



KINGDOM CULTURE VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

WEEK ELEVEN

Teaching Video Transcript | Week 11: Kingdom Culture is Just

"Bible scholar Christopher Wright tells a moving story about a friend from India who was led to Christ by reading the Old Testament. At the time he taught engineering at the local university. But he had grown up among the despised Dalit (outcast) community in his village, and his whole family had suffered greatly at the hands of the high-caste Hindus in the village—all kinds of harassment, violence and injustice. He had a great thirst for revenge against his oppressors, and so he worked very hard at school, to get to university, so that he could get a job with some influence and power, and then turn the tables on his enemies.

The day he arrived at the university he found a Bible translated into Telugu (his state language) in his room. He had never read the Bible, though he knew that it was the Christians' holy book. He opened it at random and started reading the story of Naboth and Ahab in 1Kings 21. It's the story of the unjust King Ahab who uses his power to steal the land from Naboth, an ordinary farmer. The story had so many familiar elements. "This was my story," he said. His family had also experienced theft of land, false accusations, murders, the brutality of the powerful against the ordinary people.

But then he read on and was amazed to read about another man called Elijah, who, in the name of some God of the Bible, denounced King Ahab, and said that he would be judged and punished by this God. This was astounding, my friend said. My friend had millions of gods within Hinduism to choose from. But he had never heard of such a god as he was reading about in this Bible. Here was a god who took the side of the suffering ones and condemned the government and the powerful for their wicked deeds. "I never knew such a god existed" were his exact words to me, which I have never forgotten.

As this man continued to read the Bible, he learned about Jesus, his life and death and resurrection. He also learned about the need to forgive. But his road to conversion started by meeting the God who is just and who takes the side of the oppressed." (Adapted from Christopher J.H. Wright, *Salvation Belongs to Our God* (IVP Academic, 2008), pp. 48-49)

God is a just God. One writer points out that... "Justice is one of God's attributes and flows out of His holiness. Justice and righteousness are often used synonymously in the Bible. Since righteousness is the quality or character of being right or just, it is another attribute of God and incorporates both His justice and holiness.

We cannot begin to understand God's justice unless we first understand sin. Sin is lawlessness and iniquity. It embodies everything contrary to God's holy nature and is offensive to Him. Thus, sin is a crime against God, and justice demands a penalty of death and separation from Him for it. But God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to pay that penalty for us and made salvation available to all who believe in His name.

God's own righteousness is provided as a gift to sinners who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and is based upon His grace and mercy in response to our faith. His mercy and grace are not in spite of His justice, but because of it. He loved us so much that despite the fact that our sin demands our death, He sent His Son to be our substitute upon the cross, thus demonstrating that His justice was not violated, but instead satisfied. Having been made in His image, we humans long for moral justice to prevail upon the earth and are outraged when we see injustice happening around us." (<https://www.gotquestions.org/God-of-justice.html>)

When you read through the Bible you will see that God's ways are just (Dt. 32:4) and that he calls his followers to seek justice. God inspired the prophet Micah to answer this rhetorical question: ...what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8, NIV)

When Jesus arrived it was said of him that he fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 42 which said God's messiah would ...proclaim justice to the nations. (Matthew 12:18, NIV) And then when Jesus started his ministry he read from the Isaiah to announce that his ministry had begun saying:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has

sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Jesus saw his calling was to proclaim the good news of justice and mercy.

Jesus spoke about justice often and he had a telling interchange with the pharisees about their legalistic view of keeping the letter of the law but missing the heart of the law. He challenged them because they not only did they tithe their income but they even tithed their spice garden's harvest, but as he said they ... neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. (Mt 23:23) Throughout Israel's history God continually showed Israel mercy and forgiveness to deal with their sin. He gave them a moral law to deal justly with their sins, which they followed to the nth degree, but they never addressed how that should mean they care for and love others. And so they were not faithful to God in loving others as they want to be loved and they were not merciful with others and they were unjust in the dealings with the problems and issues that arose.

Sometimes it's easy to be concerned with spiritual and religious activities without seeing much less addressing the injustices in the world right in front of us. But Jesus came to meet the just requirements of the law and pay for our sins so that justice was met. He made sure justice was kept for us. So of all people, Christians who have experienced God's mercy to pay for and forgive our sins, we should want to make sure that God's justice is felt for all people.

Pastor R.C. Sproul wrote: "Social ethics must never be substituted for personal ethics. Crusading can easily become a dodge for facing up to one's lack of personal morality. By the same token, even if I am a model of personal righteousness, that does not excuse my participation in social evil. The man who is faithful to his wife while he exercises bigotry toward his neighbor is no better than the adulterer who crusades for social justice. What God requires is justice both personal and social." (R. C. Sproul, Leadership, Vol. 9, no. 2.)

We have to take our experience with God's mercy and allow it to form how we apply justice to the world. That's the kingdom culture!

Valley Brook Community Church All Church Study: Video Transcript Week Eleven

