

Act Justly

Service with Holy Communion prepared by Rev David Bown

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Introduction

In these days of deals among countries and people with appalling reputations regarding human rights, whether it is in military hardware, profit seeking corporations or the world of sport, let justice roll on like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream. So says the prophet Amos and we cannot but give the rejoinder: Amen to that!

Hymn: God is here as we His people

Reading: Micah 6: 6-8

A meditative prayer:

Hymn: There's a wideness in God's mercy

The story/sermon: (extracts)

Where is the justice? It's a good question isn't especially in today's climate! Imagine listing all the injustice that's pervading the news these days, it would be endless. *(list examples)*

Quote Micah

"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." – The Woman caught in the act of adultery and our Lord's rejoinder had justice written all over it. We could make another list as long as your arm of the times Jesus confronted injustice with all its apparent hypocritical and corruptive elements and he never ceased using every occasion to implore those with influence, to change their ways and seek only justice to the abandonment, the absence of all injustice. The trouble is; it is when you are aware of so much all-consuming injustice that your blood levels rise to such a level that they take you from dismay to disbelief, from incredulity to sheer anger. And very sadly, it is only when the intensity of those passionate feelings of protest and outrage have righted the wrongs, that justice is achieved.

Just the other day, I was on my way home after a scintillating conversation with a friend and I thought to myself; 'Oh my goodness, we did a better job on all of those topics than Victor Meldrew himself!' It's too easy isn't to get carried away with your own views and opinions to such an extent that you turn yourself into a pious know-it-all?

Quote Micah with ? after each phrase.

"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." – The Woman caught in the act of adultery and our Lord's rejoinder had justice written all over it. We could make another list as long as your arm of the times Jesus confronted injustice with all its apparent hypocritical and corruptive elements and he never ceased using every occasion to implore those with influence, to change their ways and seek only justice to the abandonment, the absence of all injustice. The trouble is; it is when you are aware of so much all-consuming injustice that your blood levels rise to such a level that they take you from dismay to disbelief, from incredulity to sheer anger. And very sadly, it is only when the intensity of those passionate feelings of protest and outrage have righted the wrongs, that justice is achieved.

So the question is: cannot justice run like an ever flowing stream just on its own, without a gross injustice always preceding it?

But Micah in his text simply says, 'act justly'. In other words, act according to what is morally right and fair; but in an honourable way, righteously, honestly, dutifully, whether or not it is an action precipitated by something that is unjust, it doesn't matter.

Walk humbly with God: 'I am humbled!' easy to say and easily over-used, especially in one week! But it is not

what is said far from it, in fact there's a sense in which you cannot apply humility to yourself, because to 'walk humbly' more than implies it is an attribute conveyed upon you by those who perceive something integral in you – a worth, a value, a morality, indeed integrity itself.

And that is the trouble; that is the twist Jesus gave to so many of his encounters, stories and teaching. He turned the tables on the very people, those in fact who were most in need of his new teaching, his new morality, his new insights into righteousness. Echoing as Jesus did those words of Micah makes one big salient point: To strive for justice, first look at your own character, your own life before anything else.

I do remember is the way I was nurtured into accepting and appreciating a life, whereby I would ...

...Act justly

...Love mercy

...And walk humbly with my God.

Hymn: There's a Spirit in the air

Reading: John 8: 3-11

Holy Communion

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Blessing