

LESSON #5 IT'S TIME...to do Justice and Mercy

LESSON AIM: To encourage pupils to do justice and show mercy as a life style.

SCRIPTURE RESOURCE: Micah 6:8

TEACHING AID: CD of "Do You Really Care?" and CD Player

CREATING LEARNING READINESS: A CD of the song "Do you really care?" is available for each teacher to use in the classroom. (You will need to bring a portable CD player. If you do not have one, we have a few but not enough for everyone.) Ask pupils to listen attentively to the words of the song. [Our contemporary music leader recorded this for us.]

COMMENT: We've talked a lot about discovering our missional purpose but if we are going to carry out the Great Commission...if we are going to reconcile people to Christ, we have to care about them. We live in a society where we are much more concerned about ourselves than other people, about what we have or what we wear than about other people's basic needs.

In the RSV translation of Micah we read: "He has showed you, O man, 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?" (Micah 6:8)

In the NIV the verse reads: He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?

We can sum up the expected behavior in three words, **Justice, Mercy, and Humbleness**. (Write these three words on the chalkboard)

ASK: 1. How would you define "Justice"?

Webster: behavior to oneself or to another which is strictly in accord with currently accepted ethical law or as decreed by legal authority.

Webster says "to do justice to" is to act in such a way as to show *full appreciation of the worth or importance of*

Dan Vestal defines it as *doing what is right, both personally and socially*

ASK: 2. Justice and mercy are two things which society hopes for outside of religion but how do the phrases *full appreciation of the worth or importance of* and *doing what is right, both personally and socially* relate especially to Christianity?

The worth of the individual is of utmost importance since every human is made in the image of God. Apply “Inasmuch” scripture here. Christianity is all about doing the right thing.

ASK: 3. How would you define “Mercy”?

Webster: *Compassionate rather than severe behavior towards someone in one’s power.*

Vestal defines it as *being bighearted, tenderhearted, generous, giving and forgiving.*

ASK: 4. Why would God make this a requirement for us?

It’s a reflection of his behavior towards us.

If we want and expect such behavior towards us from those around us, it’s only fair that we accord them the same treatment.

ASK: 5. Webster defines humbleness in terms of being in submission. Do you see Christians and Americans in general in terms of humbleness? Why or why not?

Here are some statistics about life in America:

The average American has three television sets.

The average American watches TV at least five hours a day.

Half the pets in America are overweight.

Americans constitute less than 5% of the world’s population but consume nearly 25% of the world energy.

In 1997 approximately 501 million passenger cars were registered in the world. 25% were in the US.

In 1999, a year marked by good economic news, thirty-one million Americans were described as “hungry on a daily basis”; twelve million of these were children.

ASK: 5. Relate these statistics to the words Justice, Mercy and Humbleness.

SAY: Our theme scripture for this series has been 2 Cor. 5:18-20. “All this is from God who reconciled us from self through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them, and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are, therefore, ambassadors as through God were making His appeal through us.”

ASK: 6. What role do Justice, Mercy, and Humbleness play in our carrying this command to reconcile the world to Christ?

They are the basic elements of living a Christian life. We spend so much time thinking in terms of eternal life that we forget that Jesus not only came to the world to provide us a way for eternal salvation but he also came to teach us how to live in THIS world as Christians. He didn’t say become a Christian and I’ll transport you to heaven immediately and you’ll not deal with this world any more. He wanted us to experience what living the Christian life is all about here on earth. And a part of that process was introducing other people to Jesus Christ. By living the Christian life we open doors that allow us to carry out his Great Commission. By doing justice, showing mercy and living humbly we open doors for others to discover **what’s behind** our doing justice, showing mercy and living humbly.

COMMENT: In spite of the fact that Christianity is perceived of as a gigantic movement of millions of people and we talk about the Southern Baptist Convention and mega churches like Willow Creek Church in Chicago or large community churches like ours ...it all boils down to the fact that Christianity is an individual thing. Me. You. I have to do justice. I have to be merciful. I have to walk humbly before God and my fellow man. You have to do justice. You have to be merciful. You have to walk humbly before God and your fellow man.

The basic question all of us face in this area is whether we will be missional or not. In our first lesson in this series we gave out a card with a definition of being missional. “Being missional as finding our own way of putting our faith into action with or without necessarily being part of a program or an organized system. It is expressing our unique faith in a way that is all our own but which shows our faith in action.”

LET’S LOOK AT SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF “BEING MISSIONAL”

1. This must be something which is the range of what I can do –mentally, physically, psychologically, emotionally.
2. This can be done through some organization—maybe the church or maybe not— or it can be something I do as an individual on my own
3. I do not have to be doing some which requires an overt or vocal witness.

4. Other people may or may not be aware of what I am doing.
5. My intention in doing what I am doing must be to show God's love with the hope that someone will respond positively to the Good News of Jesus Christ.
6. I must be willing to share my faith verbally if the occasion arises. If someone says to me "Why are you doing this?" I must be willing to use that as an opportunity to say something like "because Jesus would want me to." And then deal appropriately with whatever comments this elicits.
7. I do not have to give any report on what I am doing. I am answerable only to God.

BRAINSTORM: With those guidelines in mind let's brainstorm about specific ways we can we can do justice, share mercy and walk humbly. Let's list some specific ways we can be "missional."

Examples:

Develop personal relationships with someone who needs attention. It may be something as simple as regular phone calls, visits, carrying food, being a listening ear.

Serve as a Big Brother, Big Sister type

Volunteer to work in some charitable organization

Have your own prayer ministry

Teach Sunday School, lead a bible study, work with children

Be a generous financial supporter of faith based programs

"Adopt" an elderly person, a needy family, a child of a single parent and help meet their emotional and physical needs.

Visit for Hospice

Do some personal witnessing

Do home repair for folks who need help

Visit for church regularly

Start a Bible study at work or with a group of friends

But remember that underlying all of these things is creating the opportunity to reconcile people to Christ.

CONCLUSION: Tell the class you have a homework assignment for them. They are to go home and come up with a list of three things that they might consider doing which would meet the definition of missional and would fit their abilities and personalities.