

Water of Life Community Church
BIBLICAL RECONCILIATION
WEEK 3
ROMANS 12:17-21

ICE BREAKER

PRAYER

WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Pastor asked the question, "Is there such a thing as correct or perfect justice?" Without God, there isn't! God, who promises to enact justice in the end, is the same God who went about accomplishing justice in His world by becoming a man and suffering injustice Himself. Indeed, Jesus did not judge us according to our sin as He had every right to do; instead, He took the penalty for our sin by going to the cross. As the Master goes, so go the disciples. Jesus sought to bring justice and righteousness to the people who needed it in His first-century world, and He became like them; He became like us—an object of human injustice. In the face of personal persecution, He entrusted Himself to the ultimate Judge. And so must we.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. READ MATTHEW 5:9, 43-48.

a. From what you know about Jesus' life, in what ways was He a peacemaker? In what ways did He stir things up? For what purpose did He say and do those things? Explain.

b. When might pursuing God's peace cause trouble in the world? Why?

c. How did Jesus' life demonstrate the teachings found in these verses?

d. Why is it so hard for us to love our "enemies"?

e. Read verse 48 again. How does the fact that God demands perfection from us, and yet when we can't achieve that, He fulfills His own requirements in our place speak to us about the pursuit of justice?

READ ROMANS 12:19-20, DEUTERONOMY 32:35, AND PROVERBS 25:21-22.

a. How do these verses relate to God's command in Matthew 5:43-44?

b. What do you think of the phrase, "leave room for God's wrath" (Rom. 12:19)? Does this strike you as odd or intuitive?

c. How does Proverbs 25:21-22 remind you of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5:39, 44)?

READ ROMANS 12:21.

a. How does verse 21 reiterate verse 17, while also expanding it? How do you see the command of verse 21 as an expression of gospel consistency?

b. How did Jesus avoid being conquered by evil? In the context of social justice, how do we avoid being conquered by evil?

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

How does Paul's exhortation for us to treat our enemies with kindness demonstrate the "upside-down" nature of the gospel and the kingdom of God? In what ways does this offer an alternative to the way the world thinks about justice and personal vindication?

What practices can we implement in order to guard against a vengeful and spiteful mindset toward others?

How would you explain to a non-Christian that God remains just even when forgiving sinners?

Thank God for His justice that came at the cross, and for His justice to come on the Day of the Lord. Praise God for sparing us of His judgment through Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with love, understanding, and wisdom in dealing with those who seek our harm.

GOING DEEPER / WEEKLY CHALLENGE

REFLECT

- What is the difference between revenge and justice?

RESPOND

- Prayerfully release any desire for revenge.
- Ask God to reveal your role in His desire for reconciliation.

Also ... subscribe to our e-devotionals by texting "edevotional" to 67076; or go to wolgroups.com and click on the eDevotional button for daily testimonies.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:43-44, New International Version (NIV)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,"