

Justice is part of God's nature, it is the way that he runs the universe. Law and grace are both flow from God's nature and appear in his dealings with us. John 1:17 says: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Moses revealed God's law and justice while Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal God's mercy, love, and forgiveness.

Law came first. Unfortunately, none of us (mankind) could live up to the just demands of the law because of our sin. So God mercifully, sent Jesus Christ to fulfill the law in our place (Matthew 5:17). He bore the curse of the law in our place and wins the promise of the law for us as our head and "second Adam." So in Christ we have eternal life.

We cry out for justice when we are wronged, but for mercy when we are wrong. How amazing that God has answered our call for mercy through Jesus Christ while we were still piling up our sins. God's mercy comes to us freely through Jesus Christ. If we do not personally accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, we remain subject to God's justice, punishment and eternal curse.

The way of eternal life lies open. The sacrifice has been slain and the guests are called to the feast. The amnesty has been declared and rebels are now able to come, lay down their arms and devote their service to the conquering King. Salvation has come to you right now. Just take this moment to acknowledge the evil of your disobedience to God and ask Jesus to take control of your life and to live in your heart as the center of you life. It is so easy a humble child can do it! Do it now.

These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon and can be picked up from the table at the back of the sanctuary and are also posted at <http://sermonhouse.com/SSBC>.

Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact studyeditor@southshorebaptist.com

*South Shore Baptist Church
578 Main Street, Hingham, MA 02043
(781) 749-2592*

The Book of Proverbs

Godly Wisdom for Everyday Life

SSBC Proverbs Bible Study # 45

Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passages that will be the basis of the sermon next week.

Topical Series: Wisdom Lived out in Community

This Week's Key Passage: Proverbs 29:4

Sermon Date: August 24, 2008

Uphold justice.

The prophet Micah gave us his prescription for right living in Micah 6:8 NIV: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. An what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God".

The dictionary defines justice as the principal of "ideal or moral rightness." As we support specific values, practices and institutions for "upholding justice" we must remember who we are. Even the best hands raising the banner of "moral rightness" are corrupt, sinful hands. The Scripture says in Romans 3:23 that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".

Also there is a complementary concept that must always accompany justice: "mercy". Ever notice that when we are wronged, we cry out for "justice," but when we are found guilty, we cry out for "mercy." How do these two ideas go together? What is their role in our own actions as we seek to "uphold justice?" Let's explore these ideas together in Proverbs.

1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the following charts to note your observations and any questions you have. The first verse below is the key verse for this study. Keeping this verse in mind, read each of the subsequent verses and note how each provides further insight into the meaning of this key verse.

Scripture	Your Observation & Questions
<p>Key Text: Proverbs 29:4 NIV</p> <p>^{29:4} By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.</p> <hr/> <p>^{13:23} A poor man's field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away.</p> <p>^{16:10} The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth should not betray justice.</p> <p>^{16:12} Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness.</p> <p>^{17:15} Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent— the LORD detests them both.</p>	

Scripture	Your Observation & Questions
<p>^{17:26} It is not good to punish an innocent man, or to flog officials for their integrity.</p> <p>^{18:5} It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the innocent of justice.</p> <p>^{20:26} A wise king winnows out the wicked; he drives the threshing wheel over them.</p> <p>^{22:28} Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.</p> <p>^{28:5} Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.</p> <p>^{29:7} The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.</p> <p>^{29:12} If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked.</p> <p>^{29:14} If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure.</p>	

2. Next, use this chart to interpret some key observations.

a. From the chart on the previous pages, select a few of your observations & questions that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and then interpret and apply each of them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

Observation What does it Say?	Interpretation What does it mean?

3. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- ◆ **S**ins to avoid
- ◆ **P**romises to believe
- ◆ **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- ◆ **C**ommands to obey
- ◆ **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them — listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

Application How do I apply what it means?

4. Justice is established by judgment (Genesis 18:25; Psalm 75:7, 82:8; Hebrews 12:23). What are some of the reasons people reject the idea that God judges people?
5. What are some reasons the Bible emphasizes justice? Consider Isaiah 30:18; John 1:1-18, Psalm 37:28-31; Psalm 58 and Revelation 20:12-15.
6. What are some reasons it is often hard for us to recognize that God is acting justly? Consider Psalm 6:1-3; Ezra 9:15; Jeremiah 30:10-11 and 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.
7. Why should we work to see justice upheld in the world? Consider also John 14:15; Psalm 82:3-4; Psalm 58:11; and Revelation 20:12-15.
8. The destiny of every person is to put on full display the unfettered glory of God's full justice. What are some ways this vision promotes justice in this present age? Consider 2 Peter 3:8-15.
9. What are some ways we might uphold justice?
10. How can you apply what you have learned in this study to your life this week?

Memory Verse

Proverbs 18:5

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