

**Sermon notes -Jan. 13, 2019**  
**“How to do Justice”**  
**Jordan Cantwell**

The Isaiah passage reveals God’s approach to bringing justice...

He will not cry or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.

God’s anointed one does not meet violence with violence, does not shout or rage in the streets, does not crush those perpetrate injustice – the damaged reed, the failing light – those whose own brokenness is expressed in acts of brokenness, who spread darkness and confusion. At the same time, God’s anointed also does not give up until justice is achieved. God’s spirit works in people to relentlessly pursue justice in a way that transforms brokenness with love.

Jesus knew these texts... perhaps he was thinking of these words as he decided to be baptized and begin the work God asked him to do:

I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

Luke tells us his first recorded “sermon” after his baptism is on a similar passage from Isaiah:

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

Jesus claims the work of justice as his own call to ministry. Through his experience of baptism, Jesus understands himself as anointed by God to a ministry of justice-making... and he wrestles with

the how of that in the wilderness.

In his ministry, Jesus carries out this work in ways that are consistent with Isaiah's description of the anointed one of God....

Eg. his interaction with Zaccheus

- Begins by calling forth his hospitality, invitation rather than condemnation... appeals to his goodness, open space for him to rejoin community...all this leads to repentance and justice, but begins by seeing the goodness in Zach that is buried deep out of view

Eg. his response to the Roman soldier

- Sees his faith, his compassion and his humanity even though the man participates in the oppression of Jesus and his people... recognizes the image of God in him despite how it has become distorted and obscured

Thank God that this is God's way of bringing justice, because too often I am Zaccheus.... I am the soldier.... I am the blind one who can not see past my own privilege.

As a baptized and baptizing community, we seek to be followers of Jesus' way, called to the ministry to which he was called... the world urgently needs those who "will not grow faint or be crushed" until justice is established in the earth... and who will pursue justice in a way that is humble, loving and transformative, that does not create more divisions, more hurt, more victims.

[Talk about the harmful and divisive tone of politics, media, social media and subsequent rise in hate crimes, political and social polarization, failure to listen and find common ground, easy vilification of those who disagree with us, etc....]

Need for an alternative way.

Tell story of Carlin's approach to me re: my faith and sexuality...

Tell story of Sheldon Cote & Norway House UC....