



**Jesus Christ: Bringing Justice To the Poor-**  
 What does justice mean to God, for the poor, for us? What does the covenant have to do with it? Who are the just? Find out.

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# Mary Craig Ministries • News

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## Jesus Christ: Bringing Justice To the Poor

By Dr. Mary Craig

*Give the king Your judgments,  
 O God, and Your righteousness  
 To the king's Son.  
 He will judge Your people with righteousness,  
 And Your Poor with justice.  
 The mountains will bring peace to the people,  
 And the little hills, by righteousness.  
 He will bring justice to the poor of the people;  
 He will save the children of the needy,  
 And will break in pieces the oppressor.*  
 (Psalm 72.1-4 NKJV)

**J**ustice. The word describes the character and activity of God and should distinguish God's people from others. We could use the word "righteousness" in its place. The Hebrew *tsedaqah* (צִדְקָה) incorporates two aspects of one idea, loyalty to a relationship. In the OT righteousness or justice is the fulfillment of the requirements of a relationship, whether with God or with His creation. Each relationship brings with it a set of expectations, a set of commands and demands to be fulfilled. Fulfilling the conditions imposed by the relationship constitutes justice.

*Tsedaqah* (צִדְקָה) concerns the right order of things, the correct ordering of the creation according to divine intention. Justice, then, would be conformity to the right order of things as God intended for His creation.

Things are to be as they ought to be, as God intended them to be, as God orders them to be.

For example, when weights and measurements are true to what they ought to be, they are just. (**Lev. 19.36; Ezekiel 45.10**) When sacrifices are true to what they should be, they are just. (**Psalm 4.5; 51.19**) When God acts in accord with His nature, He is just. He reveals Himself in mighty acts, which are to be remembered and proclaimed and commended to future generations (**Psalm 71.15-17; Psalm 66.1-6; Psalm 145**, e.g.). Nothing exemplifies God's justice more than His acts of

salvation and deliverance, His saving deeds, and His mercy and forgiveness as He remains loyal to Himself and loyal to His covenant promises. (**Psalm 31; 71; Isaiah 46.13; Isaiah 51; Isaiah 61.10**, e.g.)



■ "Righteousness"

**God is faithful to His covenant promise.** God's covenant is a unilateral commitment in which God

commits Himself to act toward His chosen covenant partner with unmerited favor or grace, with overwhelming kindness and generosity, with saving mercy. When God faithfully carries out what He has pledged



■ **God judges with equity: the wronged receive mercy and the perpetrators receive justice.**

to do in covenant relationship, God is just. When God orders things according to His divine intention, He is just. When God brings low the exalted and raises the lowly, He is just. When God acts for the sake of His name, when He is faithful always to act for His own name's sake in order to preserve and display His glory, He is just. (**Psalm 143; Isaiah 43.25; Isaiah 44.23; 46.13; 48.9-11; Daniel 9**)

When God moves in some mighty act of redemption, it is not based on merit or demerit, but on God being true to what He promised in His covenant of grace. In that covenant, God commits Himself to help and to save wretched, undeserving people. God's justice generally has a positive meaning of deliverance, help, and salvation. Yet within that deliverance of the oppressed comes by implication the destruction of the oppressor. Thus, when God's judgment falls, the wronged receive mercy while the perpetrators and profiteers receive retributive and remunerative justice.

God rewards His rational creatures in proportion to their works, without partiality (**Deut. 10.17; Romans 2 and 3; 1 Thessalonians 1.5-7**), acquitting the righteous and condemning the guilty (**Exodus 23.7**). God judges with infinite wisdom and knowledge, with a commitment to truth, and with a constant integrity.



God judges with equity.

**When we think about justice, we must inquire into the nature of God.** He is the Judge of all the earth who does right. He holds in His hands and heart the eternal destinies of all peoples. Scripture tells us that God loves justice and hates evil. He has compassion for those who experience injustice and seeks to rescue them. He judges and condemns the perpetrators of injustice.

Herman Bavinck notes that God's righteousness is "usually represented as the principle of the salvation of God's people," i.e., the "attribute by virtue of which God justifies [acquits] the righteous, and exalts them to glory and honor." (Bavinck, Herman. *The Doctrine of God*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1977, Pgs 216, 217) God is just when He grants salvation in accord with His covenant of grace, when He establishes them, helps them, answers them, hears them, delivers and revives them, acquits them, when He demonstrates His lovingkindness to them, when He shows forth His grace to them and forgives their sins. God fights their battles, gives them victory, pours His Spirit into their hearts, grants them a new heart, writes His law in their hearts, and delivers them from sin.

God is just. He cares about the right exercise of author-

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ity, how rulers rule. He wants dominion, not domination. He desires a proper use of power, not exploitation. He seeks conformity to His standards of morality and holiness, love and grace, not the strong preying on the weak or the misuse of power. He is against that one who takes from others what God has given them, things like life, dignity, liberty, or the fruit of their own labors. Thus the prophet Nathan tells King David a story about a rich man who used his power and influence to steal a poor man's only lamb to point out David's injustice when he used his kingly position to take Uriah's wife and then put Uriah in a place where he would be killed.

When the strong use force and deceit to take from the weak, God will take up the cause of the weak and oppressed and move to fight their enemies. God loves justice. He hates robbery and iniquity. (**Isaiah 61.8**) **Psalms 10-13** will tell you more.

**Jeremiah 9.23, 24** reveals God's passion for justice. "This is what the LORD says: 'Let not the wise man



■ **David the shepherd likely never envisioned himself capable of some day exploiting Uriah.**

boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and

knows Me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight.'" Doing justice involves pleading the cause of the afflicted and needy. (**Jeremiah 22.15, 16**)



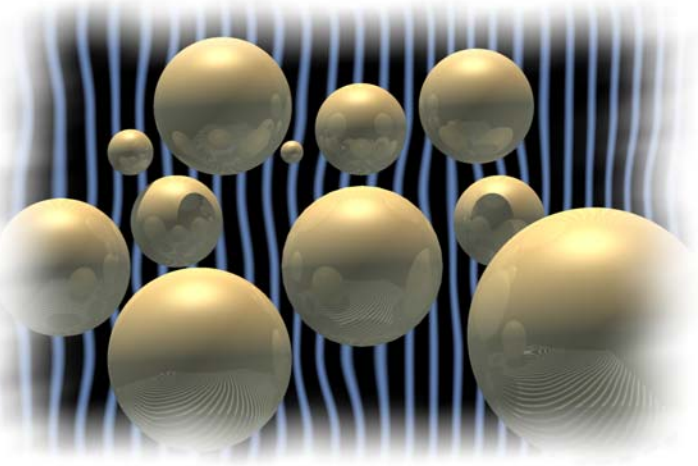
The just man or woman and the just community are rightly related to God and neighbor. Who are the just? They are the ones who:

1. Wait for God (**Isaiah 33.2; Micah 7.7-9**)
2. Hope in God (**Psalm 69.6; 71.5, 14; 146.5**)
3. Seek after God (**Psalm 69.6; 32**)
4. Trust in God (**Psalm 71.5; 143.8**)
5. Know Yahweh and fear Him (**Psalm 36.10; Psalm 103**)
6. Love God's Name (**Psalm 69.36**)
7. Cry out to God when distressed (**Psalm 35; 140**)
8. Have God as their sole refuge and fortress (**Psalm 5; 14; 52; 71; 143**)
9. Bow before His judgments (**Psalm 94; 118**)
10. Acknowledge their sin and offer Him a broken spirit and a contrite heart (**Psalm 32; Psalm 51**)

When Abraham believed God, Paul says, it was considered justice (**Genesis 15; Romans 4.3**). When the nation of Israel had faith in God, they were doing their



part and considered just. The just shall live by faith. (**Habakkuk 2.4**) God expects His people to relate in correspondence to His own acts of justice. So, they must not mistreat or oppress aliens, take advantage of the weak and poor, mistreat slaves, defend the cause of the fatherless and widow. (**Exodus 22; Deut. 10.18, 19; 23.15, 16; Psalm 76; Psalm 103**)



■ **Vertical Relationship - Justice before God**

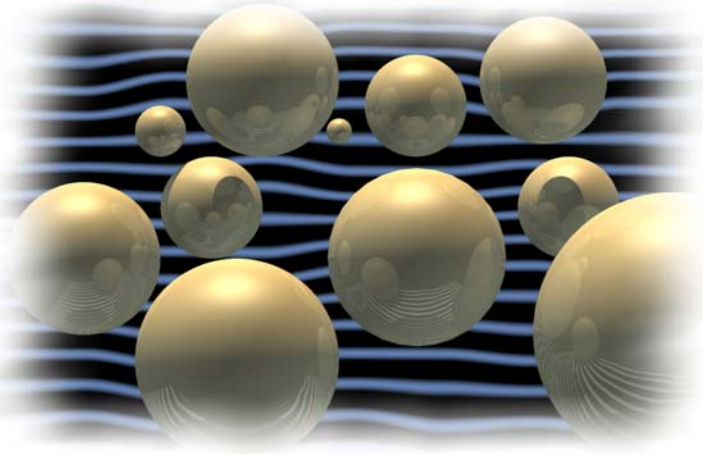
The just or righteous person of the Old Testament is a person of compassion and benevolence, especially toward the poor, the needy, and the oppressed. Thus the righteous in the covenant demonstrate righteousness or justice by dedicating themselves to bringing deliverance and restoration to the needy and afflicted who are unable to help themselves. Faith fulfills the demands of the just person's relationship with God while deeds of mercy fulfill the demands of the just person's relationship with the creation. In Romans we see Paul arguing that faith alone is reckoned as justice before God because he deals with the vertical relationship, while James argues that justice is faith in action on behalf of the destitute because he deals with the horizontal relationship.

**Israel had a king.** His chief function was that of judge. The two aspects of judgment are justice and wrath. The king was to rule, judge, and execute decisions. The king was to administer justice in Israel, mirroring God's justice by coming to the aid of the suppressed, repressed, and oppressed. (**Jeremiah 21.12; Jeremiah 22.3, 15, 16**) The king was God's representative as well as the people's representative. God covenanted with David to establish his royal line forever. Israel was "in David" (**2 Samuel 20.1**). The prosperity of Israel was bound up with the king. So if the king was just and God's faithful son, the people were

blessed. If the king did not fulfill the conditions of relationship, the entire nation was liable to punitive judgment (**2 Samuel 24**). If God rejected the king, Israel was rejected also. (**Psalm 89**)

But **what if there were a perfect king?** What if a perfect representative of God and of the people ascended the throne as God's anointed king? **Psalm 72** tells us that such a just king would mean that all the blessings of God would come upon the people of God in full measure. The blessings would include peace and security within the community along with abundance of crops, prosperity, fertile fields, and homes. The blessings would be encompassed in shalom, life in its fullness. The instrument for bringing this condition of blessedness would be God's Messiah, because only as the king stood perfectly in relationship with the Lord and with Israel would such blessedness become a reality. Such a ruler would restore to Israel all the goodness of the creation and perfectly embody God's justice.

**It is Jesus Christ who brings justice to the poor.** He delivers the needy and the poor, those who have no helper. He takes up the cause of the oppressed. The Spirit of the LORD is upon Him, which has anointed Him to preach good news to the poor; He has sent Him to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (**Luke 4.18, 19**)



■ **Horizontal Relationship - Faith in Action**

By the time Jesus came from heaven into history, born of a woman, born under the Law, His message and deeds surprised the Jews and offended the current





# Reaping Where He's Plowed:

**Barnabas Project in action**

By David Patten

The most awesome aspect of the second Mary Craig Ministries' sojourn to the Homestead area for the Barnabas Project, held on Sunday, November 23, was the spirit of the place. It was so evident that things had changed since our first visit. Then, Jim and I had nervously requested the permission of Enrique, the chief of the soccer



■ David Patten extends the love of Christ.

league, to distribute items to the farm workers. Now we strolled over to him like old Homestead friends, reminded him of our ministry, and were rewarded by, "Oh, sure, sure." Enrique recalled our earlier visit with a smile and nodded that yes, we could certainly



■ Carlos, David, Joanna, Mary, Gustavo, Marcia, Steve, and Jim (photographer) prepare to head south to Homestead.

occupy the central gazebo area in order to distribute Barnabas items.

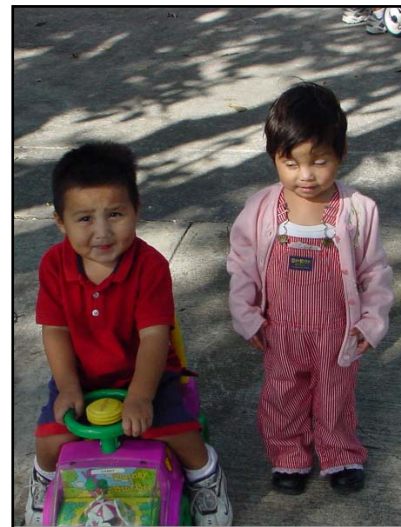
It was a beautiful, sunny day to be in the Everglades area, and quite beyond the weather it felt like many strongholds had been broken. Even the carpet of broken beer bottles seemed to be diminished, and this time no one was skulking about distributing cult literature. It was clear that our prayers had cleared the way for our Lord to begin His merciful healing work on behalf of the farm workers.



■ Babies find delightful toys.

We knew going in that this trip would be different from the first. After all, this time we would distribute the Barnabas Box. It was an important assemblage of largely symbolic, spiritual items.

One of the great blessings of the day was watching the children's eyes light up when they saw the toys, clothes, and school supplies. The notebooks and pencils and markers seemed to disappear like a few drops of water in the Sahara, so quickly did they disappear. Many of the families had three or more children and it was interesting to see how they sifted together through the items, helping each other. Even with a wealth of material goods that they might have

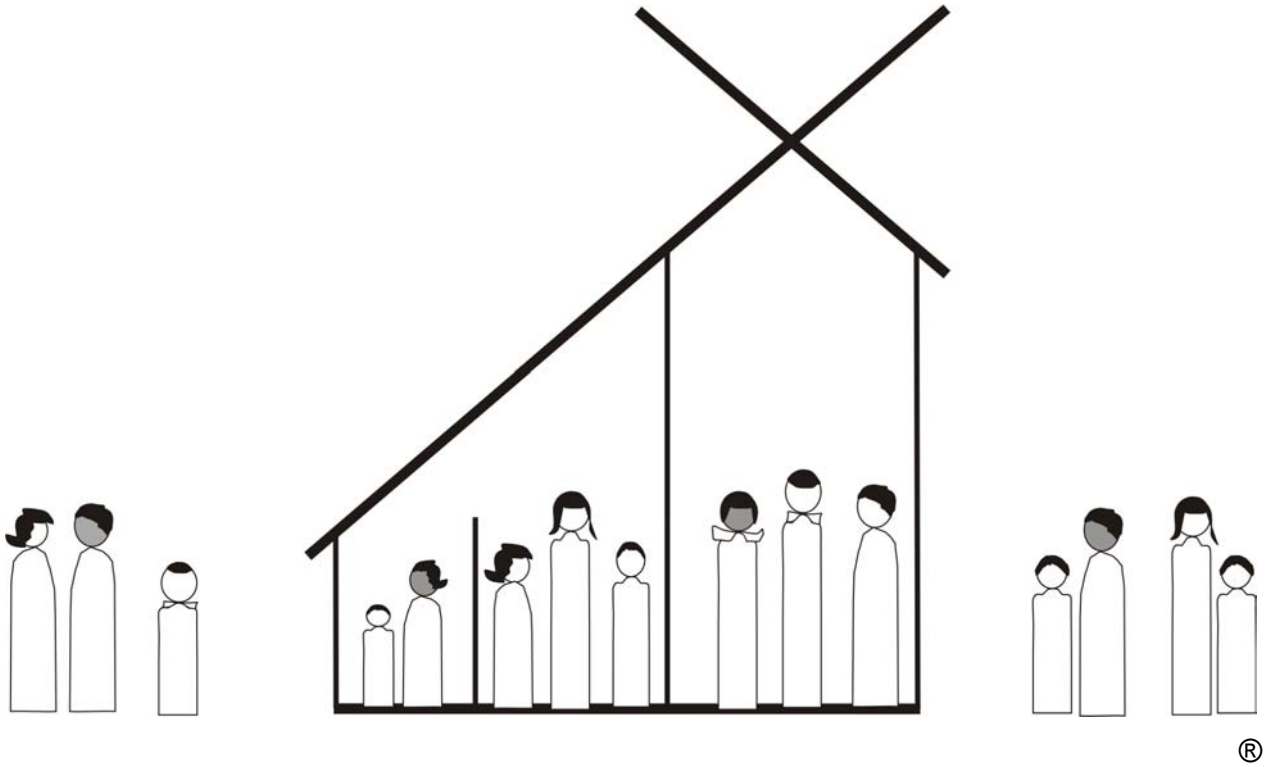


■ Little ones enjoy the day.

Even with a wealth of material goods that they might have



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# *Craighouse*

**A Commission of Mary Craig Ministries**

## Craighouse- Christ-Serving Refuge Based on the Scriptures

**Deuteronomy 33:27** *"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before you..."*

**Ruth 2:12** *"...the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you are come to trust."*

**I Samuel 22:2,3** *"The lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock, in Him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior..."*

**Psalms 9:9** *"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble."*

**Psalms 31:2,3** *"...be You my strong rock, for an house of defence to save. For You are my rock and my fortress; therefore for Your name's sake lead me, and guide me."*

**Psalms 46:1** *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

**Psalms 62:2,6** *"He only is my rock and my salvation, He is my defence..."*

**Psalms 71:3,7** *"...You are my rock and my fortress... You are my strong refuge."*

**Psalms 91:2,4** *"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust: His truth shall be your shield and buckler."*

**Psalms 94:22** *"But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge."*

### Concept of "Craighouse" Name

The name "Craig" is an ancient Scottish name originally given to the peoples who dwelt among the highland rock clefts and crags of Scotland. Craighouse is an appropriate name for a place of spiritual refuge. Scriptures speak of the importance of "crag" for those seeking refuge.

*"The conies (rock badgers) are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks..."* **Proverbs 30:26**

*"She (the eagle) dwells and abides on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place."* **Job 39:28**

### Vision Statement

Craighouse is a Christian community refuge for those seeking help and hope in Jesus Christ. Craighouse exists to offer refuge, times of refreshing, and restoration to the spiritually orphaned and wounded of the Christian community in an atmosphere of grace.

### Goal

Craighouse aspires to minister the resurrection power of Jesus Christ through worship, witness, the Word, and the Holy Spirit to those God brings to its doors.

### Objective

Craighouse purposes to present the truth of Christ in a paradigm for living by the Word and by the Holy Spirit.

### Motto

People bringing people to help and hope in Jesus Christ.



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squabbled over, the children and adults were polite and orderly in a way that suggested the Lord had extended His hand to encourage peace and prevent chaos.

We met one young boy named Esias. He stood with a key about his neck, and explained that he carried the key with him everywhere. His mother had given it to him, he said, for those occasions when he would come home



■ Our new friends want to say "Hello!"

from school and would be on his own at home. Esias held himself with a maturity and bearing that suggested he had been forced to grow up early. He explained that because



■ Marcia makes sure even the smallest are not ignored.

he was small, other boys would sometimes try to pick on him. He could only let their remarks go on so long, he said, before he lost his temper. Esias said he had trouble with anger, that sometimes it just swept him away. We encouraged him to pray to the Lord to take his wrath away.

And then there was Edeny. Surely no one there that day will ever forget her. Medium height, dark hair, large eyes, and a meekness about her that was becoming.

She had been there at our first Barnabas visit. Too shy to speak to us, she had simply picked up a bag and had

walked off. Unfortunately, she had picked up a bag that was stuffed with coat hangers. Realizing her mistake

later, she missed her chance to obtain the things that would make her life a little easier. So when she saw that Mary Craig had returned, she came back to explain what had happened to the bag of coat hangers. Mary Craig chose to present the Barnabas Box to Edeny, whose name, she said, came from Eden.



■ Joanna explains the purposes of the ministry.



■ There was no lack of excitement, thanks to our generous contributors.

That day, as we were cleaning up and getting ready to leave, with another successful Barnabas visit behind us, Edeny lingered. Where could she find a church? She asked. Did we know of a church where



■ Mary encouraged many with friendship.

she could get to know this Jesus?





Several of us began to discuss how we might help Edeny find a good church. But Mary stepped for-



■ Betty Patten provided Bibles in Spanish.

ward. "Do you want to get to know Jesus? You can get to know Jesus right now." "Yes," Edeny said. "Please."

As the sun of the Everglades warmly smiled upon us, and as the distant thuds of kicked soccer balls echoed, you could almost hear the angels singing in the heavenly realms, as Mary led Edeny in a prayer and she gave her heart to the Lord.

Afterward, we talked with Edeny for a while until it was time to go. Then we piled into our vehicles to head east, to see first-hand if Robert's



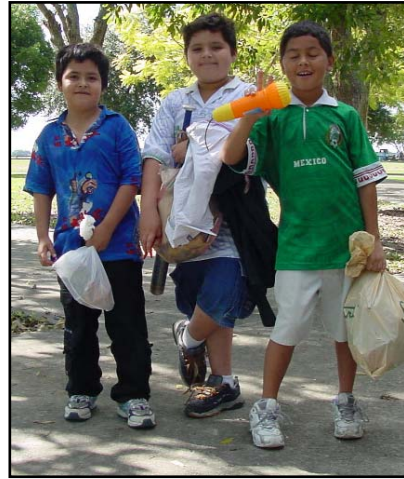
■ Edeny has a new personal relationship, with Jesus Christ.



■ Pastor Jim and Mary are thankful for the Lord's grace.



key lime milkshakes were all that the roadside signs had claimed them to be. The fertile rows of crops saluted as we drove past.



■ The boys were blessed too.

In a land of soybeans and corn and strawberries and alfalfa, lives had been touched by God. Souls had been saved. And a new



■ Families were delighted to receive much needed clothes, shoes, toys and supplies.

harvest had begun. ■

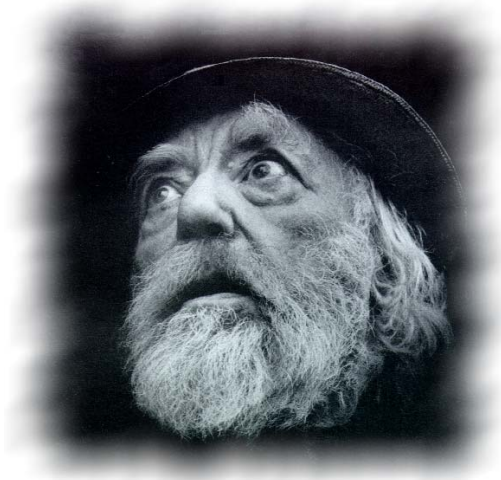
[www.marycraig.org](http://www.marycraig.org)

Please, will you check it out too?



Continued from page 4

principles of justice. Jesus told the people to seek first God's kingdom and His justice, or righteousness. (**Matthew 6.33**) Jesus overturned the prevailing ideas of justice. For Jesus, there was no such thing as moral ambiguity. He had no confusion about right and wrong. He wasn't non-committal. He has a passion for justice and teaches it through stories.



■ **God's justice lifts up the poor and levels the proud.**

When Jesus taught justice in the parable of the prodigal son, it seemed outrageous! The younger son wants his inheritance, goes off and squanders everything, lives with the pigs, and then wants to return home. As he comes to his senses, returns, and repents of his sins before his father, he is not only welcomed with open arms; he is rewarded. The elder brother comes off as self-righteous and unwarranted in his anger, yet he is the one who remained loyal and faithful to serve the father. What kind of wisdom and justice is this? Why didn't the younger brother get what he deserved for disgracing the family name, shirking responsibility, and living like the dregs of society? But Jesus defines the core concepts of justice in this story—love, faith, and grace.

Jesus teaches that God's justice means a determination and commitment to aid the oppressed. God's justice favors those who are wretched, deprived, poor, and needy. God's justice finds expression in mercy. God's justice brings salvation to those who come to their senses and return to the Father in faith, trusting in His goodness. God's justice calls for celebration. **God's justice lifts up the poor and levels the proud.**

Jesus went out of His way to speak to outcasts of society, applaud a widow's offering, help the ignorant, heal the sick, remember the poor. He identified Himself with the shepherd, an occupation which made it impossible to abide by Sabbath regulations. He is the Good Shepherd. He hung around with Galileans, who had inadequate instruction in the law. He ate with tax collectors, renegade Jews serving the enemy. He spoke

and helped women of ill repute. He forever elevated a Samaritan to Good Samaritan, when Samaritans did not worship at Jerusalem and were despised in the current society. He approved the faith of Gentile dogs, a centurion who understood authority and a woman who sought healing for her daughter. He raised the dead, cleansed lepers, and blessed children.

In going to those counted as outside the law and outside the holy community, Jesus brought justice to the poor. He proclaimed to them the good news that those who were deprived of their dignity would be special objects of God's justice as He identified Himself with the suppressed, the depressed, the oppressed, and the repressed. He bore their curse and experienced rejection. In His humiliation He was deprived of justice (**Acts 8.33; Isaiah 53.8**). He is so much on the side of the poor that He became such Himself.

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
That, though He was rich,  
Yet for your sakes He became poor,  
That you through His poverty might be rich.*

**(2 Corinthians 8.9)**

In bringing justice to the poor, Jesus took up the cause of the oppressed, the condemned, wretched, forsaken sinner. He died a degrading death and was crucified in weakness. He experienced cursedness, condemnation, and forsakenness. When God raised Jesus from the dead, He justified Jesus. He kept His promise to deliver the oppressed. Jesus was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. (**Romans 4.25**) God executed a liberating justice in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*For Christ also has once suffered for sins,  
The just for the unjust,  
That He might bring us to God,  
Being put to death in the flesh,  
But quickened by the Spirit.*

**(1 Peter 3.18)**

Faith in Jesus Christ brings a righteousness that is by faith. By virtue of Christ's righteousness God forgives and grants His righteousness to believers, who are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." (**Romans 3.24**) The atoning work of Christ demonstrates God's justice as He is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (**Romans 3.25, 26**)

The question becomes: Are you poor? Oppressed? Wretched? Forsaken? Are you like the publican who



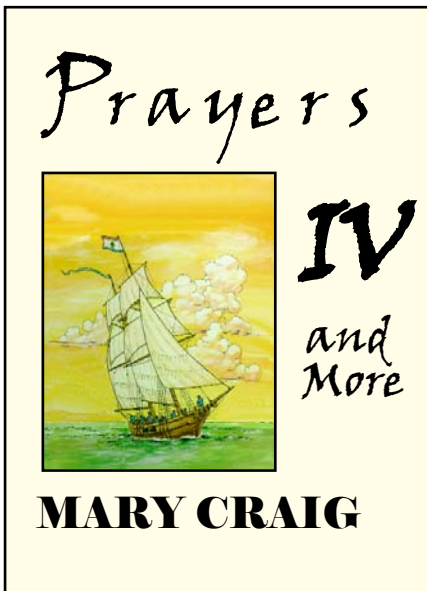


would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but cried out to God for mercy because he was a sinner? Or are you like the Pharisee who stood and prayed with himself, thanking God that he was not as other men... extorting others, unjust, adulterers, or like that publican over there. The Pharisee fasted twice a week and gave tithes. But Jesus justified the publican, not the Pharisee. Jesus said, "everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and the one that humbles himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18.14)

To misuse power and authority insults God and shows contempt for Him (Proverbs 14.31). God calls it sin, and it brings the wrath of God. Jesus brings justice to the poor. The one who knows he is a sinner and cries out for mercy will receive mercy. He will find in Jesus Christ a Savior, a just King, a Redeemer, a Deliverer, the LORD.

**You might pray something like this:** Dear Lord Jesus, I am poor... poor in spirit, in need of a Savior, in need of salvation, lacking wisdom. I have exploited others, dominated and manipulated others, shown contempt for your compassion and grace, used deceit and whatever power and authority I have been given to rob others of their God-given dignity, liberties, and rights. Please forgive my sins and my iniquity. It is my desire to repent of my sins and turn to follow You. I know that You are God; that You came in the flesh and fulfilled all righteousness; that You died to pay for my sins and rose again from the dead. I know that You sit at the right hand of the Father in all majesty as King and Lord and Christ/ Messiah. I come to You in faith, believing. I ask You to give me the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Paraclete. I ask You to save me to the uttermost and give me eternal life. Grant me great grace.  
Thank You. Amen. ■

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- rejoicing
- buying from Jehovah
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- treading on serpents and scorpions
- breaking into the Glory of God
- loosing the bonds of shame

- prayer of salvation
- overcome greed
- grafting into the Body
- calling nations to resurrection
- prayer to defeat Belial in the midst
- prayer to depart from iniquity.





■ **Ministering to South Florida migrant farm workers**

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 To implore  
 the broken,  
 wounded,  
 and lost of a fallen world to  
 accept restoration  
 and healing in the atonement  
 of Jesus Christ  
 that His own might terminate  
 their hostility toward God  
 and become what God  
 has declared them to be  
 through the transforming power  
 of God's Word  
 and the Holy Spirit  
 with love,  
 compassion,  
 and grace.



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