

BIBLE STUDY: APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

- This Bible study has been designed for the youth-adult age range.
- A script is provided for the leader to use as a guide, though the leader is certainly free to use their own wording and modify as they feel led.
- Approximate time estimates are provided for each section, though it is understood that depending on the response from participants, some sections may require a bit less time and others, more.
- The study should keep to a total of 1 hr for each session in order to honor the participant's time commitment.

PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION FOR BIBLE STUDY

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITY

“APPROACHES TO JUSTICE”

What is justice? What does the Bible have to say about it? How can we as Christians promote justice in our world today? This four week study is designed to facilitate Bible study from the perspective of justice. Each one hour session will focus on a different aspect of justice in the Bible and help us to relate that to our lives as humans – then as well as now.

- Week 1: Getting even - Retribution in kind
Exodus 21: 12-25, Leviticus 24: 19-22, Deuteronomy 19:21
- Week 2: Another way?
Matthew 5: 38-48
- Week 3: Who is justice for?
Mark 7: 24-30
- Week 4: A foundation for justice
Matthew 22: 34-40, Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18

All are welcome – come join us as we learn more about what the Bible has to say about justice!

BIBLE STUDY: APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 1 – GETTING EVEN – RETRIBUTION IN KIND

- Materials Needed: pens/pencils, handouts, attendance sheet, index cards, newsprint or whiteboard/markers.
- Arrive to set up room in advance – ideally 1 hr prior.
- Set up sign at front door and elsewhere as needed to direct participants to room. Ensure lighting, temperature and seating in room is appropriate.
- Set out nametags and markers
- Ensure NRSV Bibles are available for any who didn't bring one with them
- Provide a pen/pencil for everyone who didn't bring one
- Welcome each participant as they arrive, direct to nametags, as well as coatroom and restrooms as needed.
- Begin and end study at time scheduled, so as to honor participant's time.
- Remove materials/trash at conclusion, restore room.

Welcome: (~10 min)

Welcome to the first week of our bible study to see what we might learn about what the Bible has to say about justice.

(Go around room and invite each person to briefly say their name and why they have chosen to attend the study and/or what they hope to get out of it. Take notes as needed so that issues can be addressed or referenced as appropriate)

(Ask people to sign an attendance list, so have a record of attendees – pass it around)

Have any of you thought about what the Bible says about justice?

Each of these 4 weeks, we will look at a different aspect of justice, as found in scripture. My hope is that this approach focusing on the topic of justice will provide some new insights about Bible that will be helpful for all of us in our lives.

Prayer: Dear God, we are hungry for your word and give you thanks for this opportunity to study together. Thank you for each person who has been able to take the time to be here tonight. Over the course of these four weeks, help us to hear and learn more about what you have to say to us about justice and help us to apply it in our daily lives and share what we learn with others. Thank you God. Amen.

Intro: (~ 10 min)

One of the questions we often find ourselves asking, is what does God expect from us? The prophet Micah addresses this question directly:

(Read Micah 6: 6-8):

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

God isn't so excited by the traditional sacrifices and offerings that the people of Israel were used to giving, but clearly expects us to do justice.

So what is justice?

We will start off this week with an exercise called a wordstorm. When you hear the word “justice”, what do you think, what comes to mind?

(Write answers up on board or newsprint)

Many different ideas, perhaps reflective of our experience – those in prison may not have as positive a view as we do, for example.

(Pass out Handout for Today's Session)

On the back of the handout, is the definition according to my Webster's dictionary:

Do any of these terms match what we have come up with in the wordstorm?

The Bible, in particular, parts of the OT has quite a lot written in terms of law, in an effort to provide justice.

Do any scriptural passages come to mind when you think about the Bible and Justice?

One of the classics, is “an eye for an eye”

Taken from the Code of Hammurabi (Babylonian king, dating to ~1754 BC, one of the oldest written legal codes)

Referred to in Latin as *lex talionis* (code of retribution)

This shows up in 3 major places in OT, and we will read those today

Scripture Reading: (~ 5 min)

(go around room with each volunteer reading a paragraph)

Exodus 21: 12-25

Leviticus 24: 19-22

Deuteronomy 19: 21

Comments/Discussion: (~ 5 min)

When you hear these passages, do these sound like a good or not so good approach?

(Tit for tat, make punishment fit the crime)

(assessment of intent, for murder – places of refuge if inadvertant)

Is there value in preventing escalation of conflict – if one is killed, don’t wipe out whole family in retaliation.

Establishment of equality for all – a tooth is a tooth, regardless of status of individual.

Small Group Discussion (~10 min)

Break into groups of 3-4 and share within group for 10 minutes re the following questions (write on newsprint or whiteboard):

Do we still do this? (death penalty cases?, differences based on economic status?)

Would it be appropriate?

Who gets compensation – the victim or the state?

Report out – briefly, as people are willing to share (~5 -10 min)

Closing Comments: Justice is clearly an important concept for the people of God, even back in the earliest days.

Pass out Index Cards – ask each person to write down one take away or any new thoughts they may have had from this session. Individuals will take these cards home with them.

Volunteers share a takeaway/new thought (~ 5 min)

Prayer – Dear God, We thank you for your call to us to do justice in our world today. We recognize it is important. Help us to foster justice through the lives we lead, in all that we do. Grant us safe travel as we now leave to return home for the evening, and help us to share what we learn about justice with others we encounter. In Jesus’s name we pray. Amen.

Bibliography

Walter Brueggemann, in “*New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary, Volume P*” (Nashville, TN, Abingdon Press, 2015), 422-424, 431-435.

Brevard Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA, The Westminster Press, 1974), 469-474.

BIBLE STUDY: APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

HANDOUT (side 1)

WEEK 1 – GETTING EVEN – RETRIBUTION IN KIND

Scripture Reading: Exodus 21: 12-25

Leviticus 24: 19-22

Deuteronomy 19: 21

Notes:

HANDOUT (side 2)

Definition of Justice:¹

“**1a:** The maintenance or administration of what is just esp. by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments.

1b: JUDGE

1c: The administration of law; esp: the establishment or determination of rights according to the rules of law or equity

2a: The quality of being just, impartial, or fair

2b-1: the principle or ideal of just dealing or right action

2b-2: conformity to this principle or ideal: RIGHTEOUSNESS

2c: the quality of conforming to law

3: conformity to truth, fact, or reason: CORRECTNESS

Do justice

1a: to act justly

1b: to treat fairly or adequately

1c: to show due appreciation for

2: to acquit in a way worthy of one's powers

¹*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, G.& C. Merriam Company, Springfield, MA 1977.

LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 2 – ANOTHER WAY?

- Materials Needed: pens/pencils, handouts, attendance sheet, index cards, newsprint or whiteboard/markers.
- Arrive to set up room in advance – ideally 1 hr prior.
- Set up sign at front door and elsewhere as needed to direct participants to room.
- Ensure lighting, temperature and seating in room is appropriate.
- Set out nametags and markers
- Ensure NRSV Bibles are available for any who didn't bring one with them
- Provide a pen/pencil for everyone who didn't bring one
- Welcome each participant as they arrive, direct to nametags, as well as coatrooms and restrooms as needed.
- Begin and end study at time scheduled, so as to honor participant's time.
- Remove materials/trash at conclusion, restore room.

Welcome: (~5-10 min)

(Welcome and thank each person for coming – ensure all have nametags)

(Ask people to sign an attendance list, so have a record of attendees – pass it around)

Last week we began with God wanting Justice

We spent some time with the passage describing the eye for an eye rule – and how it was an improvement on unrestrained vengeance and social inequality.

Today we will look at Jesus's take on the eye for an eye idea and how Jesus tells us that there is another way of looking at justice

But let's begin with prayer

(Ask for any joys or concerns within the group)

Prayer: Dear God, we give you thanks today for this opportunity to come together and learn more about your word. We come with joys and concerns – you have heard them all, and know also those that are unspoken on our hearts. We lift these all up to you. Help us now to hear the message that Jesus shares with us about another way to look at justice, so that we might continue to grow in our knowledge and love of you. Thank you God. Amen.

Intro: (Pass out handout for today)

How many of you have heard of the idea of turning the other cheek?

It's one we struggle with at times - lets now read it together

Scripture: (~ 5 min) Matthew 5: 38-48

(go around room with each taking a turn to read a verse)

Large group discussion: (~20 min)

What are your initial thoughts about these passages?

(consider both turn other cheek series, and love your enemy section)

Is this easy?

Did Jesus actually mean this?

Cute ways to write this off – explaining turning other cheek as a way to keep from being hit, etc. But when did Jesus ever try to make following him easy?

Why the modification from an eye for an eye? - Where was the focus on this passage in Exodus from last week? (punishment for offender, our “getting even” via equal retaliation) A retributive system

Where is the focus on turning the other cheek and loving ones enemies? (caring for offender, meeting their needs) A restorative system. Could Jesus be urging us to follow a new path to justice?

Which is our current criminal justice system most like? (retributive!)

Consider the 3 questions and the differences between our criminal (retributive) system and a restorative system of justice (handout page 2)

In retributive system, focus is on offender. In restorative system, focus is on healing all who are hurt – including the offender. Why would anyone want to help the offender be healed? Hurt people hurt people. A way to break the cycle of harm and provide healing for all. Consider story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19: 1-10)

Note the paragraphs, taken from the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church – in our Book of Discipline. (read aloud)

How many have heard of restorative justice? Did you know it was supported in our Social Principles?

Small Group Discussion (~15 min)

Break into groups of 3-4 and share within group re the following questions (write on whiteboard or newsprint):

Have you been able to turn the other cheek, or love your enemy? If so, how did that turn out for you? If not, what keeps you from doing so?

How might we be able to utilize restorative justice to deal with harm done in our own families? Our church? Our nation?

Report Out: (~ 5-10 min) Suggestions for loving enemies, incorporating restorative justice into our lives?

Closing Comments/Discussion:

Can we love our enemies and pursue restorative rather than retributive justice?

Yes, with God's help

Pass out Index Cards – ask each person to write down one take away or any new thoughts they may have had from this session. Individuals will take these cards home with them.

Volunteers to share a takeaway/new thought (~ 5 min)

Prayer: Dear God, this new way of doing justice in our world seems really difficult – turning the other cheek, loving enemies, and focusing on healing rather than retaliation doesn't seem to come naturally for us at times, but we know with you all kinds of things are possible. We are thankful that you are willing to work with us and to help us get better at this as we move towards perfection in love. Help us to leave here tonight willing to take these ideas and apply them in circumstances that we encounter in our everyday lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Bibliography:

Jason Byassee, Barbara J. Essex, Greg Carey, Matthew Myer Boulton, in *Feasting on the Word, Year A, Volume I* (Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 380-385.

M. Eugene Boring, in *New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Volume VII* (Nashville, TN, Abingdon Press, 2015), 123-127.

Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY, John Knox Press, 1993), 55-62.

Additional Scripture:

Luke 6: 27-36 – "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.

³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

(Luk 6:27-36 NRS)

HANDOUT (side 1)

WEEK 2 – ANOTHER WAY?

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5: 38-48

Notes:

Additional Resources:

Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Scottsdale, PA, Herald Press, 2005).

HANDOUT (side 2)

Three Different Questions¹

Criminal Justice

What laws have been broken?

Who did it?

What do they deserve?

Restorative Justice

Who has been harmed?

What are their needs?

Whose obligations are these?

United Methodist Social Principles – Criminal and Restorative Justice²

“...In the love of Christ, who came to save those who are lost and vulnerable, we urge the creation of a genuinely new system for the care and restoration of victims, offenders, criminal justice officials, and the community as a whole. Restorative justice grows out of biblical authority, which emphasizes a right relationship with God, self, and community. When such relationships are violated or broken through crime, opportunities are created to make things right.

Most criminal justice systems around the world are retributive. These retributive justice systems profess to hold the offender accountable to the state and use punishment as the equalizing tool for accountability. In contrast, restorative justice seeks to hold the offender accountable to the victimized person, and to the disrupted community. Through God’s transforming power, restorative justice seeks to repair the damage, right the wrong, and bring healing to all involved, including the victim, the offender, the families, and the community. The Church is transformed when it responds to the claims of discipleship by becoming an agent of healing and systemic change.”

¹Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2002), 21.

²*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012), 137-138, ¶164H.

BIBLE STUDY: APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 3 – WHO IS JUSTICE FOR?

- Materials Needed: Laptop, projector, screen or blank light colored wall, pens/pencils, handouts, attendance sheet, index cards, newsprint or whiteboard/markers.
- Arrive to set up room in advance – ideally 1 hr prior.
- Set up sign at front door and elsewhere as needed to direct participants to room.
- Ensure lighting, temperature and seating in room is appropriate. Set up laptop and projector with link to video for this week:
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=syrophoenician+woman&view=detail&mid=04CBE45018B4C69DDB1104CBE45018B4C69DDB11&FORM=VIRE>
- After test, leave laptop on, but projector light off until use.
- Set out nametags and markers
- Ensure NRSV Bibles are available for any who didn't bring one with them
- Provide a pen/pencil for everyone who didn't bring one
- Welcome each participant as they arrive, direct to nametags, as well as coatroom and restrooms as needed.
- Begin and end study at time scheduled, so as to honor participant's time.
- Remove materials/trash at conclusion, restore room.

Welcome: (~ 5 min)

(Welcome and thank each person for coming – ensure all have nametags)

(Ask people to sign an attendance list, so have a record of attendees – pass it around)

Last week, we looked at Jesus's way of looking at justice – “turn the other cheek”, care for those who persecute you.

Today, we will ask who justice is to be for.

Prayer: Isaiah 56: 1-8 (say in unison)

Note 2 things from this passage:

-maintain justice and do what is right

-covenant extended to others – eunuchs and foreigners

Intro: (Pass out handout)

Scripture: (~5 min)

Mark 7: 24-30 (go around room and ask each volunteer to read a paragraph)

Summarize this story (~ 5 min) – ask group to piece this together

(Jesus enters house in Tyre, looking to not be disturbed)

Note that Tyre is a gentile area, “unclean”.

(Woman with ill daughter comes and begs him to heal her)

(Jesus says his ministry is to the Jews – the children of God, first, not for the “dogs”)

(Woman counters that even the “dogs” get crumbs from the children’s table)

(Jesus acknowledges her point, that his ministry is, in fact, for all people, and heals her daughter)

Play Video: (~5-10 min) “Clean and Unclean[The Syrophoenician Woman]”, by Julie Stecker – the story from the perspective of the Syrophoenician woman.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=syrophoenician+woman&view=detail&mid=04CBE45018B4C69DDB1104CBE45018B4C69DDB11&FORM=VIRE>

Questions for large group: (~10 min)

What strikes you, from the scripture, and/or from the video?

Did Jesus get it wrong, initially? How could that have happened?

If we were with Jesus at the time, would we have urged him to send the woman away?

Do we want justice only for people we know and are comfortable with?

Who are our society’s Syrophoenician women today? How will we respond to them?

Small Group Discussion (~10 min)

Break into groups of 3-4 and share within group re the following questions (write on whiteboard or newsprint):

Have we ever wanted justice for certain people and not for others?
Immigrants or asylum seekers,
Individuals accused of terrorist acts,
People who seem to be different from us in some way
If so, how do we justify this?
How would Jesus want to handle this?

Have we ever felt called to account by a “Syrophoenician Woman”?
What were the circumstances?
Have we ever acted as a “Syrophoenician Woman”?
What were the circumstances?

Report Out: (~5-10 min) Briefly summarize thoughts/conversation from each group

Closing Comments/Discussion:

The Good News: Justice is intended for everyone – even ourselves!

Pass out Index Cards – ask each person to write down one take away or any new thoughts they may have had from this session. Individuals will take these cards home with them.

Volunteers to share a takeaway/new thought (~5 min)

Prayer: Dear God, It can be hard to care for everyone and stand up to ensure all receive justice. Help us continue to move out of a focus on only our needs and towards a focus on the needs of each person we encounter. Thank you for the example set by Jesus, as he understood that God’s love and justice are for everyone. May we leave here and go out to do justice for all in our world. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Bibliography:

Loye Bradley Ashton, Amy C. Howe, Douglas R. A. Hare, Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, in *Feasting on the Word, Year B, Volume 4*(Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 44-49.

PHEME PERKINS, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary, Vol. VII* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 460-462.

Robert H. Stein, *Mark: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 349-356.

BIBLE STUDY: APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

HANDOUT (side 1)

WEEK 3 – WHO IS JUSTICE FOR?

Scripture Reading: Mark 7: 24-30

Notes:

HANDOUT (side 2)

Additional Scripture: Matthew 15: 21-28

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon."

²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."

²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."

²⁶ He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly. (Mat 15:21-28 NRS)

BIBLE STUDY: APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 4 – A FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

- Materials Needed: Laptop, projector, screen or blank light colored wall, pens/pencils, handouts, attendance sheet, index cards, newsprint or whiteboard/markers, evaluation forms.
- Arrive to set up room in advance – ideally 1 hr prior.
- Set up sign at front door and elsewhere as needed to direct participants to room.
- Ensure lighting, temperature and seating in room is appropriate. Set up laptop and projector with link to video for this week: *Justice*, by The Bible Project.
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+bible+project+justice+youtube&qpv=the+bible+project+justice+youtube&view=detail&mid=AC5326CAE6082232FCD6AC5326CAE6082232FCD6&&FORM=VRDGAR>

After test, leave laptop on, but projector light off until use.

- Set out nametags and markers
- Ensure NRSV Bibles are available for any who didn't bring one with them
- Provide a pen/pencil for everyone who didn't bring one
- Welcome each participant as they arrive, direct to nametags, as well as coatroom and restrooms as needed.
- Begin and end study at time scheduled, so as to honor participant's time.
- Remove materials/trash at conclusion, restore room.

Welcome: (~ 5 min)

(Welcome and thank each person for coming – ensure all have nametags)

(Ask people to sign an attendance list, so have a record of attendees – pass it around)

Prayer: Dear God, we give thanks for this opportunity for all of us to come together to learn from your word and we thank you for each person who has participated in any or all of these sessions. Help us to learn more today, and to discern what you would have us do in response to our learning. Thank you God. Amen.

Intro: This is the fourth and final week of our Bible study on approaches to justice.

We began looking at definitions of justice and the old testament approach of an eye for an eye, and then moved to Jesus's revision of turning the other cheek, introducing the idea of restorative justice. Last week, we saw Jesus recognizing that justice extended to all, not just to the children of Israel, and this week, we will look at the basic foundation of justice.

We will begin today with a video summarizing the idea of justice.

Play Video (6.5 min) “Justice”, by The Bible Project.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+bible+project+justice+youtube&qpv=the+bible+project+justice+youtube&view=detail&mid=AC5326CAE6082232FCD6AC5326CAE6082232FCD6&&FORM=VRDGAR>

Note that the video ends with the basic foundation for justice, which is our scripture for today, about loving God and neighbor.

Anything stand out for you in this video?

(Pass out handout for this session).

Scripture: (~5 min)

Matthew 22: 34-40

Deuteronomy 6:5

Leviticus 19:18

(go around room with each volunteer reading a paragraph)

Large group discussion: (~5 min)

Anything stand out for you in these scriptures?

With so many laws, isn't this a question we might want to have asked Jesus?

How do we love God?

How do we love neighbor?

(Note that it is assumed that we love ourselves)

Read Matthew 5: 17-20 (Jesus comes to not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it)
Old Testament Deuteronomy and Leviticus passages are upheld as the most important by Jesus in the New Testament

There are hundreds of laws, but note that the entire law hinges on these 2 commandments! – the foundation for justice

Small Group Discussion (~20 min)

Break into groups of 3-4 and share within group re the following questions (write on whiteboard or newsprint):

Where do we go from here - How do we do justice?
How do we ensure we love God and neighbor?

Do we select a particular area to focus on and do something?

Do we need to educate ourselves or others further re a justice issue?

Do we actively advocate for change?

What CAN we do?

(see page 2 of handout)

Report Out: (~5-10 min) briefly, as people are willing to share

Closing Comments/Discussion:

With God's help, we can do justice in our world today

Pass out index cards – ask each person to write down one take away or any new thoughts they may have had from this session – perhaps a commitment to pursue a particular aspect of justice. Individuals will take these cards home with them.

Volunteers to share a takeaway/new thought (~ 5 min)

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for these participants who have journeyed together through this study these past 4 weeks. Help us each to do justice as we live our lives in this world, loving you and our neighbors. Help us to work to ensure that justice is provided for all, as we are all your beloved children. May we share your love and passion for justice with all whom we encounter in our daily lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO FILL OUT A BRIEF EVALUATION FORM (~5 min)

(Distribute to all)

Bibliography:

Tim Beach-Verhey, Earl. F. Palmer, Patrick Gray, Allen Hilton, in *Feasting on the Word, Year A, Volume 4*(Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 212-217.

David L. Turner, *Matthew: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 534-538.

Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew, Interpretation: A Bible commentary for teaching and preaching* (Louisville, KY, John Knox Press, 1993), 257-260.

Additional Scripture

Mark 12: 28-34 – another account of this discussion, with question posed by a scribe.

BIBLE STUDY: APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

HANDOUT (side 1)

WEEK 4 – A FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

Scripture Reading: Matthew 22: 34-40

Deuteronomy 6:5

Leviticus 19:18

Notes:

United Methodist Social Principles – The World Community – Justice and Law¹

Persons and groups must feel secure in their life and right to live within a society if order is to be achieved and maintained by law. We denounce as immoral an ordering of life that perpetuates injustice and impedes the pursuit of peace. Peoples and nations feel secure in the world community when law, order, and human rights are respected and upheld.

Believing that international justice requires the participation of all peoples and nations, we endorse the United Nations, its related bodies, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court as the best instruments now in existence to achieve a world of justice and law. We commend the efforts of all people in all countries who pursue world peace through law. We endorse international aid and cooperation on all matters of need and conflict. We urge acceptance for membership in the United Nations of all nations who wish such membership and who accept United Nations responsibility. We urge the United Nations to take a more aggressive role in the development of international arbitration of disputes and actual conflicts among nations by developing binding third-party arbitration. Bilateral or multilateral efforts outside of the United Nations should work in concert with, and not contrary to, its purposes. We reaffirm our historic concern for the world as our parish and seek for all persons and peoples full and equal membership in a truly world community.

¹*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012), 140-141, ¶165D.

HANDOUT (side 2)

A few examples of justice concerns to consider:

Political injustice

- Do all have equal access/representation and impact re voting?

(ex. – location of polling places, voting requirements, gerrymandering)

- Are all treated equally under the legal and criminal justice system?
(ex. – mass incarceration, access to adequate legal counsel)

Economic injustice

- Do all have equal access to economic opportunity?
- Do we consume an appropriate portion of the world's resources?

Social injustice

- are all treated as equals in our society today, or are some considered “better” than others?
Is diversity appreciated or resisted?
- Racism, unacknowledged white privilege
- Sexism, ageism
- Do all have ready access to medical care

A helpful resource: Pennsylvania Council of Churches

<https://www.pachurches.org/advocacy/>

you may want to subscribe to their news and action summary

BIBLE STUDY: APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

EVALUATION

- 1) Which week of the study did you find most engaging/helpful?(circle one)
 - a) Week 1 – Getting even – Retribution in kind
 - b) Week 2 – Another way?

- c) **Week 3 – Who is justice for?**
 - d) **Week 4 – A foundation for justice**
- 2) **Which week of the study did you find least engaging/helpful? (circle one)**
- a) **Week 1 – Getting even – Retribution in kind**
 - b) **Week 2 – Another way?**
 - c) **Week 3 – Who is justice for?**
 - d) **Week 4 – A foundation for justice**
- 3) **Which aspect/activity of the study did you find most engaging/helpful? (circle one)**
- a) **Reading/reviewing scripture**
 - b) **Video and discussion**
 - c) **Large group discussion**
 - d) **Small group discussion**
 - e) **Reporting out/sharing takeaways/new thoughts**
- 4) **Which aspect/activity of the study did you find least engaging/helpful? (circle one)**
- a) **Reading/reviewing scripture**
 - b) **Video and discussion**
 - c) **Large group discussion**
 - d) **Small group discussion**
 - e) **Reporting out/sharing takeaways/new thoughts**
- 5) **Additional comments/suggestions:**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!