

Is “Social Justice” Biblical Justice? (Part 2)

Selected Scriptures

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I’ve entitled last week and today’s messages, Is “Social Justice” Biblical Justice? Our culture has rejected the biblical teaching about the sin of racism and at the same time rejected the biblical solution and has embraced instead the social justice movement with its Marxist philosophy. We’re looking at this together so we can understand it and respond appropriately. Now, last time we began by looking at a functional definition, what does it teach? I’m not going to cover these points in any length, so if you missed last week you need to go back and catch up, but let me just tell you where we went. We looked at a functional definition and at the heart of the social justice movement is the philosophy called the Critical Race Theory.

Secondly, we considered its philosophical formation, how did this idea develop? Well, it developed in three basic stages, beginning with Marxism. Karl Marx taught you have two basic categories, the oppressed and the oppressors. And it’s out of that philosophy that the second stage developed, and that was the Critical Theory or cultural Marxism. Again, based on classical Marxism, the Critical Theory taught, at the top are the privileged oppressors and at the bottom are the oppressed victims. That’s true in every culture in every setting. And you’re either in the empowered oppressors or you’re in the underprivileged oppressed.

Now, that developed then into a more specific form yet, and that is the Critical Race Theory or CRT, which I’ll refer to it that way just in the interest of time. In the Critical Race Theory the Critical Theory is applied specifically to race, sex, and gender. Now, last time we looked at this in detail, we examined this theory, and we concluded in the end that we must reject everything about this godless ideology. It’s redefinition of key words like justice and racism. It’s philosophical basis in pre-suppositions. It’s overt teaching. It’s wrong in identifying the problem and it’s wrong in the solution that it represents.

But where did it come from? Well, thirdly, we considered last time the spiritual foundations. What is its source? How did the social justice movement, with its Critical Race Theory, come into such prominence? Well, there were a couple of innocuous ways that I mentioned, or relatively innocuous. The first is, I think, it comes from the residual image of God and the

desire for justice. There is, in every human heart, that residual image of God, and therefore there is a misguided, flawed view of justice, but a desire for justice to be done nonetheless.

Secondly, there is a national sense of guilt for slavery. Now notice I didn't say objective guilt, but a subjective sense of guilt or shame you could even say. Some people don't understand this. If you grew up in certain sections of the country, you may not be aware of this sense of shame, but in places where slavery and the Jim Crow laws were especially prevalent, I assure you it's still very much a reality.

Then we went on to consider what is really at the heart of the spiritual foundation of this movement. Thirdly, we considered a sinful distortion of biblical justice. We learned that we are not personally guilty because we belong to a culture where certain sins predominate. And we considered Genesis 18 where Abraham has that conversation with God about the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. And God Himself acknowledged that there could be righteous people living in a culture that was overcome and overwhelmed with certain sins.

Secondly, we are not personally guilty because our ancestors sin. Ezekiel 18 is very clear about this reality. Instead, we will be judged solely by God's standard of justice and we saw this in Romans 2:6, "GOD WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS." The idea of collective guilt based on the sins of the people around me or the sins of those who lived before me is a violation of the basic standards of God's justice.

But really at the foundation of the Critical Race Theory and the social justice movement is a theological rejection of radical human depravity. The issue is not an economic system. The real location of racism, as we saw from several texts, is not in society or a political or economic system, but every fallen human heart and the real cause of racism is radical human depravity. Because we are by nature, apart from grace, prone to destroy relationships with everyone around us regardless of the reasons.

Now today we come to a fourth observation about the social justice movement and that is the cultural expressions. How is it trending? What does it look like around us? Well, there's so much that could be said here and I want to get to the biblical correction, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time here, but there are three main cultural expressions of the social justice

movement today as it is informed by the Critical Race Theory. First of all, there is academic indoctrination. This is really where it started. You remember, I told you last time that there were those Marxists who developed the Frankfurt school, eventually were chased from Germany by Hitler, ended up in 1935 at Columbia University, and began to indoctrinate their students with this and it spread across, in the following decades, across our country.

CRT has permeated the academic world and is now the prevailing system of thought taught to college students. Yes, probably even in your alma mater. William Jacobson, a Cornell Law School professor has created a list of more than 200 colleges and universities in the U.S that promote Critical Race Theory. But it doesn't stop in higher education. In elementary, middle, and high schools, and you've seen this, some of you have told me stories from your own families, that the administration and teachers in many schools even here are either intentionally teaching and promoting CRT, being systematically reeducated to embrace it, or in other cases are simply unwittingly embracing some of its key tenants but under the guise of different names like diversity and inclusion. According to Education Week website, which is not excited about this, is simply reporting it, as of the end of August, 27 states have, out of concern about how this is spreading through our educational system, 27 states have introduced bills or taken steps that would restrict teaching Critical Race Theory and 12 states have enacted bans either through direct legislation or other avenues.

A second cultural expression is cultural reeducation. This is how things always move through our world, right? They start at the academic level. The ideas are taught to the elite. They end up leading corporations and government and then they end up dispersing those ideas through the culture. That's what's happening with this idea. So the second expression is cultural reeducation. This reeducation is happening in government and in corporate America. It involves openly teaching CRT or teaching the same concepts as diversity, inclusion, or sensitivity. Many businesses, because their leadership were taught this, indoctrinated with this in their academic institutions or because of public pressure, many businesses have become outspoken supporters of the social justice movement and Critical Race Theory. Public statements, advertisements, and a systematic reeducation of employees. Again, several of you have mentioned to me what you have faced in your own workplace in these ways.

Owen Strachan, in his book *Christianity and Wokeness*, cites the now infamous example of a diversity training session caught on video in 2016 that went viral. The trainer, this diversity trainer, said to a room of women, many of them white, this: “All white people are racists. You are always going to be racist, even when you’re on a path to be a better human being. I believe all white people are born into not being human.” She finished by saying that white people grow up to be “demons.”

Now I think all of us who are followers of Jesus Christ understand how wrong that is, regardless of the context, regardless of what else you believe. But this is where things are going, this is the kind of reeducation culturally that’s happening both in government and in corporate America, as well as in the schools as I’ve already mentioned. Large international corporations even use their clout to punish states, cities, and other businesses that don’t support these ideologies.

The third expression, a little closer to home, is evangelical assimilation. The evangelical struggle with the social justice movement grew out of what many of you are familiar with and have heard about, the young, restless, and reformed movement. It was a Calvinistic resurgence in evangelicalism and there were many good things about it. But out of this group voices in that movement began, just a couple of years ago, to really champion ideas that were clearly influenced by the Critical Race Theory. In 2018, Matt Chandler of The Village delivered a lecture entitled, *A House Divided Cannot Stand: Understanding and Overcoming the Inconsistencies in White Evangelicals on Racial Issues*. He reflected in that address some of the ideas that we’ve talked about. Tibebe Anwabidle began to teach the CRT concept of collective guilt in that same year.

Also in 2018, at the Together for the Gospel Conference, and I and our staff, our pastoral staff, were there along with our wives, and David Platt delivered an opening message in the T4G conference in which he used Amos 5 to argue that evangelicals are guilty of systemic injustice. In 2018 Eric Mason wrote a book entitled *Woke Church: An Urgent Call for Christians in America to Confront Racism and Sin*. And then the next year, in 2019, Jemar Tisby wrote *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity in Racism*.

Now, all of that happened within a very short period of time. And in response to this aggressive promotion of the social justice movement in the church a group of our friends gathered here in

Dallas and wrote The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel, called the Dallas Statement. The key signers of that were John MacArthur, Voddie Baucham, and Tom Ascol; it was a response to this quick onslaught of what was happening in evangelicalism.

Also in 2019, and many of you are aware of this because of your Southern Baptist roots, at the annual Southern Baptist Convention this issue created a firestorm connected to Resolution 9. Now, if you've never heard of Resolution 9, or even if you have, let me tell you that it's not, it didn't start the way you think it started. It actually began as a Southern Baptist pastor's call for the SBC to reject CRT and cultural Marxism. That's how it began. But it was reshaped by progressives into a statement which actually affirmed the value of CRT as a helpful set of "analytical tools." Then in 2020, last year, the Council of Seminary Presidents of the SBC released a statement in which they repudiated CRT and, in essence, Resolution 9.

Now, I share all that history with you, just to have you get this point, evangelicalism has been infiltrated by and has assimilated much of the ideology of the social justice movement and CRT. Now don't misunderstand me, I am not accusing all of those whose names I have just mentioned of being cultural Marxists. I'm not even saying that all of them are consciously promoting CRT. However, I think what we do have to recognize, and I think it's apparent, is that many evangelicals are being influenced by this worldview. You can tell that's true by the definitions they use, by the organizations they support, by the views that they hold, by the methods that they are using to achieve those goals of what they call justice. So be alert.

At the same time, please be gracious. Not everyone who supports the social justice movement supports or even is aware of the Critical Race Theory. And not everyone who even claims to support the Critical Race Theory fully understands what it teaches or the godless philosophy on which it's based. So, so don't just start writing off everyone who uses the language of the social justice movement. Instead, be wise, listen carefully, critique wisely, and, let me add, graciously. First Corinthians 13 says love believes the best until there's evidence to the contrary. So don't be one of those Christians who reads a comment that somebody somewhere posted that one of your favorite teachers is now a raving CRTer and believe it and continue to promote it. Be gracious, wait and see if it's true. Wait and see. It could be true, but it may not be true. So please be careful.

If you want to read more about how CRT has permeated the evangelical church, I would encourage you to read Toby Smith's booklet, *The Rise of Woke Christianity: A Brief Introduction*; he documents that history. And there's also a helpful section in Voddie Baucham's book, *Fault Lines*, explaining how this unfolded in the SBC if you're interested in that.

Now, that's how it's expressing itself culturally. But I want to spend the rest of our time together focusing on what is really the key, and that is, the biblical correction. What is the truth? What does the Bible teach instead of the tenants of the social justice movement? It's so important for us to start with this question. My father-in-law, who I had for a number of classes before I met his daughter, taught theology for 50 years. He used to always say this, and it's so true, "The first question to your mind whenever you hear of anything is, what does the Bible say?" Who cares what the people around you say? What does God say in His Word? So let's consider that together.

What is the biblical correction to the social justice movement with its Critical Race Theory? Well, first of all, the Bible would say this, the real problem is sin. It's not about economics, it's not about whether you're in the majority or the minority, it's not about whether you're in the privileged group or the unprivileged group, the real issue is sin. And there are several sins that ultimately feed both the historical problem as well as its current manifestations. So let's consider those sins.

First of all, and most obviously, the sin of slavery. Now let me just be crystal clear. I am not talking about CRT's version in which they argue that our country was started to advance the institution of slavery and that the American Revolution was motivated primarily by a desire to keep the institution of slavery. And they would say, there has been no substantive change or progress since the first European settlers came to this country. I'm not talking about that. Rather, I'm talking specifically about the biblical sin.

Let me say it as clearly as I can, slavery by kidnapping, in other words American slavery, is a sin condemned in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Let me show you. Go back with me to the book of Exodus, Exodus 21:16. Here in the law of God Moses writes this, Exodus 21:16, "He who kidnaps," now you'll notice if you have the New American Standard

and you have marginal notes, literally the Hebrew word is “he who steals a man,” but obviously the idea is a man stealer or a kidnapper, “He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession,” or in his hand, literally, “he shall surely be put to death.” The intention in that day, as it was in the day of American slavery, was to enslave this person. You kidnap them, you steal them, in order to sell them to someone who’s going to use them for slavery, or you yourself are going to use them for slavery, and God says, let them be put to death.

Go over to Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 24. In the second giving of the law this is reiterated in slightly different terms. Deuteronomy 24:7, “If a man is caught kidnapping,” again, the Hebrew is “if he’s found stealing,” “any of his countrymen or the sons of Israel, and he deals with him violently or sells him, then that thief shall die; so you shall purge the evil from among you.” Now, what is very clear in these two passages is that kidnapping in order to enslave is sin against God, because those people are made in the image of God, and it is a sin against that person. And under Old Testament law in Israel, such a person who was involved in the slave trade in that way should be put to death, they should die because of their complicity in such actions.

Turn over to 1 Timothy 1. The New Testament only underscores this as crucial to God. First Timothy 1:8, Paul says, “But we know that God’s Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,” if you use it like it was intended, verse 9, “realizing the fact that God’s Law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane,” in other words, to show them their sin, and then he gets specific,

for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers, [*kidnappers, those who steal people in order to enslave them*] and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching

So understand then that American slavery is sin. It’s sin from the Old Testament. It’s sin in the New Testament. It was wrong. Let’s just admit that, acknowledge that. That’s what God Himself says. And yet that is exactly what went on in our country.

Let's start with just a brief historical survey. I'm not going to spend a lot of time here, but I want you to understand this. It begins, of course, with the British because we were, after all, a British colony originally. The British National Archives describes the origins and growth of slavery in British America. It began in earnest in the 1640s when Dutch merchants introduced sugar to Barbados and showed Barbadian planters how to grow and process sugarcane. The problem is sugarcane requires large numbers of laborers. Eventually it was discovered that the Dutch could provide such laborers by enslaving Africans and bringing them to the new world.

It started with the Dutch, as far as the Europeans. Portugal and Britain eventually became the two greatest exporters of slaves, slave trading countries, accounting for about, this is the British National Archives, accounting for about 70 percent of all Africans transported to the Americas. It's estimated that Britain transported 3.1 million Africans, tragically of whom only 2.7 million arrived. So 400,000 of them died in being transported across the ocean to the British colonies here in the Caribbean, North and South America, and other countries. Now some of those who were enslaved were captured directly by British traders, slave traders. But sadly, the vast majority of those sold to European slave traders had been captured and were sold by West Africans.

Now, let's come to the US, to US history. I think you understand, the first two settlements, European settlements, on this continent were characterized by different priorities. The first was in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. Its chief priority was economic. The second was in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620 and the primary point of Plymouth was the pursuit of religious freedom. Sadly, however, both settlements and their streams accepted and practiced the biblical sin of slavery. Original source documents show that by 1662 slavery was recognized in the statutory law of the Jamestown Colony. In 1641 the Massachusetts Bay Colony adopted laws that made slavery legal in the cases of prisoners seized in just war, those who sold themselves into slavery, both of those are commented on in the Old Testament and were allowed, although strictly regulated, but they sadly also made it justifiably legal to own slaves purchased from other places. And that's how American slavery really took its foothold.

Let's fast forward to 1776, the year in which our country was birthed. All 13 states that entered America at that point allowed slavery. But during and immediately following the Revolution,

several states passed laws outlawing it and all the northern states had legally abolished slavery by 1805, although the actual freeing of slaves was more gradual. Congress banned the import trade of slaves in 1808, but of course smuggling was common and continued, and it still allowed for those slaves who were here and their offspring to be kept enslaved.

In 1860 a government census was taken that clarifies the state of slavery in the U. S. just before the Civil War. At that time, just before the Civil War, there were 15 slave states and 20 free states. The total US population was 31 million, with four million of them being slaves. The percent of US households with slaves was 13 percent. But that's a bit of a misleading number, because remember there were 20 of the states in which there were no slaves, no slaves allowed or reported. If you take the slaveholding states, in slave states the percent of households with slaves was 26 percent. And when you take the far south states, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Florida, the percent of slaves to total population was 49 percent.

On January 1, 1863, as you know, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It stated that all persons held as slaves within the seceding states are "are and henceforth shall be free." Of course it was in the right direction, but as I think you may know, it exempted the loyal border states and portions of the South that had already been captured by the Union armies. Then came the 13th amendment, ratified in December of 1865, which ended chattel slavery anyplace under US jurisdiction.

But then came Reconstruction. And I think you understand that during Reconstruction former slave holding states instituted what came to be called the Jim Crow laws. Here's how the Encyclopedia Britannica describes them, "From the late 1870s, Southern state legislatures passed laws requiring the separation of whites from 'persons of color.' It was codified on local and state levels and most famously with the 'separate but equal' decision of the US Supreme Court in Plessy versus Ferguson in 1896. That continued until 1954. In 1954 the Supreme Court declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional, reversing Plessy in Brown versus the Board of Education. By extension, that ruling was applied to other public places and facilities and Jim Crow laws began to be dismantled." I can tell you, as a boy growing up in the south and in mobile Alabama in the sixties, I witnessed firsthand the fruit of nearly 100 years of

Jim Crow laws and the separate but equal doctrine. And of course, as you know, in 1964 the Civil Rights Act passed, a comprehensive legislation intended to end discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin.

Now that is a thumbnail sketch of slavery in America. Let me just make some appropriate conclusions based on that little historical sketch. First of all, we need to acknowledge that slavery by kidnapping and prejudice are undeniably a tragic part of our nation's history. Secondly, we need to acknowledge that at different points in our nation's history and in different places in our country, racism has in fact been systemic. Now, I would argue that has only been true when it was intentionally written into and supported by specific laws, as was true under legalized slavery and the Jim Crow laws. But I reject the CRT idea that racism can be systemic unintentionally or that individuals can be guilty of racism simply by being in the majority or having a certain color of skin.

Thirdly, we need to acknowledge that the US has made significant progress. As one author in the Wall Street Journal put it, "in its long and tortuous journey to realize its promise and abide by its founding principles." Number four, we need to acknowledge that the sin of slavery continues to have lasting effects on subsequent generations. And then finally, we need to acknowledge that the biblical sins of prejudice and partiality are still prevalent in the hearts of many individuals in our country, both those in the majority and those in various minorities, because it's part of the fallen human heart.

And that brings me to the second sin, not only the sin of slavery, but the sin of racism. Now, I am not talking about CRT's definition of racism, but rather the definition in Webster's. It's when you believe your own race is superior and has the right to rule others. Now, where does that kind of racism, which is endemic to the fallen human heart, where does that come from? What are the biblical sins that are involved in that label that we use? The word racism is not in the bible obviously, but the concepts, the sins involved, would be these.

First of all, partiality and prejudice. Turn to James 2. James, as he issues a series of tests of people's faith, includes this as one of those tests of faith. I don't have time to walk through this in the detail it deserves, go back and listen to the messages I preached on this when I was working through James, but just look at the context of the first three verses. "My brethren, do

not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.” Now, understand this, he is dealing both with favoritism and its opposite, which is prejudice. He’s dealing with treating a person partially, either for good or for bad, based on external factors. And here’s the specific factor in the early church, verse 2,

For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

James is saying it’s wrong, it’s wrong to look at external factors, in this case, how a person’s dressed or their socioeconomic standing, and to treat them either better or worse because of those external factors. On the one side, its partiality. On the other side, it’s prejudice. And both are equally wrong. He goes on down in verse 8 to say, “If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,’ you’re doing well.” There’s the solution, just love everybody regardless of those external differences, treat them equally. Verse 9, “But if you show partiality,” or prejudice, “you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” It’s sin.

Now, I think we are tempted to think that that sort of judgment we make in our hearts about other people based on external factors like race or their prosperity level, the car they drive, the neighborhood they live in, et cetera, we are tempted to think that’s a little thing. It’s not a little thing, look at the next verse. Maybe you don’t know this is the context of this verse, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.” In other words, you could keep God’s law perfectly your entire life, but if you allow this sin in your heart, even once, where you look at someone and based solely on external factors you arrive at a conclusion where you treat them better because of those external issues or you treat them worse because of the external issues, it’s sin and you shattered God’s law. Why? Because you’re not loving that person as yourself, you just failed the standard. That’s partiality or prejudice. We must never show it toward anyone based solely on external factors. It’s a sin

against God. And let me just say this, contrary to CRT, you can show prejudice or partiality regardless of what group you're in, whether you're in the majority or the minority.

Often this sin of partially and prejudice is combined with another to make it even more virulent, and that's hatred. As we saw last week in Titus 3:3, unregenerate people are hated and hate one another. This is just how the fallen human heart is prone. Every one of us, apart from Christ, has been guilty of this. But it is not a sin, brothers and sisters, that as followers of Jesus Christ we can tolerate in our hearts. According to James 2, if you practice these sins, you have shattered God's law to love others as you love yourself. Racism, we need to deal with it. I love what Daryl Harrison, who works out at Grace to You says, he says, "You don't end racism, you repent of it."

A third sin that has contributed to our current mess is the sin of anger, bitterness, and violence, or the sins of anger, bitterness, and violence. Many who champion the social justice movement and CRT, they do so because hateful individuals have committed terrible sins against either them and or their people. And historically, many of those sins have been horrific. And this is where we fall back on the character of God. Let me just tell you that God is just and that means every sin will be punished. God will either punish Christ for that sin and forgive the unrepentant sinner or He'll punish the sinner, but God's justice will be done in every single case.

However, listen carefully, God never permits the person who has been wronged, however horrifically, to hold a grudge or to take revenge. Leviticus 19:18, ""You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD."" That's the divine standard. Sinful anger and bitterness are sins before God, even when they are prompted by the sins of others.

Ephesians 4:31 and 32, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger," and by the way, wrath and anger are two different nuances, one is blowing up, anger in the form of blowing up, the other is anger in clamming up. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor," that word just means yelling, "and slander," that's not like legal slander, that's name calling. "Let all bitterness and blowing up and clamming up and yelling and name calling be put away from you, along with all malice." That's a vicious disposition where you just want to hurt the other

person. Instead, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.” God never justifies sin, even when it’s in response to the sin of others. But sadly that is the spirit that drives much of the social justice movement.

So, what does the Bible say? The real problem is sin. Secondly, briefly, the right goal is justice. Why? Because it’s our God’s character. Our God is unwaveringly committed to justice without prejudice. Psalm 89:14, “justice is the foundation of Your throne, O God.” In other words, God’s entire rule is based on justice. He loves justice. He hates injustice. And in the exercise of His perfect justice, our God, listen to this, never shows prejudice or partiality to anyone. Acts 10:34, Peter says, ““God is not one to show partiality.”” Peter, in 1 Peter 1:17, says, “If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, then conduct yourselves in fear.”

God never treats anyone differently, for good or for bad, because of mere external factors like we are so tempted and prone to do. And since He’s our Father, we should be equally committed to justice without prejudice. Again, I’m not talking about CRT’s version of justice, I’m talking about true biblical justice. We looked at that a little bit last time. It’s what theologians would call, first of all, distributive justice. We should be committed to justice in our laws and in their enforcement. And we should be committed, secondly, to communicative justice. That’s how all of us are supposed to be, treating all people fairly and with respect, since they’re made in the image of God. We must root out the sins of partiality, prejudice, and hatred from our own hearts. Folks, we should be equally committed to justice for all, regardless of the color of their skin or the color of their uniform. God doesn’t treat people differently because of race, occupation, or their group identity. In the same way, we should never make sweeping verdicts about any group, good or bad.

We must also insist that our leaders practice justice without partiality. This was a big deal to God in Old Testament Israel. In Deuteronomy 16:18-20, listen to this, and especially listen to this if you are in government or in law enforcement, but for all of us, understand, this is a priority. ““You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns,””

“and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue.”

When a crime is committed, whether by a citizen or a law enforcement officer, they should be prosecuted fairly, equally, in keeping with the law. We should also insist on laws that ensure equal and fair treatment before the law. The Dallas Statement on Social Justice makes this point. It says, “Believers can and should utilize all lawful means that God has providentially established to have some effect on the laws of a society.” So, the real problem is sin. The real goal is biblical justice.

A third point of biblical correction is, the only real solution is the gospel. Folks, we must seek justice, but in a fallen world we will never root out prejudice and hatred. Only a change of a person’s heart can do that. That means the only lasting cure for racism is the gospel of Jesus Christ. I read it to you this morning, turn back to Ephesians, Ephesians 2. Paul here, beginning in verse 11, talks about Jews and Gentiles and what’s happened through the work of Jesus Christ. Now think about this for a moment, Jews and Gentiles could not have been more different. They were different in every conceivable way. Not only ethnically, but also culturally, religiously, and the list could go on. They were poles apart. And yet what happened? In Jesus Christ, He brought them together. “For He,” verse 14, “He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.” Verse 15 goes on to say, “so that He could make the two,” Jews and Gentiles, “into one new man,” that’s the church, “thus establishing peace.”

Listen, Jesus Christ is the only one who can grant us peace with God. And He’s the only one, through His gospel, that can grant us true and lasting peace with the people around us. If your relationships are in shambles, Jesus Christ is the only one that can help you fix that. He is our peace, not only with God, but He’s the one who brings peace between us and others through His life changing gospel. By God’s sovereign plan, in the church there are people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. We see just a little taste of that here in our church, but someday we’re going to gather around the throne of God and we’re going to see it in ultra high definition. This is the only real lasting solution. So we must show, not only show the love of Christ, we must not only pursue, as much as we’re able, reasonable justice to be done in our world, but folks, let’s concentrate on the assignment we’ve been given, which is the only lasting change and that is the gospel.

The fourth point of biblical correction is, the only perfect ruler is Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 42 we encounter the very first of what are called the Servant Songs. There are four Servant Songs in Isaiah talking about the Messiah. This is the first one, Isaiah 42, and he focuses a good bit on what Christ would do in His first coming. But in the middle of that he shifts and talks about what Christ will do one day when He establishes His kingdom on this planet. Listen to Isaiah 42:3 and 4,

“He [*the Messiah, our Lord*] will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not be disheartened or crushed
Until He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands [*meaning the continents all over this planet*] will wait
expectantly for His law.”

That’s the only time on this planet there will be true justice and He will bring it. ““He will faithfully bring forth justice.””

You know, we should do what we can, we’ve talked about that, but understand that the injustice in this fallen world, and there always will be, there always will be to some extent in our country, just face that reality, as long as there are fallen people, that’s what’s in the heart. But the injustice in this fallen world should make us long for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, when there will be only perfect justice.

Well, there’s so much more that could be said about this subject. In fact, I found myself a little frustrated trying to fit it into two messages. But if you want to read more about it, here are some recommended resources. I recommend all of these, but the first two are especially helpful, *Fault Lines* by Voddie Baucham, *Christianity and Wokeness* by Owen Strachan, *What Every Christian Needs to Know About Social Justice* by Jeffrey Johnson. If you want to know more about what’s going on in Christianity, *The Rise of Woke Christianity* by Toby Smith and *By What Standard*, which is a book edited by Jared Longshore, but it includes articles by Voddie Baucham, by Tom Ascol, and others. All of those are very helpful. But if you’re going to read just one, pick one of those first two, they are especially helpful.

But folks, can I just admonish you, don't buy into every new idea that comes sweeping across America or sweeping through the church. Be committed to "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Come back and say, what does the bible teach and what have Christians believed and championed and made their priorities for 2,000 years? And make that what you aim for and not keeping up with what's trending. Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for Your word, for its clarity and truth. Lord help us to be people of the book, to know our times, but mostly to know our God and to know His truth. Lord, forgive us for being so tempted to be swept along by what's trending. Help us instead to be tied to the truth. And Father, I pray for those who may be here this morning who don't know You, who still don't have peace with You. May this be the day when they recognize the beauty of the gospel, its attraction. Lord, help them to look at the mess that they've made of their lives, as all of us have at some point or other, and to recognize that the only solution is Jesus Christ. May they repent and believe in Him even today. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.