

Do Justly: Being Zealous for Good Works That Exalt Jesus (Titus 2:14)

I. WE ARE CALLED TO DO WORKS OF JUSTICE AND TO LOVE MERCY

A. The prophet Micah summarized how God wants His people to live. We are called to be workers of justice and lovers of mercy with a spirit of humility. This is what God wants from us.

⁸ He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic. 6:8)

B. We are called to be zealous to do works of justice and mercy that exalt Jesus. To be zealous of good works is to be intentional and committed to participating with others so that good works are done on a regular basis, not merely in a casual and occasional way. They are a top priority to us.

¹⁴ That He might...purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14)

C. ***His special people***: The revelation that we are special to an infinitely great God, who deeply loves us and freely forgives us, awakens such love in us that we become zealous for good works.

D. We are called to make God's reputation known among unbelievers by doing good works.

⁹ You are...His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him...¹² When they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God.¹⁵ This is the will of God, that by doing good you put to silence...foolish men. (1 Pet. 2:9-15)

1. ***Proclaiming the praises of Him***: We proclaim His praiseworthiness and beauty. God entrusts His name and reputation in part to what He people do. God is honored when His people obey Him and He is blasphemed when they do wrong (2 Sam. 12:14; Rom. 2:24). The Church is to make Jesus' beauty and glory known to the world.

⁶ I will declare Your greatness. (Ps. 145:6)

2. ***Good works which they observe***: Unbelievers accuse God of being indifferent to the suffering that is in the world. Unbelievers listen to believers because of what they do more than what they do not do (in merely avoiding scandalous sin).

¹⁶ That they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Mt. 5:16)

3. ***Glorify God***: God is glorified by good works because they testify that His power can transform our lives, from our natural desire to live selfishly, to embracing sacrificial love.

4. ***They speak against you***: Unbelievers are naturally suspicious, critical and prejudiced against believers. They accuse the Church of being no different than they are.

5. ***Put to silence***: It is God's plan to silence the accusation of men against Jesus and the Church, by consistently doing good deeds of justice in a spirit of meekness. Works of justice will triumph over the false accusations and arguments against God's people.

- E. John the Baptist prepared the way of the coming Messiah by calling people to walk in justice.
⁴ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD...10 What shall we do then? 11 He (John) answered..., "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." 12 Then tax collectors...said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" 13 He said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you." 14 The soldiers asked him, saying, "What shall we do?" He said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages." (Lk. 3:4, 10-14)
- F. Jesus taught that the foundation of justice is first established in night and day prayer. The release of justice is most effective in context to night and day prayer.
⁷ Now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night...? 8 I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. (Luke 18:7-8; NAS)
- G. The justice movement that Jesus is raising up cries out night and day for justice, then overflows to do works of justice. We must never substitute prayer for works of justice or vice versa.
- H. Works of justice include feeding the poor, taking care of the needy, orphans, widows, homeless, and starving. Justice includes helping to alleviate the oppression of abortion, poverty, misogyny, racism (systemized prejudice), in the marketplace, law enforcement, medicine, education, employment, public services, etc.
- I. The IHOP-KC leadership team has recently set our heart to combine the *24/7 cry for justice* with *24/7 works of justice*. We seek to do outreach from prayer instead of outreach without prayer.

II. ISAIAH 58: WORKS OF JUSTICE WITH LOVE FOR MERCY

- A. Isaiah 58:1-12 gives us practical ways to do works of justice with mercy in a spirit of humility. Isaiah points out the error of seeking God without helping others (Isa. 58:1-5). They felt satisfied and justified in only seeking God without embracing works of justice and mercy.
- B. They asked why God did not see or honor their regular prayer with fasting (Isa. 58:3).
¹ Tell My people their transgression...² They seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways...they take delight in approaching God. ³ "Why have we fasted," they say, "and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?" (Isa. 58:3)
- C. God's answer was that they fasted to gain His favor on their business or ministry and to appear devout. This was to gain favor from the religious community in order to continue to make large profits, by not paying their employees properly, and by treating the people under them roughly.
³ In the day of your fast you...exploit all your laborers. ⁴ Indeed you fast for strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness. (Isa. 58:3-4)
- D. They fasted and prayed for greater power, influence and resources. Yet, they did not use this increase to support and mobilize more people in sacrificial love and good works that exalt Jesus.

- E. The fast that pleases God is joined with works of justice and mercy (Isa. 58:6-10).
1. Systemic injustice or institutional wickedness (Isa. 58:6): We are to help relieve people from the bondage, that results from oppressive laws and social barriers, that have been created over decades or centuries. They are referred to as bonds of wickedness or heavy burdens and yokes. We work to provide economic and educational opportunities, etc.
⁶ Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? (Isa. 58:6)
 2. Practical needs (Isa. 58:7-8): We are to help with the food, housing and clothing.
⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor...when you see the naked, that you cover him...? (Isa. 58:7)
 3. Genuine respect with dignity (Isa. 58:9): We must take away the yoke of demeaning attitudes and the pointing of the finger, in condescending speech, that belittles people. We cannot make uninformed generalizations about why they are in great need.
⁹ If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness... (Isa. 58:6-9)
- F. Seeking God must include these godly actions to be complete. Passion for Jesus must result in zeal for good works of justice that exalts Jesus. Faith without works is dead (Jas 2:20).
- G. What we do outside the prayer room is essential to what occurs in it. As we worship, we connect songs of love to Jesus with acts of love to the needy. Worship is love in action. The worship that moves God's heart flows from believers whose hearts are moved by the needy.
- H. Those who measure their numerical strength should not measure it by how many people sit in the sanctuary on Sundays, but by how many are zealous for good works in the community.
- I. God promises to break in with power to those who embrace God's chosen fast (Isa. 58:8-12). Power to heal the sick is better than just helping the sick with finances. The power to break demonic oppression off people is better than just hearing their pain with compassion.
⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer...¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones... (Isa. 58:8-11)
- J. We must zealously do good works on Jesus' terms or for His reasons. There is emerging a false justice movement called the harlot Babylon (Rev. 17). It will be rooted in humanism without absolutes and devoid of the revelation of Jesus. It will be a counterfeit justice movement that will feed the poor and do humanitarian projects. The fact that they are sincere about their mission does not lessen the damage of their lies. It is essential that the Church be zealous for works of justice to show forth the glory of Jesus.

III. THE DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP OF THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS

- A. It is impossible to love Jesus and not love people more. The greatest anointing of the Spirit is to walk in the two great commandments, by loving Jesus and our neighbor with all our heart. Loving God and others are bound up as one, as the visible measurement of our invisible love.
³⁷ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 The second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mt. 22:37-39)
- B. Our love for others is a reflection of our love for Jesus and is the greatest work of the Spirit.
¹⁰ God is not unjust to forget your...love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints... (Heb. 6:10)
- C. There is a dynamic relationship of the first and second commandments and the prayer room. Prayer is only a small percentage of the many ways we express love for God.
- D. We are equipped best to love others when we receive the love of God and love God in return. The Spirit sustains us with compassion that moves our heart, with the things that move His heart.
1. We sustain compassion for others by the gratitude and joy of abundantly receiving it from God. We value others most when we see how valuable we are to God. We love others in the overflow of being energized by the Spirit.
⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (Jn. 15:5)
 2. We gain the “fuel of intimacy” in times of prayer by connecting and relating to God as a Person. In prayer, we acquire the oil that is necessary to love God and people.
³ Those who were foolish...took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil... (Mt. 25:3-4)
- E. Prayer aligns our heart with the reality that we are living before His eyes. This is a key to not burning out in ministry. Christianity is an on-going encounter of love with a Person.

IV. SETTING OUR HEART TO BE ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS

- A. God desires to give us creative ideas on how we can help the oppressed. As we change the primary dream of our heart from getting more money, honor and comfort to connecting with His heart and exalting His name, then He will give creative ideas on how He will use us.
¹⁰ We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)
- B. We will never meet *all* the needs in our hurting world, but together we can make a difference in the lives of *some* by consistently doing small acts of compassion. God is raising up those who will courageously do great exploits, without being intimidated by the obstacles.