

IT'S **NOT** YOUR
BIRTHDAY



Week #2: "Fair's Fair!"

What does it mean

to do justice?

Daily Readings and Devotionals for November 4-9, 2019

Monday, November 4 Read Psalm 106:1-6

Praying for justice is a risky endeavor as we are all guilty of violating God's very high standards, as v.6 reminds us. Yet God balances stern justice with an amazing loving graciousness. If we are called to "do justice (Micah 6:8)," how can we balance justice with grace in dealing with others? _____

What attitude can help us be more loving and gracious with those who have angered or hurt us? _____

Tuesday, November 5 Read Amos 5:6-24 & Amos 8:1-8

God's prophet here is unstinting in his condemnation of Israel. How would you sum up the nature of Israel's crimes in one or two sentences? _____

Are there any parallels here to our own time and place? _____

On our own scale, what are some ways we can respond to this cry for justice? _____

Wednesday, November 6 Read Isaiah 61:1-11

In Luke 4:16-17ff, Jesus reads this passage as an announcement of the beginning of his own ministry. What does this passage tell us about what God desires and is willing to completely give himself to? _____

As members of Christ's Body, the church, what are we being called to? _____

What is your personal part in this? Discuss this with God in prayer today and listen for His answer. _____



Thursday, November 7 Read Matthew 18:21-35

The first servant in this parable could have rightfully claimed he was just adhering to the law and justice. The second slave did owe him the money, after all! What does Jesus' teaching tell us about God's definition of justice as we are called to live it out? _____

Why is forgiveness essential to God's justice? _____

Friday, November 8 Read Galatians 6:1-10

Re-read v.1 several times, reflecting on the words "restore," "gentleness," and "tempted." What are we tempted by in these circumstances? _____

What "law of Christ" is being fulfilled when we bear one another's burdens and why is this essential to living justly? _____

Saturday, November 9 Read Matthew 20:1-16

Most of us struggle with this parable, largely because we often see ourselves as the ones chosen first and from that perspective the owner's actions seem monumentally unfair. Is it? Why or why not? _____

Wrestle with v.15 as we reflect on what our own motivations often are. How is God's definition of "fair" often at odds with our own? _____

**Sermon Notes for:
"Fair's Fair"
November 3, 2019**

- 1. Justice is really about removing the barriers between people and between people and God.**

- 2. We participate in God's justice when we:**
 - A. Resolve our conflicts**
 - B. Reach across divides**
 - C. Lift others up**

Small Group Discussion Guide

for Week #2

November 4-10



Part I: Sharing Our Experience of Christmas

1. Discuss the following questions with your group.

- How much of what you spend on Christmas benefits only you and your family? Another way to look at it, is to ask how much energy and resources do we spend on people who actually need very little. What do our loved one actually *need* from us and how do we give it, especially during this season?

2. Read Amos 5:6-24 & Amos 8:1-8 and discuss the questions from Tuesday with your group.

Part II. How Do We “Do Justice?”

1. Read Romans 12:1-18 and answer the following questions:

- Why is being transformed by God as opposed to being conformed to the world seen as a form of sacrifice? What are we sacrificing ourselves to here?
 - Why is v.3 so important if we are to build unity in the Body?
- ### 2. In the sermon Sunday, it was suggested that “justice is really about removing the barriers between people and between people and God.” What are some of the ways the guidelines offered in the reading from Romans helps remove those barriers? Be as specific as possible.
- ### 3. In what ways does the traditional Christmas story reflect God’s desire for justice and graciousness? In what ways do our celebrations of the holiday do the same? In what ways do they fail to honor that part of God’s desires? Are there ways we can change this?

Part III. Some Christmas Reflections

- ### 1. Discuss these questions with your group. If the true gift of Christmas is “Emmanuel (God with Us),” in what ways is God with you as you plan for the Christmas season? In what real and concrete ways will you allow His Will to shape what you buy, what you carve out time for and what you want?