

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

GUIDE 1: JUSTICE

(Paired with Sermon Outline #1)

- ***A righteous and just family***
 - Watch [Justice](#).
 - Read Genesis 18:17-19.
 - How do you think Abraham was to teach his family about righteousness and justice? What types of practices might that have involved?
- ***Righteousness and justice are the ways of the Lord.***
 - Read Psalm 33:4-5.
 - Why do you think God loves righteousness and justice?
 - How does God display his justice throughout the biblical story?
- ***Abraham is called to teach his family righteousness and justice so that these characteristics will flow from them out to the nations.***
 - Read Isaiah 41:8-10,42:1-7.
 - What do the parallels in these two passages suggest about the identity of the servant in the latter passage?
 - How will this servant bring justice to the nations?
- ***Jesus is the model of what a just member of Abraham's family looks like.***
 - Read Luke 4:16-19.
 - How does Jesus live with justice in his interactions with others? What kinds of "justice" are popular today that do not align with the way of Christ?
 - Note that both Isaiah 42:1 and Luke 4:18 (quoting Isaiah 61:1) mention the empowerment of God's Spirit. How does the Spirit enable people to live justly toward others?
 - What does justice look like when you are engaging with someone who opposes you?
- ***Following the way of Jesus, how might you live with God's kind of justice toward others in need this week?***
- ***Concluding Prayer***

"O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others
Open my ears that I may hear their cries;
Open my heart so that they need not be without succor;
Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong,
Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,
And use me to bring them to those places.
And so open my eyes and my ears
That I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee."
—Alan Paton, "Life Prayers from Around the World"

GUIDE 2: GENEROSITY

(Paired with Sermon Outline #2)

- **Investing through generosity**
 - Watch [Generosity](#).
 - Read Luke 12:32-34.
 - What does conventional wisdom tell us about smart financial investments, and how do Jesus' words compare to that?
- **Our generous God gives abundantly to us.**
 - Read Luke 12:22-31.
 - When you look at the world around you, do you see a world of abundance? Why or why not?
 - What do the images of God as shepherd and father communicate about his care for you?
 - Can you think of a time when God generously provided for your needs?
- **The best investment we can make is in God's kingdom.**
 - Read Luke 12:15-21 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19.
 - What do you think is the difference between wisely preparing for your future and storing up treasures for yourself?
 - Why does it feel so good to store up treasures for ourselves? And what kind of life does it lead to?
 - What return on investment do you think we get when we invest in God's kingdom by giving to those in need? What kind of life does it produce right now? And what kind of life does it lead to in the future?
- **How we use our resources both reveals and directs our hearts.**
 - Read 1 John 3:16-18.
 - How does Jesus reveal what's in his heart?
 - Take a minute to reflect on how you spend your money and time and what that reveals about your heart. How well do the things you prioritize line up with your values?
 - When our hearts are misaligned or disordered, we start to desire the wrong things and make uncharitable judgments of others. But the practice of giving generously can help us realign our hearts. Consider an experience where you gave your time, resources or attention to another person or organization of people who are working to help people. Did that experience expand your heart or strengthen your love for others, or did something else happen? What other parts of that experience do you remember?
 - When has someone shown real generosity toward you? How did that experience impact you?
- **Concluding Prayer**
 - Father, everything we have comes from your hand. May we hold it all with open hands for you to use as you see fit. Transform our hearts to make us generous like you, and open our eyes to see where you're inviting us to give. Amen.

GUIDE 3: COMPASSION

(Paired with Sermon Outline #3)

- **Our compassionate God**
 - Watch [Compassion](#).
 - Read Exodus 34:6.
 - What stands out to you most about God's description of himself in this passage?
 - Can you think of someone in your life who shows real compassion? What does this look like? In general, what kinds of things happen as a result of showing compassion?
- **God shows motherly compassion toward his people.**
 - Read Exodus 34:8-10 and Isaiah 49:15-16.
 - Note that in Exodus 19-32, Israel accepted a covenant relationship with God but immediately broke it by making a golden calf idol. How does this background shape our understanding of God's compassion in Exodus 34?
 - In what ways does God's comparison of himself to a nursing mother inform our understanding of him and our experience of his compassionate care?
- **Jesus embodies God's compassion in his ministry on Earth.**
 - Read Matthew 9:35-38.
 - Matthew describes the crowds as "bewildered and helpless" (NET), which at least implies that they were powerless to live as God made them to live, or they were unable to even know what good living meant. Rather than getting angry or accusatory toward them, Jesus shows compassion.
 - What do you think this looked like?
 - What would Jesus have been doing, or not been doing, in order to stay compassionate toward them?
 - In what ways do you see God's tender heart toward humanity communicated through Jesus, either in this passage or elsewhere in his life?
 - How have you (as an individual or as a community) experienced Jesus' compassion?
- **God calls us to be like him in our compassion.**
 - Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.
 - How does God's compassion toward you make you feel? What does it make you think about? And maybe most importantly, can God's compassion motivate us to offer compassionate comfort to others? If so, what would that look like?
 - Think of someone in your family or community who needs to experience God's compassionate comfort this week. How might you bring God's comfort to them?
- **Concluding prayer**
 - Lord, help us to know your compassion for us. May we experience your tender care even in the face of our mistakes. May we feel the comfort of your protective wings gathering us to you. Forgive us for the times we have been hardhearted toward you and others. Teach us to be compassionate like you and care generously for everyone, especially those who oppose us or do not like us. Help us to rest in the comfort of your embrace and bring your comfort to those around us today. Amen.