

Week 6 (Feb 16 + 18)

“Seeking Justice”

We live in an age of clashing moral visions. Lots of people are passionate about doing the right thing and making the world a better place. Unfortunately, we seem to disagree more and more about what the “right” thing really is.

Everyone has moral feelings, a sense somewhere inside that some things are right and others are wrong. And everyone has the conviction that at least some of those feelings should be binding on other people, that there are moral obligations we have to one another. Even the most committed moral relativist who says there is no right or wrong is convinced that everyone else ought to be a moral relativist, too. But how do we hold people morally accountable if all we have to go on is our personal feelings? And if my feelings are different from yours, how do we sort that out?

Secular people can be moral, but they can't explain why anyone should have moral obligations. Darwinism might say morality is a survival trait, but it can't explain why we should value the weak or the outsider. Cultural relativism might say morality is about local customs, but it can't explain why every culture should protect human rights. Utilitarianism appeals to selfishness to convince people to be unselfish. Modern rationalism can't give us a way to say whose definitions are right or whose models are better. And if postmodernism tries to rid the world of oppression by attacking power, we find it just sets up new oppressors in their place.

The uncomfortable truth for secularists is that their moral sense was developed based on a Christian understanding of God, man, sin, and salvation. They want the moral fruits without the biblical roots. But morality requires responsibility. Moral sense tells us there is Someone we're accountable to.

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When we look at Scripture, we see a perfect God and equality among men. We should value the poor and weak because God values them. We should be humble about our reason and power because we're mere creatures, and corrupted by sin. But best of all, we see that God became one of us to save us. His mercy, justice, and humility demonstrates the highest possible moral standards—and his gift of grace includes everyone and frees us from arrogance or legalism.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Who is someone who helped you develop your sense of right and wrong? What was he/she like?

What kinds of moral expectations do people have in your workplace? Are they very consistent?

If you have kids, how have you been teaching them to think about right and wrong?

Do you tend more toward legalism (we all have to measure up to be accepted) or license (I can do what I want because there are no consequences)? How do you personally guard against those temptations?

What does it mean to be a good person in God's eyes? How does that impact your life as a Jesus follower?

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NOTES FROM PERSONAL REFLECTION + GROUP DISCUSSION