

## 1. Connect

**Question of the Day. Highs and Lows. Share how last week's message influenced your week.**

Last week we continued as a church to grasp what it means to Love Jesus, Live like Jesus, and Lead Others to Jesus. Last week Pastor Michael Lee gave us a passionate challenge to invest, invite, and impact three people who need to hear about the love of Jesus. How did it go last week with the names on your impact list? Were you able to invest and pray for any of those people, or invite them to church?

## 2. Engage: Sermon Review + Discussion

As we turn our attention this week to opposing injustice, read Genesis 3:1-12 and Genesis 4:1-10 together as a LifeGroup.

As you read these passages of scripture, what words, images, or sentences stand out to you? Spend a couple of minutes making your own observations about the scripture, then share those observations together as a group.

### **Discussion**

Pastor Albert showed us the devastating reality of what happens when Sin grows up. When sin grows up, it looks like injustice. All of the DNA present in the systemic injustice that we see all around us is in the everyday sin we commit all of the time. Our day to day actions are deeply connected to the injustices of our world.

- In Genesis we see that the first problem with Sin is that we began talking to the serpent and bringing our doubts and questions to the serpent instead of God. Satan gets you to doubt what God said, and what God intended. Are there any doubts or questions about God that you're currently wrestling with? Is there a trusted friend, pastor, or spiritual leader who you can discuss your doubts and questions with?

- Sin leads directly to brokenness. Adam and Eve sin, and then insufficiently try to cover their shame on their own with fig leaves. It might not be fig leaves, but today we reach for things like pornography, money, relationships, and status to cover our shame and brokenness. What are you tempted to reach for to cover yourself, and make yourself feel whole?
- When you talk to the serpent, you get language about yourself that never came from God. God says to Adam and Eve, "Who told you that you were naked?" What language and labels are occupying your mind right now? Call them out in your LifeGroup. It could be labels like insecure, ugly, broken, not enough. Do these labels line up with what God would say about you?
- In Genesis 4 we see that sin is crouching at the door. Pastor Albert says "On one side of the door is our sin, on the other side is our anger." And if they get together, they produce something deadly. Cain allows his sin and anger to come together, and it causes death to his brother Abel. Injustice is not just death to you, but death through you. For example; Pastor Albert showed us that lust leads to pornography, and the insatiable demand of pornography leads to human trafficking, and human trafficking takes little boys and girls and locks them into a system of injustice that all starts with the lust in our hearts. How does this vision of an everyday sin that leads to injustice resonate with you? What do you think about that?
- Is there sin in your life that is un-confessed? Is there sin in your life that you're currently hiding? Can you confess those sins in the safety of your LifeGroup right now?

### 3. Apply: Next Faithful Step

- Sin equals brokenness, and brokenness leads to injustice. Jesus Christ has come to turn the equation around. We can now see ourselves through the lens of Christ's righteousness, instead of our sin and brokenness. Now we get to participate in the dismantling of injustice wherever we find it. What are some systems of injustice that God may be calling you to participate in dismantling?
- What's one tangible step you can take this week, to come out of hiding, and into the presence of God?

## 4. Prayer

Take some time to hear prayer requests from each member of your LifeGroup. Pray for one another, for your families, communities, our church, and the world.

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## 1. Connect

**Question of the Day. Highs and Lows. Share how last week's message influenced your week.**

Last week we began to explore what it looks like to Oppose Injustice. Pastor Albert led us through Genesis, and exposed how even the sins we think have no victims on the other end, trace back to injustice. We were encouraged and challenged to confess sin, and dismantle systems of injustice. Was there any unconfessed sin that you were able to share with a friend or trusted spiritual leader last week? Were you able to take any next steps towards dismantling systems of injustice?

## 2. Engage: Sermon Review + Discussion

As we continue opposing injustice, read Genesis 4:1-10 together again as a LifeGroup.

As you read this passage of scripture, what words, images, or sentences stand out to you? Spend a couple of minutes making your own observations about the scripture, then share those observations together as a group.

### **Discussion**

- Last week Pastor Albert showed us the devastating reality of what happens when Sin grows up. This week we saw the equally devastating reality of what happens when Sin gets "franchised".
- When Injustice is systemized, sin is franchised. Systems of injustice perpetually create sin, destruction, and oppression all over the world. At its core, it is designed to take life from humanity. Pastor Albert mentioned that The Church has become good at showing mercy (by mopping up the mess), but lacking in identifying the root causes of systemic injustice (by seeing where the mess is coming from). How does that resonate with you today?
- Can being a "Christian" and having biases towards others co-exist?

- Pastor Albert said as humans, we fall into systems of perpetuating injustices. In this mode, we fuel scarcity, greed, prejudice, selfishness, hate, bias, and power. As you look at this list, what is impacting your own personal struggle of “Off-brand Christianity” due to the nature of sin?
- If we cannot hear biblical truth, it might mean that we are more consumed with the voice of the elephant or the donkey (political parties), than with the voice of the Lamb. Pastor Albert urged us to surrender our political idols. Are there any political idols that you might need to surrender? What would this surrender look like for you?

### 3. Apply: Next Faithful Step

- Pastor Albert said we have to be a church that wakes up and fights the systems of injustices around us. It’s not enough to show mercy because God came to bring full restoration. This week, listen to the song, “Open the Eyes of My Heart.” Pray and ask God to bring revelation, to “open your eyes,” to know how to live out compassion and hope more deeply this week.
- What’s one tangible step you can take this week to fight injustice? If this question feels overwhelming, consider joining the work our church is doing to fight injustice through Fellowship’s Center for Racial Reconciliation. Our next workshop takes place on May 18th and you can sign up on our website.

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## 1. Connect

**Question of the Day. Highs and Lows. Share how last week's message influenced your week.**

We are in our third week of exploring what it looks like to Oppose Injustice. Last week, Pastor Albert showed the devastating reality of what happens "When Sin Gets Franchised." In asking God to "open your eyes of your heart," where did you see systems perpetuating injustices in your community? Were there any forms of "off-brand Christianity" you personally needed to confess and surrender?

## 2. Engage: Sermon Review + Discussion

As we continue opposing injustice, read Luke 9:23-25 together again as a LifeGroup.

*<sup>23</sup> Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. <sup>25</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?"*

As you read these passages of Scripture, what words, images, or sentences stand out to you? Spend a couple of minutes making your own observations about the scripture, then share those observations together as a group.

### **Discussion**

Pastor Albert asked, "What does it mean for your life to be transformed by a cross-shaped love?" A cross-shaped love means to have a love marked by sacrifice and grows up to look like the cross. Jesus says if you want to be his disciple, there are three things you must do: (1) Deny yourself; (2) Take up your cross; (3) Follow me.

- Pastor Albert stated our culture today often plays with a concept of love that never grows up but instead stays immature, small, and self-serving. In your own life, how have you bought into this cultural message?

- As humans, our default nature is selfishness and sin, therefore we must develop a deep dislike for sin. In the moment, sin tastes like life, but it causes death to your soul. What are some things in your life that taste like life but are actually causing death to your soul?
- Another message the world gives us today is that we are the “star” of our life. As Christians, we believe our lives are not about us-- our lives are about God. Where are the places in your life where you’ve been the “star”? What would it look like to deny yourself?
- The current of the world will lead us to be us-shaped, not cross-shaped. If we as the Church want a real, grown-up love, we need to pick up the cross daily and follow Jesus. What are areas of your life you’re comfortable with “wearing” a cross but not actually carrying it?
- Pastor Albert used an analogy of being at the gym-- if we lift up heavy things, muscles start to come up. If we lift up our cross, love starts to come up. Resurrection comes after the crucifixion but crucifixion involves pain. What muscle area of denying yourself is underdeveloped?
- Jesus says, “Follow me.” As we follow Jesus’ way, he will always take us to places of injustice. His mission statement was to release the captives, give sight to the blinds, and free the oppressed. Pastor Albert said if we will *be* with Jesus, we will *do* justice. How can you put your energy not into what you *do* but who you *become* so that you embody and live out justice?
- Pastor Albert read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 over the church, reminding us of what love looks like when it grows up. What does it mean for your life to be transformed by a cross-shaped love this week? How can you love be marked by sacrifice and the cross?

### 3. Apply: Next Faithful Step

- Pastor Albert exhorted us with the image that when outsiders of the Christian community see the Church coming, they should say is, “Here comes Jesus.” As we strive to become cross-shaped Jesus followers, what is one way you can deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus this week?
- What’s one tangible step you can take this week to fight injustice? If this question feels overwhelming, consider joining the work our church is doing to fight injustice through

# LOVE JUSTICE

LifeGroup Discussion Guide



Fellowship's global and local justice initiatives. You can find these on our website under "global missions" and "local missions."

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## 1. Connect

**Question of the Day. Highs and Lows. Share how last week's message influenced your week.**

We are in the final week of our series on opposing injustice. As we look back at last week, Pastor Albert encouraged us to enter into the call of Jesus to "deny ourselves." Were there any practical ways, or areas in your life where you found yourself able to live out Jesus' command to deny yourself? Were there any tangible steps you were able to take towards fighting injustice?

## 2. Engage: Sermon Review + Discussion

As we continue opposing injustice, read Micah 6:8 together as a LifeGroup.

*<sup>8</sup>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.*

As you read this passage of Scripture, what words, images, or sentences stand out to you? Spend a couple of minutes making your own observations about the scripture, then share those observations together as a group.

### **Discussion**

As we think through what it means to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God, consider the following questions for conversation and reflection.

- In the passage, God lays out a clear command and requirement for his people to do justice. As you think about your own life, what are some things that personally keep you from doing justice?
- Our preachers this Sunday spoke about the damaging effect of silence. Pastor Michael Lee mentioned that it's possible to "do nothing wrong, yet do nothing right." How does this quote resonate with you? When it comes to matters of justice have you just been silent? What would it look like to begin breaking that silence today?

- Pastor Michael Field mentioned that it was only through certain key relationships that he became aware of certain systemic injustices. Has a relationship in your life ever opened your eyes to injustices that you were previously unaware of or silent about? If not, why?
- Our passage connects doing justice with walking humbly with God. How do you think walking with God and doing justice might be related?
- Is there anyone in your life who you personally need to show mercy to? What would it look like for you to show mercy to that person?
- Can you reflect on a specific time in your life when you know that God showed you mercy? Talk about that in your group.

### **3. Apply: Next Faithful Step**

- This week, think about potential people in your life that desperately need you to show them mercy. How can you begin to do that this week?
- Continue to reflect on the areas and times in your life when God has shown you mercy. When we fail to show mercy to others, it's usually an indication that we have lost touch with the mercy that has been shown to us by God.
- Is there an area of injustice that God might be calling you to break your silence about? This week, what is one thing you can do to step out of silence and begin to speak out against this injustice? Do that thing this week.

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