



MISSIONAL COMMUNITY



Justice and Mercy

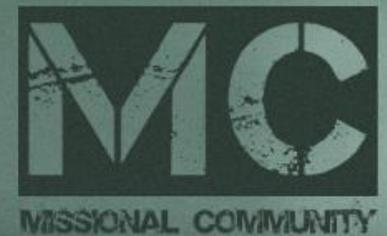


“The profession of social work seeks to help people overcome some of life’s most difficult challenges and needs.”

<http://www.socialworkguide.org/>



Global Injustice and Cruelty – IJM.org



Global Injustice and Cruelty – IJM.org

- 4 billion people live outside the protection of the law with nothing to shield them from violence
- 35+ million people are enslaved – trapped and forced to work through violence and/or drugs
- almost 2 million children are exploited in the commercial sex industry



Local Injustice and Cruelty

- physical needs, emotional needs, and spiritual needs
- because of abuse, oppression, theft, bullying, violence and atrocities
- CTV News – 2 charged last week



Isaiah 58

- returning to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon
- Jerusalem was God's holy city
- living in a holy city didn't make people holy
- performing holy acts, like fasting and prayer, didn't make people holy



“Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don’t be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! Yet they act so pious!

They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God.



They ask me to take action on their behalf,
pretending they want to be near me.

‘We have fasted before you!’ they say.

‘Why aren’t you impressed? We have been very
hard on ourselves, and you don’t even notice it!’



MISSIONAL COMMUNITY



“I will tell you why!” I respond. “It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves....

This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me.



⁵ You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind.

You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? **Do you really think this will please the LORD?**



What acts of worship please God?

Attending a Sunday morning worship gathering?

Singing while standing with arms raised, or sitting out in the foyer with arms crossed?

Reading from a digital Bible app, or a 10-pound, leather-bound Bible?

Taking notes on the teaching, or listening while playing Candy Crush?



⁶ “No, this is the kind of fasting I want:
Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten
the burden of those who work for you. Let the
oppressed go free, and remove the chains that
bind people. Share your food with the hungry,
and give shelter to the homeless.



9 Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. ...

Remove the heavy yoke of oppression.

Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble.



What acts of worship please God?

- to loosen the bonds of injustice, to share what we have with those who have not, to bring the homeless into our homes, to give clothing and shelter to those with no covering, to reconcile with our family, to help the afflicted
- to meet visible and invisible needs
- to come alongside the downtrodden
- it will cost us something



What acts of worship please God?

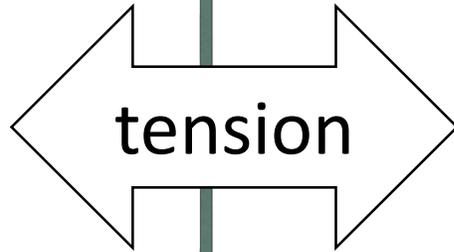
“These are more than one time actions. These are behaviors with broad social consequences, actions that will restructure relationships. God's desire is not for singular, pious acts, but for a whole dismantling of unjust relationships.”

- Amy Oden



God is holy

just



merciful



“It was at the Cross of Jesus where God’s justice was perfectly administered and his eternal mercy publicly displayed when God took upon Himself the punishment meant for the guilty. The perfect, sinless, infinitely just God devised the means whereby sinful, guilty human beings could be justly reconciled to God without an ounce of guilt being swept under the carpet.” - J.M. Njoroge, RZIM



God

is holy

just

Jesus

merciful

Jesus died in our place and we receive
mercy, but that's not the best part ...



“Look again at the Cross: the justice of God, the judgment of God, the mercy of God, the love of God, the holiness of God, and the forgiveness of God are all in the person of Christ.

God himself embodies the good, overcomes evil, **and makes a way for us.**” - Tanya Walker, RZIM



Barriers to a life of worship

***Suffering from injustice, cruelty and/or grief?**

This is a time for you to receive mercy and heal

Don't know? Barrier: our ignorance

Overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem? Barrier: our need to fix everything

No time? Barrier: our schedules and responsibilities



Barriers to a life of worship

Not rich? Barrier: our priorities and our wants

Don't care? Barrier: our indifference and apathy

Afraid to get involved? Barrier: our own security and safety

Other?

What is your barrier?



What does worshipful, obedient, standing up for justice and distributing mercy look like for us this week?



Using our influence to help others with less influence.

Using our power for someone's weakness.

Using our resources to provide protection and advocacy for those who are without defence.

Giving what we have to help those who have not.

Coming alongside and entering into someone else's story.



Through the cross, God himself embodied the good, overcame evil, and made a way for us.



Father, we are thankful that your mercy is wider than our wanderings and deeper than all our sin.

Forgive our refusal to relieve the suffering of others, our envy of those who have more than we have, our obsession with creating inconvenience-free lives, our indifference to the injustice and cruelty around us and our neglect of your justice and mercy.



*Help us to change our way of life,
re-ordering our priorities,
so our lives spent in worship will glorify you.
Through the power of your Spirit help us
come alongside others who have lost their way.
For your glory we pray,
Amen.*

