

Where is the Cry for Justice

Dear Friend,

Where is the cry for justice as housing costs go up along with ever increasing utility costs? Where is the cry justice for those without adequate legal assistance who are locked up in growing numbers? Where is the cry for justice as affordable housing is destroyed and the homes of the poor and elderly are taken from them through the use of eminent domain?

The list of injustices go on and on. How we need Jesus to not only give us light in the ever-increasing darkness of injustice, but also wisdom on how to deal with it. As Eph 5:14 says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light".

The time has come for us to arise and believe Luke 18:7, "And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off?" As we encounter injustice, we must never forget the importance of earnest prayer. Never underestimate the power of crying out to God day and night concerning the injustice you are aware of. I can't help but recall the miracle resulting from the Missouri inmates who were being abused in Texas, some years back. After they cried out to the Lord, a video was miraculously released showing this abuse, and before long the Missouri inmates were returned to Missouri.

As we pray, we must believe God and know that He cares about the issue of *justice*. As Psalms 140:12, in the Amplified Bible states, "I know and rest in confidence upon it that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will secure justice for the poor and needy." When we pray we must also seek God as to what He wants us to do to address these issues of injustice.

Much of religious broadcasting today concerns itself with the two issues of abortion and homosexuality. As a result many vote for candidates exclusively on how they relate to these two issues. This allows oppressors and perpetrators of injustice to exploit the Christian vote as they continue to engage in actions of injustice against the poor and elderly.

What does the Scripture say that God desires of His people? "To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man, who is of the earth, may not terrify them any more" (Ps.10:18). "Learn to do right! Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Is. 1:17). As you read these words you need to ask yourself what you believe that needs to be done to correct the oppressor, defend the fatherless and plead for the widow.

How do we respond to the on going misuse of eminent domain, which takes the homes of the poor and elderly in order that rich developers may make more money? What do we do about the control of big utility and oil companies, whose ever-increasing rates not only cause the poor and elderly to become slaves, but also continue to pollute the environment with their use of fossil fuels?

Then there is the issue of justice for the homeless in communities like St. Louis, Springfield and Kansas City, where the powers that be, try to drive them out, not only from their downtown areas but from their cities as a whole. “Thus says the Lord: Execute justice and righteousness, and deliver out of the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong; do no violence to the stranger (homeless) or temporary resident, the fatherless, or the widowed, nor shed innocent blood in this place” (Jer.22:3).

Evidence is now showing that Larry Griffin, a poor man who was executed in 1995, very likely was innocent. Since then, even as other poor innocent people have been executed, legislators in Washington, many who claimed to be pro-life, continue to make it easier and easier to execute those without adequate legal defense. The issue is not one concerning the pros and cons of the death penalty, but the legal lynching of the poor and those who are victims of false testimony in the courts. Exodus 23:1-9 speaks of the wrong of denying justice to the poor because of their social status (verse 6), giving false testimony in court that results in an innocent person’s death (v.7) and accepting a bribe (verse 8) which could also be a political contribution given in hopes of getting political favors. “This is what the Lord Almighty says, ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another’” (Zec.7:9).

Medicaid services have been cut in Missouri under the leadership of senators, representatives and a governor who say they are pro-life. As these cuts prevent the poor from getting dental services, eyeglasses, hearing aids, and rehabilitation services, what do you think should be the response of the Christian community? When do budget cuts move into the area of injustice? What does it say about a society when programs for the needy continue to be cut, while services for the rich and powerful continue to expand in the name of economic development?

Being on the front lines in behalf of those in need, as advocates for justice, does not mean that we have to become bitter angry people. The Bible tells us to be angry but sin not. This means we can direct our anger in a productive way at the source of the injustice with the knowledge that God is in control. This knowledge keeps us from becoming bitter insecure people, for we are anchored in God’s love. “He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are law and justice. A God of faithfulness without breach or deviation, just and right is He” (Dt.32:4).

Jesus has called each of us to be “salt” and “light” in our community. If the people of God remain silent in the light of injustice the result is, “justice is turned away backward, and righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God) stands far off; for truth has fallen in the street and uprightness cannot enter (the courts of justice) Is. 59:14”. “They have grown fat and sleek. Yes, they surpass in deeds of wickedness; they do not judge and plead with justice the cause of the fatherless, that they may prosper, and they do not defend the rights of the needy.”(Jer.5:28)

God has created enough for all. With that in mind we see that there is no real energy crises, food shortage or water problem. The problem is a greed problem that can and will be overcome as each one lets Jesus fill them with that sense of purpose, power and presence with a satisfaction that all the things in the world can never provide. As this truly happens, we will “let justice run like waters and righteousness as a mighty and ever-flowing stream.”(Amos 5:24)

It is by faith that justice will flow forth. "Who by faith subdued kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promised blessings, closed the mouths of lions."(Heb.11:33) Let us speak the truth in love, closing the mouths of the lions and allowing justice to be administered. We must remain faithful in our service to our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ as we pray without ceasing. Remember, "He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."(Psalms 37:6) "The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern."(Proverbs 29:7)

Realizing the sins of indifference and self-centeredness causes us to cry out to God in godly sorrow. This godly sorrow produces within us a desire to repent. "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you; what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done." (1Cor 7:10, 11) We have a new concern for others and a desire to see justice done. We have been set free from the bondage of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a result of being set free, we have a longing and a deep earnestness to serve our Risen Lord as we reach out to others through His love and power.

May God bless you as you cry out and pray and work for justice. Remember, a cry for justice includes sharing the good news in Word and deed that there is hope, Christ is risen.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Rice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

Larry Rice

Please answer the following questions for this study, "Where is the Cry for Justice"

1. Why is it so important that the Christian community is awakened to the need for the cry for justice?
2. In what ways is prayer critical in the fight for justice?
3. According to Ps.10:18, Jer.22:3 and Is.1:17 what does God desire for His people to do?
4. In light of Ex.23:1-9 and Zec.7:9 why should Christians be concerned about issues like the death penalty, protecting the rights to provide shelter, and other areas effecting the poor and homeless?
5. What does it mean to be salt and light in our community?
6. In the light of Is.59:14 and Jer.5:28 why is it critical that those who are followers of Jesus Christ speak up and act in behalf of justice?
7. How can it be said that there is not a food or energy crisis but instead there is a greed crisis? What must be done concerning this?
8. In what ways can it be said that it is by faith that justice will flow? What examples do you find in Heb.11?
9. Why should we repent as a result of our sins of non-response to the issues of injustice? Why is godly sorrow a necessary part of repentance? (see 1 Cor.7:10,11)
10. Why is it that as a result of being set free from sin we have a longing and a deep desire to serve our Risen Lord by helping others and taking a stand for justice?