



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Everyday Mission Series – Practicing Justice

Speaker: Rich Villodas – Lead Pastor

Scriptures: Ezekiel 3

3 And he said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel.” **2** So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.

3 Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it.” So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

4 He then said to me: “Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them. **5** You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and strange language, but to the people of Israel— **6** not to many peoples of obscure speech and strange language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely if I had sent you to them, they would have listened to you. **7** But the people of Israel are not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for all the Israelites are hardened and obstinate. **8** But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. **9** I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people.”

10 And he said to me, “Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. **11** Go now to your people in exile and speak to them. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says,’ whether they listen or fail to listen.”

12 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the LORD rose from the place where it was standing.^[a] **13** It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures brushing against each other and the sound of the wheels beside them, a loud rumbling sound. **14** The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the LORD on me. **15** I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days—deeply distressed.

Ezekiel’s Task as Watchman

16 At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me: **17** “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. **18** When I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for^[a] their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. **19** But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself.

20 “Again, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before them, they will die. Since you did not warn them, they will die for their sin. The righteous things that person did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. **21** But if you do warn the righteous person not to sin and they do not sin, they will surely live because they took warning, and you will have saved yourself.”

22 The hand of the LORD was on me there, and he said to me, “Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you.” **23** So I got up and went out to the plain. And the glory of the LORD was standing there, like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown.

²⁴ Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet. He spoke to me and said: “Go, shut yourself inside your house. ²⁵ And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes; you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people. ²⁶ I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious people. ²⁷ But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you shall say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says.’ Whoever will listen let them listen, and whoever will refuse let them refuse; for they are a rebellious people.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Pastor Rich will continue our series on Everyday Mission. He will explore what it means for us to be people of justice—those who work for a world that's marked by harmony, equality, and fairness.

Sermon Questions:

1. “Biblical Justice is about creating conditions where social harm is named, resisted, and reimagined so that every person is treated with equal dignity and worth.” Share where you have seen or experienced elements of this kind of justice or where you would like to see this kind of justice at work.
2. It can be challenging to live into that vision of biblical justice. Name areas where you struggle with addressing the injustices you see. What holds you back? Ex. being overwhelmed, too many opinions and competing solutions, compassion fatigue, etc.
3. Ezekiel was about to hastily speak into the situation of Israel’s exile, idolatry and injustice without fully understanding or taking time to listen first. He was full of bitterness and anger, but that began to change as he got closer to the situation. Pastor Rich quoted, “the further you are from the problem, the simpler the solution appears.” Can you share an example of when you made a fast judgment and reacted too quickly without taking time to understand the situation? What did you learn? How do you think moving in closer to the situation and people involved could have impacted your perspective?
4. Pastor Rich shared 5 marks of practicing justice in the world:
 - Spirit Led
 - Sit (proximity to people in pain)
 - Silence
 - Sorrow (guarding against moral numbness)
 - Speak

What strikes you about these practices? How can they help impact the way you respond to injustice?

5. Take time to pray for your life to be marked by God’s way of justice using the Franciscan Blessing and/ or your own words.

A Franciscan Blessing

*May God bless us with discomfort
At easy answers, half-truths,
And superficial relationships
So that we may live
Deep within our hearts.*

*May God bless us with anger
At injustice, oppression,
And exploitation of people,
So that we may work for
Justice, freedom and peace.*

*May God bless us with tears
To shed for those who suffer from pain,
Injustice, starvation and war,
So that we may reach out our hands
To comfort them and
To turn their pain into joy.*

*And may God bless us with enough foolishness
To believe we can
Make a difference in the world,
So that we can do
What others claim cannot be done.*