

October 9, 2011

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Sermon

Peace and Uprightness

## 1. Introduction:

- \* "If you want peace, work for justice." Isaiah 32:16-20. We commit ourselves individually and as a community...to struggle for peace with justice. There's something going on, some link, some relationship between justice and peace. So what is it? Well we heard the connection in its most basic form in our Scripture reading earlier today. Isaiah 32:17 describes the relationship like this – "The fruit of justice will be peace; the effect of justice will be quietness and security forever." The fruit of justice will be peace. In other words, if you work for and maintain justice, the natural outcome will be peace; if you do not have justice, you will not have peace. There's a great Mennonite banner and it captures this profoundly. It reads, "If you want peace, work for justice." If you want peace, work for justice. You can't have peace where injustice exists.
- \* Rene Padilla, the brilliant Latin American theologian, puts it this way: "Peace has its own conditions. Unless these are fulfilled, the ideal of peace is nothing but wishful thinking. The main condition for peace [is] justice...where there is no justice, there can be no peace. Injustice and peace cannot coexist." Psalm 85:10 also highlights this connection. It reads: "love and faithfulness meet each other; justice and peace kiss each other." Again we see a biblical connection between justice and peace.
- \* And this biblical connection has been discussed by some of our most famous minds. Martin Luther King, Jr. for example, wrote that "peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek. It is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends by peaceful means...True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice." Once again, true peace is characterized by, and made possible by, justice.
- \* Now as we've seen, this relationship is rooted in the teachings of Scripture, but its reality is recognized not just by theologians and pastors. Listen to what Colin Powell, a lifelong military man, has to say: "We cannot win the war on terrorism until we confront the social and political roots of poverty." We cannot win the war on terrorism – there won't be peace – until we confront poverty – until we have justice. Once again, as Isaiah says, the fruit of justice will be peace.
- \* As the Holy Bible says, "Justice and Peace kiss each other." So, both are interrelated, like coincide. Without peace there will be no justice and without justice there will be no peace. Injustice in any form is a potential threat to peace and justice. The world today is witnessing violence against peace in different form like terrorism, suicide bombing, using nuclear weapon, and injustice against justice like oppressing the poor, women, children, tribal and different ethnic and minority groups. We read of wars, conflicts, injustice, and violence in the Bible. However, the Bible stresses that God's people must put their trust in God, rather than any military power or weapons. We have to make and spread peace and justice in the Church and in the world. How can we do this? ✓

## 2. Origin:

### A. Peace:

A word with a wide range of meaning in both the OT and the NT. Its root meaning in the OT (Heb. shalom) is "Wholeness & Fullness of life or Well-being," and it can be used in both religious and secular context.

The Greek word for "Peace" normally means the absence of war or conflict. However, the word also acquires much of the Shalom and some new Christian understanding.

So, it used as a greetings and farewell (Judg 6:23, Ezra 5:7, Dan 4:1, Exod 4:18); Security and prosperity (2king 20:19, Ps 122:7, Deut 23:6); Gift of God (Lev 26:6 Ps 29:11); Christ is prince of peace and His work to bring peace (Rom 5:1, Col 1:20); Spiritual mind (Phil 4:7, Col. 3:15, Rom 15:13)

### B. Justice:

Justice is the standard by which the benefits and penalties of living in society are distributed. Justice is originally translated into English is "righteousness" and "judgement". Justice is founded in the being of God

for whom it is a chief attribute. As such God is the sure defender of the poor and oppressed (Jer 9:23-24, Ps 10:17-18, Deut 10:18-19, Isa 59:15-16, 2 Cor 9:8-10, Amos 5:21-24, Mic 6:6-8, Mat 23:23); Justice is closely related to love and grace (Deut 10:18-19, Hos 10:12); justice is focus on oppressed, special attention given to poor, widows, orphan, slaves, homeless, day labourer, and those with physical infirmities ( Job 29:12-17, Ps 146:7-9, Mal 3:5), Justice focus on "rights" of needy (Jer 5:28, Job 24:1-12) Land rights (Ezek 45:9) Food & clothing (Deut 10:18) Shelter (Job 8:6) The oppressed are raised- the oppressors are judged( 1 Sam 2:7-10, Luke 1:51-53, ;20-26).

*Let us ask questions -*

\* **3. What are the tolerances and Chaos's against Peace we see in the World and in our Country (Country Perspective):**

These are the present growing phenomenon within ten to fifteen years in our country and also all over the world which creates the unrest situation and chaotic world, such as: Terrorism due rising of fundamentalism, Corruption due to over population-poverty and illiteracy, Natural calamities due to climate change and global warming, Gap is widening between rich and poor due to globalization.

\* **3. What are the Bible references regarding Peace & Justice? Example-Shalom**

- We can find some in the origin section-2. Eph 2:17, Isaiah 32:17, Isaiah 32:16-20.

**Biblical themes**

- ✓ ⊙ Jesus' own teaching, for example in the Sermon on Mount (Matthew 5)
- ✓ ⊙ The universal love of God, not just for one community.  
John 3:16, Ephesians 2:13-22, Galatians 3:26-28, 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, Luke 4:24-30
- ✓ ⊙ The prophetic vision of a world of peace and justice for all people  
Isaiah 2:2-5, 65:17-25, Micah 4:3-5
- ✓ ⊙ Transformation of power from worldly power to Godly power  
Exodus 14:13-14, Kings 6:8-23, Kings 7:3-7, 1 Samuel 26:8-9, Judges 7:1-24, Ephesians 6:10-17, 2 Corinthians 10:3-4
- ✓ ⊙ Redemptive suffering, the mystery of the cross  
Isaiah 53:1-12, Luke 9:22-27, Philippians 2:5-11

*(and talk) (or address)*

\* **Pathways to Peace** *if we want peace we must speak the:*

- ✓ ⊙ Truth
- ✓ ⊙ Be committed to the Truth. John 8:31-32
- ✓ ⊙ Cease fire. Ephesians 4:26-32
- ✓ ⊙ Use non-violent means. Matthew 5:9, 39
- ✓ ⊙ Negotiate in good faith. Matthew 5:8, 37
- ✓ ⊙ Accept mediation. Matthew 18:15-16
- ✓ ⊙ Justice
- ✓ ⊙ Fairness, lack of exploitation. Psalm 12:5
- ⊙ Peace
- ✓ ⊙ Biblical vision of a society with both truth and justice. Isaiah 65:17-25 ✓
  - Psalm 85:10-13

**Psalm 85:8-13:** God the Lord will speak peace to God's people who turn to God in their hearts. Surely salvation is at hand. Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; justice and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and justice will look down from the sky. Justice will go before the Lord, and will make a path for the Lord's steps.

**Amos 5:6-7, 21-24:** Seek the Lord and live, you who turn justice to poison. God says this to you: I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your sacrifices, I will not accept them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

**Romans 3:21-24:** Now, separate from works of the law, the justice of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the justice of God through [the faithfulness of] Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they all are now justified by God's grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

\* **4. How best we can ensure or take initiative to establish Peace & Justice within our community, country and in the world?**

Peace and Justice is a spiritual word. It's a long process and faith or Shalom journey. We can not change at a sudden. We need to participate in peace making process and not like peace lover. There is a saying that Charity begins at home. What we start from our family, Church and society that will affect globally. Other wise we have to think Globally, but he has to act locally.

So the question, at least in my mind, becomes this: if our peace and our security is contingent upon there being justice, how are we doing – as individuals, as a church, as a nation – how are we doing at promoting justice and actively fighting injustices? Because again, the struggle for justice isn't just about some utopian ideal of helping the poor; the struggle for justice is wrapped up in our own security and ability to live in peace. As Dr. King rightly asserts, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Once again, **Rene Padillia** offers insight here. He outlines a number of conditions and characteristics that make peace impossible; we'll look at four of these and ask ourselves whether they're are ever true of our society.

- ✓ He starts off by saying, "Peace cannot be experienced by a materialistic society obsessed with wealth and indifferent to the plight of the poor." Are we materialistic? Are we obsessed with wealth? Are we indifferent to the plight of the poor? If so, we will not experience peace.
- ✓ He goes on: "Peace cannot be experienced by a hedonistic society oriented only toward its own comfort and self-satisfaction while remaining blind to the suffering of the masses." Are we oriented only toward our own comfort, our own self-satisfaction? Are we blind to the suffering of the masses? If so, we won't have peace.
- ✓ He continues: "Peace cannot be experienced by a consumer society committed to the idolatry of the fashionable and callous to the misery of the underprivileged." Are we a consumer society? Are we callous, have we grown hard to the misery of the underprivileged? If we are, peace will not be possible.
- ✓ And finally he concludes: "Peace cannot be experienced by a wasteful society given to the ideology of unrestrained economic growth [while] heartless in the face of the hungry multitudes." Are we wasteful? Are we heartless in the face of hungry multitudes? If so, no peace.

The answers to those questions depend on your perspective, so I don't want to answer those questions for you, but I think they're questions worth thinking about. If you want peace, work for justice. Where there is not justice, there cannot be peace. ✓

**5. What are the injustice and violations of the rights do you see in our country and in the world?**

These are the following rights which are mostly violated in our country, such as: male domination and domestic violence, child labour and abusing child, minorities are deprived and oppressed by majority groups.

\* **6. How Jesus made peace or how he wants us to do for Peace and Justice? As Christians how we should be following Jesus Christ in order to make peace and Justice among us?**

Jesus wants to give freedom to all and He does not give the peace as the world gives. To follow Jesus' example, we need to liberate women and empowered the women to the ministry and in decision making process, giving important to the children, feeding the hungry, healing the sick. What we will do for people that we do for Jesus.

- ✓ If you read through Scripture, God never stops talking about social justice, the prophets never stop talking about social justice Jesus never stops talking about social justice the early church the disciples the

apostles, the church fathers, they never stop talking about social justice, and so we will never stop talking about social justice. It is a necessary requirement for peace to exist, and it is central to who we are as followers of Jesus. You can't have peace without justice; and you can't be a follower of Jesus without being committed to social justice.

Now, it would be great if we had time to flesh these thoughts out a bit more – it would be especially valuable if we could talk about what it means for us to be justified through the faithfulness of Jesus, and the peace we have with God on account of what Jesus has done; again, peace made possible through justice or justification. Right now, here's what I'd like us to do: I've made reference a few times to the fact that peace with justice is central to our faith and is even included in the creeds that we say, so I thought that we'd end this reflection by reciting one of those creeds.

We commit ourselves individually and as a community  
to the way of Christ:

to take up the cross;

to seek abundant life for all humanity;

to struggle for peace with justice and freedom;

to risk ourselves in faith, hope, and love,

praying that God's kingdom may come.

Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen. ✓✓

### 7. Any living example in short for Illustration: <sup>ed</sup>

These are the people and great leader who work for Justice and Peace. They are the living legend for the peace and justice.

- Prophet Amos & Micah
- John the Baptist
- Jesus Christ
- Bishop Desmond Tutu
- President Nelson Mandela
- The Rich man and Lazarus: Why the rich has gone to hell? He did not murder or torture any one. He was not responsible. He did not response to the need of others who are in need.

### 8. Do you see the Church of Bangladesh has been doing to make ensure and taking some initiative for Peace and Justice really?

The Church of Bangladesh has been doing many things through CBSDP, School, Hospital and Hostel projects to make ensure and taking some initiative for peace and justice in the society. Through the Social Development project, we work among the irrespective caste, colour, creed and religion and ensure socio-economic and cultural development among all kinds of the people. They also work for the women and tribal development, who are weaker section of our society. Through the hospital, we ensure health service, love and care of our Lord and also supporting poor patient from the poor fund. Through the hostel, we nurture the children, orphan and poorest of the poor in our society.

### 9. Implication / Invitation people to this Ministry?

How we can overcome this injustice and violence? We should not get scared to this kind of atrocities in this society and world at large. How did Jesus overcome? He said that you should not fear and have deep faith on God. I have overcome the world and you will also overcome. We can also have faith on His resurrection that this situation is not the end but there is hope to have new life and new kingdom in this world.