

In a world marked by brokenness, inequality, and suffering, the Christian faith calls us to a radical vision of justice, not as an abstract ideal, but as a lived reality that flows from the very heart of God. It is tempting, perhaps even comfortable, to compartmentalise justice and mercy, as though they are separate virtues to be pursued in different contexts. Yet Scripture reveals that they are deeply intertwined, and mercy finds its fullest expression when justice is truly in action.

The prophet Micah captures this vision powerfully in his well-known call: "He has shown you, O mortal, 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." (Micah 6:8). It is not an either-or proposition. Justice and mercy are two sides of the same coin, and our pursuit of one without the other distorts the very character of God we are called to reflect.

Consider the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. A man is left beaten and abandoned, stripped of dignity and left for dead. The priest and the Levite—representatives of religious piety—pass by on the other side, perhaps reasoning that mercy alone, detached from a sense of justice, is insufficient to intervene. But the Samaritan, moved by compassion, stops. His mercy is not a vague sentiment but an active response to the injustice suffered by the wounded man. He binds his wounds, carries him to safety, and pays for his care. Mercy flourishes because the Samaritan's heart is attuned to the injustice before him, and he takes action.

This is not merely an individual act of kindness; it points to a much broader reality. The biblical call to justice is not confined to personal charity, though that is part of it. Justice involves the ordering of society in a way that reflects God's righteousness, where the weak are protected, the poor are cared for, and the vulnerable are given voice. In Zechariah 7:9-10, we hear God's heart: "Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor." Justice here is not optional; it is a divine imperative, and it is precisely in the context of such justice that mercy flourishes.

Yet we must be honest. In our modern world, justice is often reduced to slogans or campaigns, detached from the deep moral vision that the Bible presents. There is a tendency to demand justice for our own causes while neglecting to extend mercy to those with whom we disagree. True biblical justice, however, is not selective. It requires a humility that acknowledges our shared humanity, our mutual brokenness, and our need for grace.

This is where mercy finds fertile soil. When we pursue justice not out of self-interest or ideology, but as an act of worship, recognising that every person bears the image of God, then mercy flows naturally. In the cross of Christ, we see this truth most

profoundly. There, divine justice and mercy meet in perfect harmony. The righteous demands of a holy God are satisfied, not by dismissing the weight of sin, but by bearing it in full. And mercy is extended, not because justice is ignored, but because it is fulfilled in love. As Paul writes in Romans 3:26, God is both "just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."

When we act justly in our communities—by defending the rights of the oppressed, advocating for the marginalised, and challenging structures of injustice—we create space for mercy to flourish. The two are not in conflict; they are partners in the restoration of God's shalom. It is in the pursuit of justice that mercy becomes tangible: a shelter for the homeless, a meal for the hungry, a voice for the voiceless. And it is in the practice of mercy that justice is made real, no longer an abstract principle but a lived reality in the lives of those around us.

Let us, then, be a people who hold fast to both justice and mercy, refusing to settle for one without the other. In doing so, we reflect the heart of our God, who is both just and merciful, and we become agents of His kingdom in a world longing for restoration.

1. What does it mean to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8) in our daily lives?

How do we see this lived out practically, and where might we struggle to hold these three together?

2. In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), how does the Samaritan demonstrate both justice and mercy?

What lessons can we learn from his example about responding to injustice in our communities today?

3. Why is it important that justice and mercy are not seen as separate, but as deeply connected?

Can you think of situations where focusing on one without the other leads to problems?

4. How does recognising every person as made in the image of God shape our approach to justice and mercy?

How does this perspective change the way we engage with people we may disagree with or find difficult to love?

5. How can we move beyond slogans and good intentions to embody a true, biblical vision of justice and mercy in our communities?

What practical steps can we take as individuals or as a group?