

April 14, 2024

“Bending Toward Justice”

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

Cell: 970-412-7510



SEASON OF EASTER

A very large stone was used to seal Jesus’ fate as just another tragically failed Messiah — dead, entombed, and soon forgotten. Yet it could not contain him nor the new questions that carries us into the Easter Season. The women wonder as they approach, "Who will move the stone for us?" The figures in dazzling apparel ask, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” Perhaps the power of love can bring us new life!

1. GATHERING

Musical Prelude (Stan)

Call to Worship (Katie)

Opening Prayer (Katie)

Congregational Singing

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

All: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.”

“Throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted; the indifference of those who should have known better; the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most; that has made it possible for evil to triumph.” — Haile Selassie

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: Acts 9:32-42, Matthew 23:23-24, Micah 6:6-8

Acts 9:32-42

The Healing of Aeneas

32 Now as Peter went here and there among all the brothers and sisters, he came down also to the saints living in Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years, for he was paralyzed. 34 Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed!" And immediately he got up. 35 And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Peter in Lydda and Joppa

36 Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. 37 At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." 39 So Peter got up and went with them, and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. 40 Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes,

and seeing Peter, she sat up. 41 He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. 42 This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Matthew 23:23-24

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

Micah 6:6-8

What God Requires

6 "With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high?

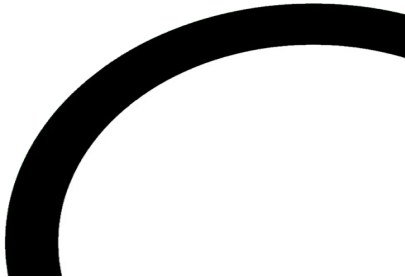
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

SERMON: "Bending Toward Justice"



Was Dr. King correct? Is the moral arc of the universe actually bending toward justice?

Today I will share some thoughts, notions, arguments and stories that just might invite us to conclude that there is hope and justification for King's prophecy.

I will share a new definition of justice that is more inclusive and holistic than what we hear from the media and general scholars of justice.

My premise is simple: justice without compassion and redemption is purely revenge. True justice is inclusive of consequences and mercy. It is the beginning of a journey of healing for both the victim and the offender.

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Congregational Singing

Response

Joys and Concerns

Offering & Music (Stan)

Sending: Isaiah 30:18 (John)

Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you.

For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.

*"The moral arc of the universe bends at the elbow of justice."
— Martin Luther King, Jr.*