



Sermon Series: The Church In An Upside Down World

Christ First Church
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June 20, 2021

Sermon 3: THE SAD GREAT AWOKENING

Acts 2:38-47 & 4:32-37

INTRO: Thank you for coming back to the third and final week of our series, “The Church in an Upside Down World”. Go ahead and find your place in scripture at Acts 2. The fifth book of the New Testament, the Book of Acts, chapter 2.

Well, I hope this series has been meaningful to you. That it has enlightened you as to what we are dealing with as a church in this culture that we are positioned and purposed in. Make no mistake about it, we were created for such a time as this! God has placed us here in this moment to be a light to this world. And for that we should be extraordinarily thankful that God has invited us into His work, to make a difference in this world!

Last week, I preached on the subject, “Who Keeps Shaking the Snow globe?”. The first week of the series I preached on, “This Bazzaro World”. Today, I am dealing with the subject of social justice. I have titled my sermon, THE SAD GREAT AWOKENING.

As I taught last week, to be considered “WOKE” by CRT proponents, one who is deemed an oppressor by critical theory must have a new found awareness in the area of so called social justice and racial justice. They must accept responsibility, repent, and take up the antiracial cause themselves, meaning they advocate on behalf of the “oppressed”, which includes, but is not limited to, the BLM movement, the LGBTQIA+ movement, the climate change/green movement, and there are others. But in addition to that, they must also turn their back on traditional Christianity and the Bible, and their families, if they come from a group that is considered oppressors. And if they are willing to do that, then they are “WOKE” That is what is being taught. So, as you can see, this is not just a racial issue.

Sadly, some so called Christians have made this decision. And not just a few. The truth is, there are churches, and denominations, led by those who are deceived or have intentionally walked away from the truth, that are brazenly carrying the torch of critical race theory and social justice. They wear the banner of WOKENESS and have turned their backs on the truth of God’s Word. And they, together with evil ones, are chipping away at the moral foundation of our world. And as David wrote in Psalm 11:3 *“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”*

SO, it is very important to know the truth. And God’s Word is truth. And here at Christ First Church we believe in the inerrancy, inspiration, and all sufficiency of the Bible. So, if you want to hear the truth and know it, you are in a good place!

Before we get into the sermon, let me make sure we all know what SOCIAL JUSTICE is. If I were to ask 10 of you what social justice meant, there’s a good chance I would get 10 different answers. So, let me share with you what we’re talking about.

According to the **Oxford Dictionary of the English Language** - SOCIAL JUSTICE: Justice at the level of a society or state as regards to possession of wealth, commodities, opportunities, and privileges. (See Distributive Justice)

So, according to the Oxford Dictionary Social Justice is the same as Distributive Justice. It is Marxist socialism. And Marxist theory calls socialism the first, necessary phase on the way from capitalism to communism.

William H. Young wrote an article on the National Association of Scholars website, where he said, "Social justice is the frequently professed ideal of the academic left, progressivism, and postmodern multiculturalism in America. Its core concept, while often amorphous, is the redistribution of resources and advantages to the disadvantaged to achieve social and economic equality." Social Justice is state redistribution.

The social justice movement seeks to rectify what they believe is the unjust exploitation of the poor by all those who are rich. Again, their assertion is, that there are primarily two groups of people, oppressors, and the oppressed. And there's no in between.

NOW, to see how badly social justice misses the mark, we need to understand what biblical justice is. To do that we need to go to the source. Read with me in Acts chapter 2, beginning at v 38.

Acts 2:38-47 *"Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 This promise belongs to you and your children and to all who are far off—to all whom the Lord our God will call to Himself." 40 With many other words he testified, and he urged them, "Be saved from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who embraced his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to the believers that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. 46 With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*

And we read something very similar in chapter 4.

Acts 4:32-37 *"The multitude of believers was one in heart and soul. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they owned. 33 With great power the apostles continued to give their testimony about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And abundant grace was upon them all. 34 There were no needy ones among them, because those who owned lands or houses would sell their property, bring the proceeds from the sales, 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet for distribution to anyone as he had need. 36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (meaning Son of Encouragement), 37 sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."*

Wow, you may think that sounds a lot like social justice. That's why it's important to know the Word and how it applies to our lives. Let's look at these verses a little closer.

Let me give you the backstory to what's going on in these verses. This is all taking place a few weeks after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus has just ascended back to the Father in Heaven, and true to His word, He sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to fill the apostles, and all who believed with power from on high. In the first verses of chapter 2 of this book of Acts, we see this outpouring of the Spirit. Then Peter stands up and preaches the gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At this Word, 3000 people get saved. And from there the church was born. The verses we are looking at today describes what happened in the lives of those people who gave their hearts to God. Notice...

I) THEIR CHARITY: ch/vv 2:44-45, 4:32 *"All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need... 32 The multitude of believers was one in heart and soul. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they owned."*

Biblical justice differs from social justice in the fact that it is birthed in CHARITY! Ch 2:44 states, *"All the believers were together and had everything in common"* The Greek word translated "common" here, is the word "Koinos" which carries the meaning of a "shared oneness". In v 42 we read, *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."* "Fellowship" is the word "Koinonia" meaning, what is shared in common as the basis of fellowship. These two words show us that there was great unity and love among these believers, and because of that they acted out in charity toward one another.

Social justice is not charity, nor is it done out of love. It is a forced compliance that is state provoked. That's the opposite of what God intends. As a matter of fact, if we read on into chapter 5 we can see this plainly. vv 1-5 *"Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2 With his wife's full knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds for himself, but brought a portion and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and withhold some of the proceeds from the land? 4 Did it not belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How could you conceive such a deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God!" 5 On hearing these words, Ananias fell down and died..."*

So, here in this sad story we can see that the church was not forcing anyone to sell their property and give the money to the poor. It was their money to do with as they pleased. THEY GAVE ALL TO THE CHURCH, because they recognized the great debt they owed to God for their salvation, and because of His love in their hearts. THEY GAVE OUT OF CHARITY AND LOVE!

To understand the difference between social justice and biblical justice, you need to know the difference between COMMUNISM and COMMONISM. Communism says, what's yours is mine, if I can get it. Commonism says, what's mine is yours if you need it. Communism has the mind and heart of a thief, while commonism has the mind and heart of God. Notice...

II) THEIR CARING: ch/vv 4:33-35 *"With great power the apostles continued to give their testimony about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And abundant grace was upon them all. 34 There were no needy ones among them, because those who owned lands or houses would sell their property, bring the proceeds from the sales, 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet for distribution to anyone as he had need."* WOW, that is so amazing! And they weren't asked to do this. They did it because they CARED for one another.

I) THEIR CHARITY: ch/vv 2:44-45, 4:32

II) THEIR CARING: ch/vv 4:33-35 CONTINUED v 34 “*There were no needy ones among them...*” That should challenge our hearts! Somehow, during a time when these people were enslaved to Rome, and in a congregation that numbered well over 3000, they managed to CARE for one another to the degree that the Bible says, there was not a needy person among them!

That's what knowing the scripture and obeying the scripture can produce! God has a perfect plan for the world if people would just listen and obey. God's ways are higher than man's ways! And that's why secular humanist social justice falls short of biblical justice.

Because of God's love in their heart and the apostles teaching, these people learned to CARE for one another in a way that was life changing.

So, we see their CHARITY and their CARING. Now notice lastly...

III) THEIR COMMITMENT: ch/vv 2:46-47, 4:36-37 “*With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.... 36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (meaning Son of Encouragement), 37 sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*” **REALLY, WHAT MORE DO WE NEED TO SAY!**

These people were committed to God and one another! You will never find this type of commitment in a forced state! Look what it says in v 46. It says they were “...*sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart,*”

DO YOU SEE ANY GLADNESS IN THOSE THAT ARE TRYING TO FORCE THE SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA? No! Sadly, progressives, and social justice warriors are among the saddest, most angry people you will ever meet. They scream and yell, and spew venom at anyone who disagrees with their perverted notion of a utopia state brought about by force to make others conform to their ideologies. HOW SAD. But Christians are happy people. We serve with gladness! We share the love of God with a world that hates us, and smile as we do it.

ILLUS: Robert Arthington lived in a single room, cooked his own meals, and shared his friendship with students who were in need. Yet he gave tremendous amounts of money during his lifetime to Christian missions. When he died, his estate was worth about five million dollars which he willed all of to missions.

Of those who knew him, and knew of his great wealth, no one could understand why he lived such a simple life consisting of a single room. Then after his death a letter he had received from a missionary was found in his belongings. It said, “Were I in England again, I would gladly live in one room, make the floor my bed, a box my chair, another my table, rather than the heathen should perish for the lack of knowledge of Jesus Christ.” Robert Arthington was determined to make that kind of self-denial the pattern for his life. And he did so with great joy!

CONCLUSION: If you are here and don't know the joy I have been speaking of today, I have good news for you... God loves you!