?

That's what justice ultimately entails—
to "do justice" means to bring about human flourishing as God intended it;
it means restoring the right relations
that make for God's peace, his *shalom*.

As Tim Keller puts it, "to 'do justice' means to go to places
where the fabric of shalom has broken down,
where the weaker members of societies fall through the fabric and to repair it."⁹

Justice, then, means giving a person what they are due—
as those created in God's image,
as those for whom God cares.

⁹ Keller, *Generous Justice*, p. ??.

So the just treatment of people can include both penalty and protection,
chastisement and care.

It is about right relations among people—

Justice is necessarily “social.”

And in God’s world,

a right relationship of justice necessarily includes mercy.

The social dimensions of biblical justice suggest that

“doing justice” involves more than just our individual interactions
with other individuals.

To illustrate, consider what may be involved in seeking justice for the unborn.

I could say that if I don’t have an abortion myself (or encourage someone to have one),
then I am acting justly.

But the Bible calls for more.

In Proverbs, for example, we read:

**“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.**

**Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Prov. 31:8-9).**

My opposition to abortion rightly leads me to address

some of the social aspects that promote the practice.

I may seek to change the values of the culture related to sexual immorality
and the value of marriage.

I may support agencies like Assist that provide help for those women
who may feel unprepared or ill-equipped to care for a baby.

And I may seek to lobby government officials to change laws
to limit the availability of abortion.
All of these are aspects of seeking "social justice" for a vulnerable group of people—
babies in the womb.

It's true, the term "social justice" has acquired various connotations in our culture,
that conjure up particular political and social agendas.
Some may avoid the term for that reason.

But I think Christians can rightly use this term to describe
the social dimensions of biblical justice.
We engage in social justice whenever we seek moral reform of our society
in ways that ensure that no group is dealt with unjustly
and every person is treated with dignity and given their due—
as those created in God's image
and as those whom God loves.

Those whom God loves should be those whom we love—
that's why we should care about racial justice in America.

The Great Commandment—
to love God and love our neighbor,
entails the Great Requirement voiced by the prophet Micah--

*He has shown you, O mortal, 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. (Mic. 6:8) /

These are some of the theological principles that ought to guide our thinking.

Next week we will seek to apply them to our contemporary situation,

as we consider the painful legacy of race-based slavery in this country

and how we might respond to the injustice that has resulted from it.

Prayer—

Lord, I confess my fear is that I might be like the priest and the Levite in Jesus' parable

who saw the injured man on the road

and walked by on the other side.

May we be like that good Samaritan—who crossed the cultural barriers of his day

to display real love for his neighbor.

Lord, help us *To act justly and to love mercy*

and to walk humbly with our God. (Mic. 6:8)

Closing Song: a new song sung to a familiar tune—

God, with Joy We Look Around Us sung to "Angels from the Realms of Glory" – organ

Benediction:

Phil. 1:9-11 [May] your love may abound more and more

in knowledge and depth of insight,

so that you may be able to discern what is best

and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,
filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ --
to the glory and praise of God.

Nov. 8, 2020

**Racial Injustice in America (Part 1)—
Thinking Biblically about the Issue:
Why Should We Care?
(Micah 6:8)**

In a time of upheaval in our culture, we need to think biblically. This week and next we will be looking at the issue of racial injustice in our nation, and how we ought to respond. This week, we focus on how we ought to think about these issues, so that we might be like the men of the tribe of Issachar “who understood the times, and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chr. 12:32).

I. Our Great Motivation:

The Great Commandment

Love of neighbor requires

compassion toward the poor

and justice for the oppressed.

II. Key Theological Principles

A. Human Dignity

B. Human Depravity

C. God's Redemptive Grace

D. God's Desire for Unity in Diversity

III. Principles of Biblical Justice

A. Retributive Punishment

B. Equal Treatment

C. Special Protection

D. Provision for the Poor

E. Mercy and Generosity

The Great Requirement:

*"He has shown you, O mortal, 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." (Mic. 6:8)*

*Our Reception of the Gospel
Is Reflected in Our Treatment of Others*

Sermon Response:

Racial Injustice in America (Part 1)—

Thinking Biblically about the Issue:

Why Should We Care?

(Micah 6:8)

•Issues related to racial justice can be very sensitive, and they must be treated with great humility. Pray that the Lord gives you humble hearts as you engage in this discussion. Seek to listen well.

•What experiences in your life have influenced the way you think about racial issues in this country?

•What biblical principles do you find most significant as you think about how you ought to think about racial issues? How does the gospel relate to these issues?

•We often think of justice in mere procedural terms—we must simply treat everyone the same. How does the Bible broaden that understanding when it speaks of God as the defender of the poor and oppressed?

•Why does God put himself on the side of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner? What should that mean for us?

•Why does the Bible speak of mercy and generosity as aspects of justice?

•What do you understand by the term “social justice”? Why is it sometimes controversial? How should we understand that term?

- Pray for a humble and obedient heart as you reflect on the message of Micah 6:8.