



Better Than

Better Than Fairness



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Justice and Righteousness

- Justice – “mishpat”
 - Retributive - legal, punishment for crime
 - Restorative justice – put things right, advocate for the vulnerable, address social inequities between the powerful and the vulnerable
- Righteousness – “tzedakah”
 - righteous (right) behavior, treat people with dignity, living as a community
- Eden

Wickedness & Oppression

- Wickedness – “rasha” – rejecting “tzedakah,” evil, power and self instead of community
- Oppression – abuse of power, profit at the expense of someone else, especially against the vulnerable
- “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.” Ge 6:5-6

God's response

- “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.” Ge 8:21
- Abraham

Ecclesiastes 3

¹⁶ And I saw something else under the sun:

In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.

¹⁷ I said to myself,

“God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked,
for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every
deed.”

Ecclesiastes 4

Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun:

I saw the tears of the oppressed— and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors—and they have no comforter.

² And I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive.

³ But better than both is the one who has never been born, who has not seen the evil that is done under the sun.



Luke 11:37-40

³⁹ Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰ You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹ But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor [with acts of mercy and compassion], and everything will be clean for you.

- We are not called to fix, but we are commanded to
 - love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Luke 10:25-37))
 - carry their burdens (Ga 6:2)
 - to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Eph 2:10)
- Love the people God puts in our path and do what God asks us to do, no matter what

Invitation

- Pay attention. Notice the good work that God has prepared you to do.
- Respond to God's call to act. Show up.
- Be open to the idea of showing compassion and mercy as God leads, despite the cost.

Have there been – or are there now – places in your life where God is inviting you to respond to the needs of others?