

Sacred Pursuit 3: *Blind Eye*

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<p>Simple Unexpected Concrete Credible Emotional Stories</p>
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(ME-WE-GOD-YOU-WE) (Orientation-Identification-Illumination-Application-Inspiration)

What do I want them to know? Why do I want them to know it?

What do I want them to do? Why do I want them to do it?

How can I say an old truth in a new way?

If this teaching is hard, how am I being redemptive?

ME:

Describe what make you mad, pound your fist. Explain your Holy Discontent.

WE:

What makes you mad?

What makes you pound your fist on the table and say "That ain't right!"

What gives you a 'holy discontent' in your gut?

- Maybe for you it's a job environment, or a relationship, or a parent, mistreatment...

GOD:

The Bible has a LOT to say about that feeling we've all felt. In fact, the Bible says that God has those feelings as well. It's called Injustice!

We are looking at the book of Proverbs in Sacred Pursuit. The ultimate pursuit is Wisdom. Wisdom then leads to wise choices in all the other areas of life. There are several main themes threaded throughout the book: Hard Work vs. Laziness; Generosity vs. Stinginess; Love vs. Lust; False Security vs. Real Security; Wisdom vs. Folly...

Last time at 4D we talked about Living Blindfolded - that many of us are willing to strap a blindfold on when making decisions, ignoring the eternal truth that **The Consequences of Tomorrow are determined by the Decision of Today**. Too often we ignore what Wisdom is telling us for the pleasures of the moment, and we give in to Folly.

Tonight: I want to talk with you about a different kind of blindfolding, and it has to do with the Proverbial topic of Justice vs. Injustice.

Isaiah tells us that "the LORD loves justice"

But what is Justice? If God loves it, I'd like to know what it is.

Is. 1:16-20 (give context) **"Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek (pursue) justice, encourage the oppressed (poor/need). Defend the cause of the fatherless (orphans), plead the case of the widow."**

We often confuse Justice with equality/fairness... let me try to distinguish the difference.

LESSON: Justice isn't always about what is Fair; Life may never be Fair for many people.

BUT, Justice *is always* about responding rightly to that which isn't fair.

- It isn't fair that 24,000 people will die of hunger - today! (16K children)!
- It isn't fair that in 2006 almost 10 million children died before reaching their 5th birthday, most by preventable causes, all related to poor nutrition.

- It isn't Fair that the US and Europe could solve the world's sanitation & food requirements if they simply stopped spending money on perfume for 1yr!! (\$13B)
 - (Which incidentally was the amount our govt just gave to GM to keep them afloat)
- It isn't fair that if the US manufactured just one less missile and redirected its money, a school full of hungry 3rd world children could eat lunch for 5 years!!
- **BUT, Justice demands that we are moved with concern to action!!**

Proverbs 28:5 “Evil men do not understand **justice**, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.” (Is the converse true?)

Prov. 29:7 “The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.”

1. A Heart like God's Cares about Justice & Injustice.

- But the fact is, we are sometimes so utterly unconcerned with the cause of Justice.
 - It's either the furthest thing from our minds – we just aren't thinking about it
 - We'd rather just turn a blind eye.

In fact, even our prayers can be affected by our attitude towards those in need!!

Prov. 31:13 “If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.” (Do you think maybe justice is important to God?)

- **Ironically**, we are usually VERY concerned about justice for ourselves!! What I deserve!!
 - This is often so innocent. Our lives have their own concerns! I need to eat. I need to work. I have stress, relational issues...
 - **But here's the hard part:** Scripture shows us that God wants us to be active participants in Justice for others, but when it comes to Justice for ourselves, his policy for us is 'hands off.' (whole other series!)
 - Might mean that you and I are the answer for each other's justice!!!
- SO why is it that we generally do so little about the cause of Justice in the world?
 - We're just not thinking about it or we just don't care
 - And even if we do care – *just* caring isn't enough!!

Micah 6:8 “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.”

2. A Heart like God's Acts on what it Cares about!

I don't mean to ruin your night, or to ruin your enjoyment of a diner later tonight, but if we have the heart of God, it won't allow us to turn a blind eye to Injustice!! If 2,000 passages of Scripture deal with this topic, then there's too much for us to ignore! And we can't just assume that someone else is on it.

- For what it's worth, James says that when we **know the good we ought to do and don't do it, that is sin!**

YOU:

So what can YOU do?? Isaiah told us to Seek Justice by doing the following:

- Encourage the oppressed (poor/need)
- Defend the cause of the fatherless (orphans)
- Plead the case of the widow

Now you might say, what can one person do?? You probably won't single-handedly solve world hunger, but you can make a dent!!

YET Too many of us would rather turn a blind eye to these problems. - it's just easier, isn't it?

- And maybe it isn't even about solving world problems like AIDS & Genocide. God is on it! Maybe for you and me it is all about adopting the heart of God. Jesus said in Matt. 25 that "whatever we do for the least of these we have done to him."

WE:

Jer. 22:15-16 (give context – about a king in Judah named Jehoiakim)

15 "Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? (Jehoiakim that this was the mark of a king)

Did not your father (Josiah) have food and drink?

He did what was right and just, so all went well with him.

16 He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well.

Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD. (Jehoiakim found himself outside God's Presence)

to KNOW: information of a person, with a strong implication of *relationship* to that person

- Maybe it's all about knowing Him!? "If you're not doing this, then you don't really know me."

Can you imagine what the world would be like if all Christians everywhere **knew** God like this, took up the cause of justice??!!? What would our community of 4D be like? How would it be transformed?? Or how could the world be transformed if every 4Der took personally just one cause of justice on a global scale??

Closing Discussion Questions: SO Where or How can you show justice this week? Would you be willing to decide tonight to be open to whatever the Holy Spirit might prompt your heart to do about this? Open your eyes this week to the cry of Injustice when you encounter it. And let it move you to action!!! Do something!!

Other Areas of Injustice:

- Homelessness – how many times have you turned a blind eye?
- Child Sponsorship
- World Hunger
- Poverty
- Worldwide AIDS epidemic
- Sex Slave trade
- Rwanda – civil war
- Genocide in Darfur
- Habitat for Humanity
- Mercy CCPC
- Refugee Camps in Somali
- Reading Opportunity House
- Relational justice among friends, family, co-workers, spouses

The world hunger problem: just a slice of Justice Issues worldwide:

Facts and Figures on Hunger and Poverty

- Today our world is home to 6.6 billion people. ²
- Every day around 24,000 people die directly from hunger or hunger related diseases. 16,000 are children – that's one every 5 seconds!
- In the Asian, African and Latin American countries, well over 500 million people are living in what the World Bank has called "absolute poverty"
- For the price of one missile, a school full of hungry children could eat lunch every day for 5 years. (Are the world's priorities mixed up? Wonder how God feels 'bout that?)
- In 2005, almost 1.4 billion people lived below the international poverty line, earning less than \$1.25 per day. ⁹
- **US\$20** can provide a child with six months of nutritious date bars.
- Nearly one in four people, (1.3 billion) live on less than \$1 per day, while the world's 358 billionaires have assets exceeding the combined annual incomes of countries with 45 percent of the world's people.
- To satisfy the world's sanitation and food requirements would cost only US\$13 billion- what the people of the United States and the European Union spend on perfume each year.
- In 2006, about 9.7 million children died before they reached their fifth birthday.
 - Most of these deaths are attributed, not to outright starvation, but to diseases that move in on vulnerable children whose bodies have been weakened by hunger.

Facts and Figures on HIV/AIDS

- In 2006, 4.3 million people become infected with HIV and 2.9 million people died of AIDS.
- (interconnectedness of the problem) Because the majority of those falling sick with AIDS are young adults who normally harvest crops, food production has dropped dramatically in countries with high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. ¹⁰
- Infected adults also leave behind children and elderly relatives, who have little means to provide for themselves. In 2003, 12 million children were newly orphaned in southern Africa, a number expected to rise to 18 million in 2010. ³
- Since the epidemic began, 25 million people have died from AIDS, which has caused more than 15 million children to lose at least one parent.

Extra Scripture:

Proverbs 21:15

When **justice** is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers. (b/c the righteous share the heart of God)

Prov. 19:5

⁵ A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free. (b/c it perverts justice)

Prov. 17:15

¹⁵ Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent— the LORD detests them both.

Prov. 18:5

⁵ It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the innocent of justice.

Proverbs 17:23

A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of **justice**. (God is concerned when justice is perverted)

Prov. 14:31 “He who oppresses (mistreat, treat unjustly) the poor shows contempt (willful disobedience, open disrespect) for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”

Kind: have mercy, be gracious, take pity on, show an act of kindness or compassion