



Links Players

KINGDOM INVESTMENTS 4: JUSTICE

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice...” (Matthew 23:23, NIV)

JUST A WEEK AGO, WE CONSIDERED THE RULES OF GOLF. You have almost certainly heard that one of the reasons you want to be knowledgeable when it comes to the Rules is so you can take advantage of the them. What that means, of course, is that sometimes knowing the Rules can help you apply them in a way that betters your position rather than penalizes you. We can live with this. But if instead, we saw someone taking advantage of the Rules in a way that they were not intended to be applied, we have a word for that: unjust.

You may be surprised to discover how significant a matter justice is in God’s eyes and how active a role he wants his people to play in initiating and protecting it.

In Matthew 23, we read of a time when Jesus stood face to face with a number of religious leaders and spoke to them strongly about the way they were behaving. This surely shocked them, and not just because of Jesus’ tone. They thought they were doing really well when it came to pleasing God. They had created a large number of piggyback laws, because they wanted to be sure that they weren’t missing what God wanted them to do. Yet they were. And now Jesus was telling them exactly how.

In the middle of this encounter, he exposed for them that all their meticulousness about this little matter and that was causing them to miss three key traits of those who serve God best: justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Jesus picked three things close to God’s heart, and the leadoff hitter was justice.

In our time, it is a common error to think of justice as “my side wins.” We’re willing to overlook strong evidence contrary to our own, because justice has come to mean that the judge or the crowd sides with me.

We know this was not Jesus’ idea of justice, because he spoke too often of personal sacrifice and of “taking up our cross.” An understanding of true justice recognizes that others may be harmed by insidious systems, slumlords, bullies. Some are hurt by their own frailty or ignorance. *Who will be there for them?*, Jesus wanted to know. *Who will take up the cause of those who cannot help themselves?* This is a Christian’s call, the work of one who has Jesus’ heart.

Opening questions What is a rule in golf that you commonly use to help yourself on the course? How do you know you’re applying the rule in a just way?

READING Genesis 18:16-19; Micah 6:8; Proverbs 29:7

Abraham’s charge (Genesis 18)

How meaningful is it that God showed his desire for justice so early in his relation with men? In what way do you think Abraham’s “great and powerful” legacy was connected to his willingness to follow God’s path for him?

Acting justly (Micah 6)

We often think of justice as a noble concept, but it must be acted out in order to be realized. What are some ways we can act justly in our homes, in our businesses, in our clubs, in our churches, and in our communities?

Looking out for others (Proverbs 29)

What does this proverb commend? Both the proverb and our devotion today emphasize looking out for others. How well do you do this now? How can you be more mindful of the needs of the poor and hurting?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: https://youtu.be/z117_GC6eOA