



1. Sunday Summary: This morning we continue our sermon series that we're calling *Lessons from the Desert*, based on the lives of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In today's sermon we looked at the life of Isaac and explored what his story teaches us about justice and injustice.

- a) Isaac's actions in the story give us a classic picture of everything injustice is. Isaac tries to preserve himself at the expense of others by telling people of the area that Rebekah was his sister rather than his wife, a move that might have brought guilt and judgment on the people of Gerar. But the people of the area were not Isaac's concern. Saving his own neck was. Injustice always begins with a commitment to defend and preserve what's ours without regard for others. Justice is recognizing that it's not "just us" in the world.
- b) This story also teaches us the source of the hope we have for justice. And the source of that hope is that God blesses his chosen people in spite of everything just like he does in Isaac's life. He blesses Isaac in spite of his circumstances, in spite of his sins, and even in spite of opposition. God's blessings cannot be stopped in our lives to teach us that we don't have to hold on so tightly to the things we love. He has more than enough blessing to go around for everyone. God is the God from whom all blessings flow. Blessings don't come from our hand, and they don't come from our ability to protect and preserve what's ours. We can be free to bless others knowing God's blessings will keep coming to us. We don't need to be afraid.
- c) Throughout Scripture we see God's commitment to justice especially for those who are marginal in society. He identifies with them, so strongly that he became one of them. Jesus was born in a feed trough to a poor family. Later in life he was homeless. He died a criminal's death, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. He was the poor, and the homeless of our world. And, not only did he become poor, but he stood in the place of all those of us in spiritual poverty and paid our debt. When we take that into the center of our lives, and hang on to that blessing it will make us doers of justice.

2. Connecting Questions: (Interactive, life sharing, thought & feeling type stuff)

- Talk together about what the word justice means to you. Pastor Mike talked about how "injustice always starts with a commitment to defend and preserve what's ours." What do you think of that statement? Think about a time when you've done that, and didn't really care about the consequences to others?

- Have you ever made decisions about people, and what they're like, without any conversation with them? If so, is there a group of people you're most likely to do that with?

- Talk about a time that God surprised you with a blessing you know that you didn't deserve. Have God's blessings ever ceased in your life?

- What insights from today's message were most helpful for you?

3. Truth Questions: (What does the Bible say?)

- Think together about some other passages that deal with the topic of justice. Can you think of any? What might they add to the conversation?

- Read Micah 6:8 together. What does it mean to "walk humbly with God," and how does that relate to doing justice?

- Read Psalm 147: 7-9. Why, according to this Psalm, should we be concerned about the vulnerable of the world? Why is God so concerned for the vulnerable? What does/should this mean for us?

4. Formation Questions: (Taking it further, How does the Truth change the way I live?)

- What concrete steps can you make to sink the gospel truth that we dealt with today deeper into your life throughout this week? What will you do about the message you heard today?

- What will you do to be a doer of justice this week? What small act of justice is God calling you to?

- How will you use today's learning to help you to live out your call to living a holy life this week?

5. Resources for Further Study:

1. Peterson, Eugene. *The Jesus Way: a Conversation on the Ways Jesus Is the Way*. (William B. Eerdmans Publishing C.: Grand Rapids, MI. 2007).
2. Haugen, Gary A. *Just Courage: God's Great Expedition for the Restless Christian*. (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL. 2009).

