



Sermon Notes | I Will Surely Hear Their Cry (Part III) | Exodus 22:16-23:9

We continue our study of 'Social Justice' noting how differently God defines the subject compared to the world. There is no soft or new definition, no vague definition. The same ancient truths and principles remain for all time. Our God remains the same God of justice. While the world takes these principles askew and astray, we will take the time to study and understand 'Social Justice' God's way.

God's Law remains the undergirding framework of true 'Social Justice'. As we have already noted, God's Law legislates:

### **I. JUSTICE OF THE MAIDEN (22:16-17)**

A maiden, ready for marriage but is taken advantage of before marriage; God is concerned for the maiden far beyond the violation. He provides long term protection for her by providing a new family for her by means of marriage, or by the familiar family. He hears her cry, and justice prevails.

### **II. JUSTICE FOR THE WICKED (22:18-20)**

Sorcery, bestiality, idolatry – these are vile wickedness before God, and under the Law bring death. Sorcery in all of its forms, fortunetelling, charms and whatever else, is an attempt at playing God. Bestiality is rebellion against God's creation and design. Idolatry is erecting and worshiping other gods. Such evil practices demand God's justice, by Law.

### **III. JUSTICE FOR THE DISADVANTAGED (22:21-24)**

This is justice for the 'clearly disadvantaged,' the sojourner, the widow, and the orphan. There is no subjective, no 'felt' reality here. This is God's Law identifying and protecting the clearly evident and tangibly disadvantaged. He hears the cry of the disadvantaged, and God rights the wrong. He does not make new wrongs by doing so. God's concern for the wrong means that He moves to uphold justice, so that the wrong does not happen again.

### **IV. JUSTICE FOR THE POOR (22:25-27)**

This is the poor among God's people. There is a priority for the poor brother, established from the Law in Leviticus, reinforced by Jesus, the priority being 'the household of faith'. Bear one another's burdens.

Matthew 25:21-40

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. The King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'*

Galatians 6:3-5, 9-10

*"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbour. For each will have to bear his own load.... And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."*

Aiding the brother does not mean that we are to exclude the other poor. We are to consider them also, but we have a priority to feed and take care of God's own first. We are to give without interest 22:25, and care for the needs of God's people. This means to feed God's own first, 'the family' first, and then feed the neighbours. Unfortunately, the narratives of today are completely backwards in society. And while the physical needs of people are to be dealt with, the most important need is the Gospel. God is compassionate, and He demands proper justice for His people.

Exodus 22:27

*"And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate."*

And so today we continue on and look at 'Social Justice' in Relationships according to the Word of God.

Exodus 22:28-23:9

*"You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people."*

You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me. You shall be consecrated to me. Therefore you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field: you shall throw it to the dogs.

You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice, nor shall you be partial to a poor

man in his lawsuit. If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him. You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

## **V. JUSTICE IN RELATIONSHIPS (2:28-23:9)**

The health of every relationship ultimately flows from our relationship with God.

Exodus 22:28

*"You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people."*

You shall not revile God! This means you will not curse Him. This is an overarching law and principle over the next four verses. One is not to criticize in an abusive way, condemn in anger or insult, must not act/speak inappropriately towards God. This word 'defile' is the same word that God used earlier with reference to making 'disparaging' talk toward parents. God has no patience for such talk.

Exodus 21:17

*"Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death."*

There is to be no reviling of God, no reviling of parents, and one is not to revile God by cursing a ruler. In Israel, this means no reviling of judges or kings either. These persons are in the place they are because God has placed them there.

Romans 13:4

*"... for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on subjection."*

Judges and kings, all appointed by Sovereign God, for our good. But, they are not like God. They sin, they legislate evil. Think of Jeroboam, Roe and Wade, for example. We may disagree with them, and be tempted to revile them when they do wrong, but they are 'God given' rulers, and thus, are not to be cursed.

Peter, writes to the exiles under the wicked Emperor Nero, who was known to have burned 'brothers and sisters' of the faith. Yes, there is persecution going on, but they are not to revile. This is God's command.

I Peter 2:17

*"Honour everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the emperor."*

Paul understood this thinking also. Under custody at the time, Paul has words with the council. The 'high priest' orders those who stood by him to strike Paul on the mouth. It was an illegal action by the wicked high priest and Paul reacts negatively/angrily against it, calling Ananias 'a white-washed wall', a term for hypocrisy, judging Paul by the Law, but hitting him, which was against the Law. Those standing by questioned Paul. "Would you revile God's high priest? And Paul said, 'I did not know brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people'" (Acts 23:4-5).

We can disagree, but we are NOT TO REVILE THE AUTHORITIES OVER US!

We also are not to revile God by holding back from God. Always give the 'first and the best' to God. God has called for the consecration of the firstborn, both children and animals. All the first-fruit of the land was to be Yahweh's.

Exodus 22:29

*"You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me."*

Exodus 22:30

*"You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me."*

Exodus 13:1-2

*"The LORD said to Moses, 'Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast is mine.'"*

Numbers 3:40-51

*"And the LORD said to Moses, 'List all the firstborn males of the people of Israel, from a month old and upward, taking the number of their names. And you shall take the Levites for me – I am the LORD – instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the people of Israel.' So Moses listed all the firstborn among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as listed were 22,273. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle. The Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. And as the redemption price for the 273 of the firstborn of the people of Israel, over and above the number of the male Levites, you shall take five shekels per head; you shall take them according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel of twenty gerahs), and give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for those who are over.' So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those redeemed by the Levites. From the firstborn of the people of Israel he took the money, 1,363 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary. And Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses."*

And so the LORD creates a means of substituting Levite males for the firstborn males of the other tribes, and likewise for their cattle, but for the 273 Israelites who had no Levite to take their place, a redemption price was to be paid, five shekels per head, the money collected going to Aaron and his sons.

And so God makes clear to Israel, that God is to be given 'first place' in their lives, and by providing first-fruits of children, animals and harvests, and later even their baking, they demonstrate the place God is given. The LORD provides further instructions for the offerings that will be acceptable to Him, only the pure and perfect among the first-fruits. As the priests are to be clean and pure, so also are the offerings to be without blemish, having no imperfection. Nothing that is to be offered to the LORD shall be profaned.

Leviticus 22:17-25

*"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel and say to them, 'When any one of the house of Israel or of the sojourners in Israel presents a burnt offering as his offering, for any of their vows or freewill offerings that they offer to the LORD, if it is to be accepted for you it shall be a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats. You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you. And when anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock, to be accepted it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it. Animals blind or disabled or mutilated or having a discharge or an itch or scabs you shall not offer to the LORD or give them to the LORD as a food offering on the altar. You may present a bull or a lamb that has a part too long or too short for a freewill offering, but for a vow offering it cannot be accepted. Any animal that has its testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut you shall not offer to the LORD; you shall not do it within your land, neither shall you offer as the bread of your God any such animals gotten from a foreigner. Since there is a blemish in them because of their mutilation, they will not be accepted for you.'"*

Deuteronomy 15:19-23

*"All the firstborn males that are born of your herd and flock you shall dedicate to the LORD your God. You shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. You shall eat it, you and your household, before the LORD your God year by year at the place that the LORD will choose. But if it has any blemish, if it is lame or blind or has any serious blemish whatever, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. You shall eat it within your towns. The unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as though it were a gazelle or a deer. Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it out on the ground like water."*

As God's people, 'the first' is always to be His, the first-fruits of the field, the livestock, and the firstborn children. All to Him! If God is our ultimate 'relationship' we cannot respond to Him in any less way.

We rightly give, and justly give, what He has coming due. Two Key Principles:

1. We do not delay what God is due.
2. We do not give God the leftovers, only the best and the first

Exodus 23:19

*"The best of the first-fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God."*

We do not revile God by partaking in what is unclean.

Exodus 22:31

*"You shall be consecrated to me. Therefore you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs."*

The people of God have been called to be 'set apart', called to be different. They must not do what the pagans do. They must not eat flesh torn by other animals. They must be fully devoted unto God. The pagans eat anything. They eat the torn flesh that is fit only for dogs. They do not discriminate. But Israel, this is not to be you. No, the people of God are to walk by His ways only. They are consecrated, 'set apart' from the culture around them. And so must we be 'set apart' from the culture around us, different from the ways of the world. We are not to be like the world. We are called to be 'like Him'. Therefore, we do not gloss over these instructions. This is what God requires of us: there is not to be partaking in that which is unclean. As God's people there is to be no association with, no participation with, the things that are unclean, the things that are not of the LORD.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

*"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness. What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them', says the Lord, 'and touch no unclean thing, then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me', says the Lord Almighty."*

THERE IS TO BE NO DABBING, NO TRIALS, NO TOLERATING, NO PARTICIPATION, NO UNION AT ALL, WITH EVIL!

We owe God our reverence, our devotion, our consecration, our first-fruits. So then, this is how we are to approach 'relationships'; be in line with the ninth commandment. Do not lie, spread false reports. Do not associate with lies. Do not bear false witness.

Exodus 23:1

*"You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness."*

We need this reminder. NO LIES! We must be people of truth. By definition, 'Do not join hands with the wicked and vicious'. Do not be a malicious witness. Do not be an adversary given to false testimony. Do not join hands with evil hands. Do not do this.

Deuteronomy 17:6

*"On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death, a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness."*

But errors exist in 'Social Justice'. We see its failings. We see, for example in the Black Lives Matter movement, people thoughtlessly joining hands, both figuratively and literally, yet after a year, they have come to stand for immoral identity, anti-family (the breaking down of family), 'anti-God' (tearing down God's created order), the organization calling good evil, and evil good. How can we 'join hands' with movements that spread false reports and pervert justice? You shall not!

Isaiah 5:20-23

*"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who acquit the guilty for a bribe and deprive the innocent of his right!"*

Exodus 23:2

*"You shall not fall in with the many to do evil..."*

DON'T SIDE WITH THE MAJORITY. Do not fall in with those who are perverting justice, the 'crowd' (NIV), the 'multitude' (KJV). Falling in with the crowd seemingly/initially 'feels safe,' like a cocoon; you are not standing out, you are not causing a stir, you think you are saving face by 'not making waves'. In the name of 'Social Justice' you are falling into the 'majority' without giving thought that the 'world's way' is but an outflow of the 'curse'. Yes, it is trendy, but error leads to error – lowering flags, raising flags, anti-police slogans.

And how often does our 'silence' also speak volumes? By just trying to stay out of sight, not drawing attention, not looking 'foolish' or odd, joining the crowd, so as to not 'draw attention.' As commentator Douglas Stewart has noted, speaking to this principle of humanity:

*"The temptation warned against here is that of being swayed in any action that would be wrong by the fear of looking foolish, incorrect, odd or dishonest, because of taking a position different from that taken by everyone, or virtually everyone else. God has created human beings to be socially integrative and to try to cooperate with one another. As a result it can be extremely difficult to take a stance in a different and an emotionally charged situation, or legal case, against the majority in favour of a cause that has no other advocates, possibly including many of one's friends or even family."*

Exodus 23:2-3

*"You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice, nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his lawsuit."*

DO NOT FIND YOURSELF 'ESTEEMING THE WRONG'. The injustice of daily wrongs must be attended to. There is not to be injustice in the courts. One is not to be partial to either the rich or the poor.

Leviticus 19:15

*"You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor."*

THERE IS TO BE NO PARTIALITY, only proper justice, the standard being, God's righteousness. Justice is not to be determined by our sympathies, not to be determined by our bents, not to be determined by society, only by His righteousness. New Testament righteousness is embodied in the form of Christ. Jesus brings both justice and mercy. Justice and mercy come through Him, and in Him all the wrongs will be righted. Contrary to 'Social Justice,' Christ offers no partiality, for there is no justice in partiality. There are no preferential groups in Jesus. The book of James confirms this point.

James 2:1, 8

*"My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.... If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors."*

So then, to review:

1. Do not spread false reports by joining in with the wicked.
2. Do not fall-in or join with the majority crowd.
3. Do not pervert justice.
4. Do not show partiality.

Instead, we are to show 'true justice' in our relationships, justice by God's standard. Justice is to be shown in all our relationships, even among the enemy.

Exodus 23:4

*"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him."*

The world continues to rebel against God, but we must LISTEN TO THE WORD. While the world calls God vengeful with smiting ways, this is a stereotype of God. It is a typecast of Holy God, which has not looked upon His justice. The world itself promotes 'getting even,' dog eat dog, look out for number one, kill it, destroy it, this is karma, they had it coming to them, what goes around comes around. But indeed, this is not the economy



of YAHWEH. This is 'pseudo justice,' false justice. We turn back to the Word of God to find TRUE GODLY JUSTICE.

Exodus 23:4-5

*"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him."*

When you come upon a lost or fallen animal, you are to return it, help it. You are to show no partiality, friend or enemy, you help the animal. It matters not who it belongs to, you help the distressed animal. You do what is right. You do not give in to a vengeful spirit. GOD'S LAW ENFORCES WHAT SHOULD BE NORMAL!

How sad it is that we have fallen so far that we would not just do this. But we need the Law to show what is 'normal'. We are the problem, not God. It is us who are unjust, not God. Thank God that He makes things right. He brings sanity to the chaos and confusion and immorality. The world's 'Social Justice' claims the high ground, demands that you do 'partiality', and presents the new morality forcefully. You must submit, you must get on board, you must fit in, or else. This approach has proven to be 'LAW REPLACEMENT,' the Law of God for the law of man. But it is dangerous replacing the Law of God for the law of man. To do so, one must redefine 'all relationships' by the new law. We have seen what this has done to 'the family,' for example. The family, as we have always known and understood it to be, has been obliterated and redefined. Note the clear and firm language that comes from God:

Exodus 23:6

*"You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit."*

Exodus 23:7

*"Keep far from a false charge and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked."*

Exodus 23:8

*"And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right."*

God has spoken concerning what is right, yet the wicked reject it, they kill, take bribes, subvert justice, erode justice, turn justice upside down. 'Social Justice' promotes 'new ways' to accommodate what God says. It says, "No" to the ways of God. But there can be no excuses. God's True Justice does not add to the problem; it stops the problem, if it is dealt with on God's terms.

Do Not curse the ruler.  
Do Not delay offerings to God.  
Do Not partake in the unclean.

Do Not fall in with the crowd.  
Do Not be partial to the poor.  
Do Not mistrust the enemy.  
Do Not be partial to anyone – rich or poor, ruler or enemy.

We are not to be far from the God of the Law who gives us this standard.

Exodus 23:9

*"You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt."*

Israel was brought from Egypt to the mountain, to the mountain to meet God, to meet 'their God'. But the ultimate plan of the 'Social Justice' of humanity is to stop mankind from meeting God, from meeting 'their God'; to stop God from reaching these people, to stop the eternal plan of God 'to save them,' (to save the rebels from the eternal hell fire that is deserved).

We have sinned, and we deserve God's wrath. But God delivers His righteous eternal plan, and He sets His people free, drawing them closer to Himself. HE DRAWS US CLOSE TO HIMSELF, IN CHRIST. God shines through His Law, and we are justified in Christ, and can therefore draw near to God through Him. In spite of man's rebellion, God went ahead with His redemptive plan. This was His grandeur as God. And His love for us.

HE IS KING AND LORD IN ALL THINGS!