

### **John 8: 2-11**

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

Within us, among us, before us,

**CHRIST IS COME TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW**

Hello, sun in my face. Hello you who made the morning and spread it over the fields... Watch, now, how I start the day in happiness, in kindness.

Mary Oliver

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind; in whom to dwell is to find peace and security; toward whom to turn is to find life and life eternal, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldst be pleased to make thy ways known unto them...

ML King Jr.

We are in week 3 of our series on BIG WORDS in the vocabulary of faith and the theological conversations that take place in our lives from time to time and in the wider culture, conversations which too often suffer from a lack of healthy humility and just plain misunderstanding of some of these BIG WORDS. Our theological conversations (and the late poet Mary Oliver inspired countless such conversations through her lovely work) help us to make meaning of our lives and the world. This is a pretty important piece of what it takes, frankly, to be sane and grounded.

Our first two BIG WORDS were KINGDOM OF GOD AND EVIL. Today, and appropriately so as we celebrate the MLK holiday, our BIG WORD is JUSTICE. Between now and the beginning of Lent, we will have pondered 8 BIG WORDS. Next week's word is GRACE. I am still thinking about possibilities for the final 4 and welcome your suggestions.

As we consider the word justice and how we use it in polite conversations and hear it used in the wider culture, what I want to offer you are two ways of approaching this BIG WORD. And let's keep in mind that as with all these big words, we are, with all humility, just able to begin to sort through the depth and richness of these terms. But with justice, let's approach it in two ways.

First, let's talk about "retributive justice." This is what we might talk about when we talk about fairness. Fairness is what we need for minimal baseline functioning in our relationships, whether in marriages, families, friendships, communities, cultures, and international relations. Following 9-11, the United States implemented retributive justice by attacking the Taliban in Afghanistan. You hurt me. I hurt you. That's only fair. It's "an eye for an eye" justice. Mahatma Gandhi, who as we know had significant influence on King, famously said that "an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." We will come back to this in a minute.

The civilized world's system of laws and courts is all about retributive justice, fairness. Our system of laws is intended to protect us from our own worst instincts and choices, like seatbelt laws for instance, AND the worst instincts and choices of others, like drunk driving laws for instance. Violate the law, and an appropriate punishment is proscribed.

All this is intended to make the world as fair as possible. We have set up a system which provides a workable stand-off between multiple and complex competing interests. If you've ever been in an attorney's office, seen the walls of law books, floor to ceiling, you get a sense of how hard we have worked to make things fair. And the work continues.

Retributive justice is the system we see playing out in our text today.

She broke the law-----she must be punished.

Jesus isn't going there. Jesus is calling humanity to something better than fairness. And so we come to our second way of working with this BIG WORD, JUSTICE.

Moving along from retributive justice, let's now talk about "restorative justice."

See how that works in our text today? There is no dismissal of the charge. The truth of the adultery is not denied. But Jesus widens the scope of the truth, enlarges the circle of truth to include the accusers. Are they without sin? Are they in a position to condemn?

Think, think, think, think..... the sounds of stones dropping.

Everyone in the story is set upon a path toward restoration of their humanity, restoration of what is sometimes described in theological literature as “right relationship.” Right relationship with others, right relationship with self, right relationship with God.

Where fairness seeks to achieve a workable standoff between competing interests, right relationship seeks healing, reconciliation, wholeness.

The woman, who knows she is a sinner, is affirmed as a person who is “not just a sinner.”

The accusers are confronted with a hard but essential truth of their own sinfulness, the logs in their eyes. When Jesus draws near, (this is true for us all) as the light of Christ begins to illumine our hearts, we all see our sin more vividly, more profoundly. To recognize one’s sins more vividly is a sign of spiritual growth. This Christ light is never a condemning light. It’s always a gracious light----leading us along the path of healthy and wise humility.

One can hope that the accusers went back home to look more carefully at their scrolls, maybe to see them with fresh eyes, maybe to find themselves in the book of the Prophet Micah 6:8

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

To walk justly, to ONLY walk justly, is fairness. But there is more that God requires. To love mercy, to walk humbly. That’s the way to restorative justice.

The placards we see on TV sometimes say NO JUSTICE NO PEACE. Sure, if the peace you have in mind is a standoff of competing interests.

The Gospel would propose another way. NO PEACE NO JUSTICE. The restorative justice of the Gospel, of the Commonwealth of God, can only come from a place of graced serenity, of a spacious peace in the soul of a people, a people in whom the light of the Divine shines and manifests as mercy and humility.

# SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD-GRACED AT CHRIST'S TABLE

NORTH OAK CHRISTIAN CHURCH-DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

January 20, 2019

In Jesus' Name, Greetings!

Music for Gathering

Show us Lord, your kindness, and your rescue grant to us

**GOD'S RESCUE IS NEAR, THAT GOD'S GLORY DWELL IN OUR LAND**

Kindness and truth have met, justice and peace have kissed

**TRUTH FROM THE EARTH WILL SPRING UP AS JUSTICE FROM THE HEAVENS LOOKS DOWN**

Lighting of the Candles

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that." ML King Jr.

**21 Let the Whole Creation Cry**

Sharing Christ's Peace

**80 My Shepherd You Supply My Need vss 1 and 3**

The Morning Prayer and Musical Response

Silence

"Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." ML King Jr.

Children's Circle

All children thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade are welcome to come forward. A small outreach offering will be collected for our money jar. Following this time of sharing and prayer, children may attend their very own

"Worship and Wonder" time together in our classroom annex. Child care is offered for infants and toddlers but they are also welcome in the sanctuary.

Prayer for Illumination

Happy are they whom You instruct, those You teach Your ways

**WHEN MANY CARES FILL OUR MINDS, YOUR CONSOLATIONS CHEER OUR SOULS**

THE GOSPEL JOHN 8: 2-11

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost**

**As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, amen amen.**

The Meditation "No Peace, No Justice" Rev. Rob Carr

**Our world grows weary of the battering and the vicious cycles that devour us. We turn, as people always have, to you, Single Source of newness. Waiting Friend, in your mercy receive us and all our weary neighbors. Hold us and all our desperate friends. In your mercy, cherish all our enemies. Gift Giver, embrace all those who are strangers to us, who are your well-beloved children.**

**Make us, altogether, new. Amen.**

Silent and spoken personal prayers of thanksgiving confession, intercession

Flute Solo Rebecca Fillingham

The Offering

**Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below**

**Praise God above ye heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost**

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.  
As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

**419 All Who Hunger Gather Gladly**

Welcome to the Table

You love us, Gracious One, more than we can ask or imagine  
**YOU SAVE US FROM THE SNARES OF FEAR, YOU SATISFY OUR EVERY NEED**  
So great is Your loving response toward those who are humble  
**SO FAR DOES YOUR ENDURING STRENGTH UPHOLD US WHO FACE THE DARKNESS WITHIN**

The Words of Institution

Gentle us, Bread of Heaven  
**THAT WE MAY LEARN THE WISDOM OF PURITY, PATIENCE AND PEACE**  
Awaken us to Your Indwelling Presence  
**YOUR TRUTH IS EVER BEFORE US, BY IT YOU SET US FREE**

The Communion Prayer

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, amen.**

Following the Lord's Prayer, please come forward by rows to receive the loaf and the cup.

The cup is non-alcoholic by choice of the congregation  
Gluten free crackers are available on the table for those who prefer this option  
Children also celebrate communion weekly as part of "Worship and Wonder"

**630 We Shall Overcome verse 1 2X**

May you be filled with all the fullness of God!  
**WHOSE POWER AT WORK WITHIN US CAN ACCOMPLISH FAR MORE  
THAN ALL WE CAN ASK OR IMAGINE!**

**TO OUR GUESTS-----WELCOME!**

**SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD AND GRACED AT CHRIST'S TABLE  
WE WALK HUMBLY, LOVE DEEPLY, LIVE SIMPLY, AND SERVE JOYFULLY**

We are delighted to include you today. Your presence and participation is a gift to us all. We hope you experience among us the warm spirit of our family of faith and the gracious touch of Christ upon your life. Refreshments and welcoming conversation are available before and after worship in the Community Room just down the hall. More information about NOCC and the Disciples of Christ is available via Facebook and these websites

[www.nocckc.org](http://www.nocckc.org) [www.kcdisciples.org](http://www.kcdisciples.org) [www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org)

## OUR LIFE TOGETHER

### THIS WEEK

Today NOCC Youth to Orange Easel 530PM  
Monday 6PM Troop 90  
Tuesday 945AM Men's Bible Group  
Tuesday 1230PM Women's Bible Group  
Tuesday 6PM Pack 900  
Wednesday 7PM Music Ministry  
Thursday 6PM Girl Scouts

### UPCOMING

SOUPER BOWL SOUP FEST  
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 3 FOLLOWING WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION TO CENTERING PRAYER—LED BY KEVIN KELLEY  
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 9 9AM TO NOON

YOUTH SUNDAY FEBRUARY 10 1015AM  
NOCC YOUTH HOST NORTHLAND YOUTH 5PM

DISCIPLES REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT AT TALL OAKS  
FEBRUARY 22-23

SPRING RETREAT AT MARILLAC CENTER IN LEAVENWORTH  
FRIDAY—SUNDAY APRIL 26—28

Keep these items in mind as you consider the remarkable ministry  
of our friends at CHERITH BROOK.

Blankets Blankets Blankets! Tennis Shoes, Cold Meds, Band-aids, Bike Locks,  
Gloves, Hats, Chapstick

Cherith Brook Local Honey for Sale! Contact Eric 816-241-8047