

The Disparity Gospel: Blessed Are Those That Want More

Text: **Matthew 5:1-10**

Warming Up

Questions:

1. What is your favorite flower?
2. What do you see that is broken that you would like God to make right?

Digging In

Read **Matthew 5:1-10**.

Questions:

1. Which one of these beatitudes resonates with you today? (Has it changed from last week?)
2. Why might Jesus have used the imagery of hunger and thirst to talk about our desire for righteousness?

The Greek word for “righteousness” is one we repeat a lot around here: *dikaiosune*. It means to “make things right” in our world and in our lives. It is and can be translated “justice” in every case. (In fact, in Spanish translations it is translated this way.)

Questions:

1. What do you think of when you see the word “righteousness”? What connotations does this word normally carry?
2. How does translating “righteousness” instead as “justice” change your understanding of this beatitude?

Read **Romans 1:16-20**.

There is so much going on here. Notice we see the word “righteousness” again. And again, it is *dikaiosune*: “justice”. The Good News, or gospel, is attached strongly to this idea of justice here in Romans. And then we hear the word “wrath”, which very simply means “anger” (*orge* in the Greek). God is angry about *wickedness*. The word for “wickedness” here is *adikia*. It shares the same root word as “righteousness” or “justice”: *dik*. In other words, “wickedness” can rightly be translated as “injustice”.

Questions:

1. What do you normally think of when you see the word “wickedness”?
2. How does replacing “wickedness” with “injustice” change your understanding of what God is angry about?

There are two words for justice in the Old Testament Hebrew: *mishpat* and *tzedek*. They are sometimes found together: Read **Psalms 89:14**.

In English it comes out as “justice and righteousness”. It speaks of a *holistic* justice. Both of these words are also found in Isaiah, which spells out justice and righteousness as our act of worship. (The Hebrew for “injustice”, *resha*, is also found here.)

Read **Isaiah 58:1-14**.

Questions:

1. *What acts of worship do you see here that looks like what we do on a Sunday morning?*
2. *What acts of worship is God pleading for from His people?*
3. *What do you think it means that God includes justice as true worship?*
4. *In Isaiah 58, what is the result of God's people worshipping by making things right in their world?*

Sending Out

In the Scriptures, God shows concern for making things right in the world *and* making things right within us. In other words, there can be no justice *in the world* without our seeking to allow God to make things right *in our hearts*. We call this sanctification: we need God to be transforming *us* as well as our world. *And* there can be no making things right in our hearts without it leading to justice in the world. The early Christians name Jesus' work as doing *both*.

Read **Colossians 2:13-15**.

In this early Christian teaching, Jesus is spoken of as both forgiving and changing *us* and disarming and triumphing over the unjust powers *in the world*.

Questions:

1. *What is the danger in working for justice without allowing our hearts to be transformed?*
2. *What is the danger in seeking heart transformation in ourselves without working for justice in our neighborhoods and world?*
3. *Where would you like to see things made right in your world?*
4. *Where would you like to see things made right in you?*

Closing

Take a moment in silence to come before God and ask the question, "*What word or phrase or idea or moment does God want me to remember from this morning and carry with me this week?*"

Close with prayer.