

For Prayer and Reflection: Select Texts on Justice in the Bible
(Which texts to you find challenging, consoling; how might they influence life today)

Genesis 1:26-27: Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Exodus 22:20-26 "You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. 21 You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. 22 If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry. 23 My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your own wives will be widows, and your children orphans. 24 "If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors among my people, you shall not act like an extortioner toward him by demanding interest from him. 25 If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset; 26 for this cloak of his is the only covering he has for his body. What else has he to sleep in? If he cries out to me, I will hear him; for I am compassionate.

Deuteronomy 1:16-17: I charged your judges at that time, 'Listen to complaints among your kinsmen, and administer true justice to both parties even if one of them is an alien. In rendering judgment, do not consider who a person is; give ear to the lowly and to the great alike, fearing no man, for judgment is God's. Refer to me any case that is too hard for you and I will hear it.'

Deut 15:7 If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. 8 Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs.

Deut 27:19, "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the orphan or the widow." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!" [These are sample references to the frequent concern in the Old Testament for the four groups of powerless people, "the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger in the land."

Amos 5:24 But if you would offer me holocausts,
the let justice (mishpat) surge like water,
and goodness (sedeqah) like an unfailing stream.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Micah 6:8 You have been told, O man, what is good,
and what the Lord requires of you
Only to do the right (mishpat)
and to love goodness (chesed)
and to walk humbly with your God.

Hos. 2:21 I will espouse you to me forever; I will espouse you in right and justice
in love and in mercy I will espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know the Lord.

Isa. 1:16 Wash yourselves clean Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes
cease doing evil 17 Learn to do good, make justice your aim:
redress the wronged; hear the orphan's plea,
defend the widow; 18 Come now, let us set things right, says the Lord
Though your sins be as scarlet, they may become as white as snow
Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool

Isa. 32:16 Then judgment will dwell in the wilderness
and justice abide in the garden land.

**17 The work of justice will be peace;
the effect of justice, calm and security forever**

Jer. 22:15 Must you prove your rank among kings by competing with them in cedar?
Did not your father eat and drink He did what was right and just)
and it went well with him, 16 Because he dispensed justice to the weak and the poor
it went well with him. Is this not true knowledge of me? says the Lord.

Matthew 6:33 "Seek first God's reign and God's justice"

Matthew 12:15-21, citing Isaiah 42:1-5 When Jesus realized this, he withdrew from that place. Many (people) followed him, and he cured them all, but he warned them not to make him known. 17 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 18 "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom I delight; I shall place my spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. 19 He will not contend 12 or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory. 21 And in his name the Gentiles will hope."

Matt 25:31-46, esp. 37-40 Then the just ones will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' 40 And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Luke 4:14-21 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread 6 throughout the whole region. 15 He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. 16 7 He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom 8 into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read 17 and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, 9 because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, 19 and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." (citing Isaiah 61:1-2) 20 Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. 21 He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 6:20: Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.' (=Matt 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit")

Luke 12.15: And he said to them, 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.' See **Colossians:** 3:5 "greed which is idolatry"

Romans 15.26: Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.

James 2: My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? 2 For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, 3 and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, 'Have a seat here, please', while to the one who is poor you say, 'Stand there', or, 'Sit at my feet', 4h Have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?

1 John 3:17 How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? 18 Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.